

Our Grant Making Priorities and Principles

2021-2023

This document sets out both Cheshire Community Foundation's thematic priorities for funding and our grant making principles which you are strongly advised to read when making an application to our open call programmes, alongside any specific programme criteria.

1. Our Grant Making Priorities

Cheshire Community Foundation commissioned research in 2016 into the key issues and needs in Cheshire and Warrington that our funding could support.

In the light of the covid-19 pandemic, we reviewed our priorities for the next three years 2021 to 2023.

The results of our review show that inequality, discrimination, disability, illness, distress, abuse, neglect and mental health issues continue to erode the life chances of people living in our most deprived communities.

We recognise that people can become disadvantaged in any geography, but that marginalised and disadvantaged communities are at an even higher risk of poor life outcomes.

We can confirm that our top four thematic priorities for funding continue to be;

- To improve mental health and wellbeing
- To tackle poverty and disadvantage
- To develop education, skills and employment opportunities
- To build stronger communities across Cheshire and Warrington

The overarching priorities for funding within each of these four themes are;

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The Pandemic has had a significant impact on mental health and wellbeing for people of all ages - and is likely to continue to do so, during the phased recovery period and beyond.

- **Children and young people 's mental health** – Supporting young people to cope with, control and manage mental health issues and prevent them becoming more serious by encouraging early intervention.
- **Tackling health inequalities in Cheshire and Warrington** - Focusing on those people – who face the greatest disadvantages in life – and the greatest risk to their mental health and wellbeing.
- **Support for lonely, isolated older and vulnerable people** - Ensuring that there are a range of opportunities for older people to remain active and enjoy social interaction, to improve their wellbeing - recognising that Cheshire and Warrington has one of the fastest growing ageing populations.
- **Support for isolated rural communities** - where there is a lack of access to support services which negatively impacts wellbeing.

Poverty and Disadvantage

The pandemic has increased levels of poverty and disadvantage in Cheshire and Warrington (with a further threat that the UK economy as a whole may be pushed towards one of the deepest recession on record)

- **Children and young people living in poverty** - recognising that one in every seven children (15%) in Cheshire are now living in poverty.
- **Support for families in need and family unity** - providing emergency help to those living in poverty, through access to emergency food, home supplies, practical advice and support. In addition, recognising that support may be needed to tackle poverty and disadvantage, to prevent increased incidences of domestic violence and abuse.
- **Support for people experiencing debt in a climate of increasing unemployment** - narrowing the gap which exists between the economic prospects and the health and wellbeing of affluent and poor families and vulnerable groups and recognising that there may be increasing levels of people needing support for the first time.

Education, Skills and Employment

Education, employment, and skills have all been adversely impacted by the pandemic – with potential long term detrimental impact - due to school closures, families lacking access to equipment and the internet (the digital divide), job losses and potential further unemployment rises, as furlough comes to an end.

- **Increasing young people's skills and confidence** where they are at higher risk of unemployment. Research indicates that spending more than six months unemployed at this age, can have a significant long-term impact on their careers - with many young people needing support to obtain entry level qualifications and gain work experience to help them secure their first job opportunity.
- **Support to tackle the widening achievement gaps for vulnerable young people** – particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to increase their confidence and aspirations, encouraging young people to develop life skills, which will improve their chances of gaining employment later in life.
- **Giving younger children in disadvantaged communities increased opportunities** - enabling them to develop a passion for learning and to increase their skills by taking part in extra-curricula activities.
- **Support for people of all ages affected by loss of employment** - to help them to learn new skills, gain support and advice, to find employment. Focus on developing the basic skills which lead to employment, including IT skills, interview and personal presentation skills, time management, people skills and confidence building.

Stronger Communities

Whilst there have been many examples of communities and charities stepping up to help people during the pandemic, through thousands of small acts of kindness, many community services have had to remain closed in line with government guidelines and need support to re-open and many people in Cheshire and Warrington have had little contact with others for over a year.

- **Create more resilient communities** - by supporting local support services, community centres, halls and hubs to reopen safely, to enable them to play a vital role in supporting people of all ages to re-connect with one another and to feel re-engaged in their communities.
- **Support for the voluntary/charitable sector** -to enable it to survive and thrive to meet the needs of those at greatest disadvantage.
- **Support to help develop vital social and emotional skills for young people** - following a period of severe lack of social contact, to increase confidence, social mobility, a sense of belonging and help reduce risk taking behaviours.
- **Bring together diverse communities and cultures** - as well as groups who share the same needs to promote and improve social cohesion.

2. Our Grant-Making Principles

Our Vision for Cheshire

We want Cheshire to be a place where, regardless of where they live:

- People can feel fulfilled and reach their full potential.
- People can achieve economic, social and physical wellbeing.
- Inequalities in life expectancy, health and employment opportunity are reduced.
- People share a strong sense of community.
- Voluntary and community-based activity can thrive and flourish.

To achieve this, we will endeavour to:

- Understand the needs and aspirations of people in Cheshire, recognising that “disadvantage” can take many forms.
- Develop grant making programmes that are responsive and flexible, to take account of changing and emerging needs.
- Be responsive to the wishes of donors.
- Ensure that our grant making makes a significant difference to people’s lives.
- Work strategically on a Cheshire-wide basis, making links across sectors and working proactively to bring about change.
- Develop ongoing relationships with the voluntary and community organisations we work with and fund.
- Create an enduring legacy for Cheshire.

We want to fund activities that:

- Will help us to achieve our Vision for Cheshire.
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of existing or impending need and its causes.
- Are informed by local consultation and local knowledge.
- Encourage community involvement, volunteering, and self-help.
- Are well-planned, realistic, and achievable.
- Will make a practical difference to people’s lives, in a way that can be clearly demonstrated and evidenced.
- Can achieve a great deal with a relatively small amount of money.

We want to fund organisations that:

- Understand clearly the needs of their beneficiaries.
- Have a clear vision of what they are trying to achieve.
- Involve the local community and value their volunteers.
- Are competent, well managed and resourceful.
- Are able to deliver value for money / seek to maximise a return for any funding provided.
- Are accountable and transparent.
- Are able to manage their finances appropriately.
- Can demonstrate that they are best placed to meet the needs they have identified.
- Prioritise the beneficiaries of their services above the needs of their organisation.
- Are willing to share their learning and resources.

Our Commitment to Sustainability

- As part of our Vision to ‘Make Cheshire Better’, the Foundation is committed to promoting environmental, social and economic sustainability in all its grant making. We are particularly keen to encourage the organisations we fund to consider the environment, make ethical purchases and operate in a way that promotes social co-operation and partnership. Our Sustainability Policy can be viewed here (currently pending approval of policy).

What we can and cannot fund

We can only fund organisations:

- Whose work primarily benefits people living within one of the three local authorities of Cheshire East, Warrington and Cheshire West and Chester. Regional or national organisations working in Cheshire **may** be considered if they can demonstrate that they are the best organisation to tackle a particular social issue or address a specific need and there is no local organisation able to do this.
- That are “not for profit”; such as charities, community groups and social enterprises, that can demonstrate a clear community benefit in their constitution or governing document. The governing document should state clearly how any profits are to be reinvested for community benefit. **There is no requirement for applicant organisations to be registered charities.**
- Where partnership applications are received, we will consider project proposals where some of the partner organisations are based outside Cheshire, but we would expect local organisations to take a lead in that partnership.
- Cheshire Community Foundation is unable to fund the core running costs of infrastructure organisations. We give priority to frontline organisations that are working directly with local people “on the ground”. Infrastructure organisations, which are able to directly deliver projects serving disadvantaged people are eligible to apply, please contact us if you wish to discuss a project of this nature further, prior to making an application.
- Where organisations are “in crisis”, we will endeavour to offer our support, but this may not necessarily be financial support
- In special circumstances, grants to individuals in need will be considered.

We will NOT fund organisations:

- That are statutory bodies (such as schools, Parish Councils and hospitals) or private businesses, including sole traders.
- Whose work does not support people living within one of the three local authorities of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester or Warrington
- Who do not have a minimum of two unrelated cheque signatories.
- For Community Interest Companies – we require a CIC to have at least 3 Directors to be in place and they must not be related. We would expect that there would be a quorate of at least three Directors at Board meetings to enable robust financial procedures to be followed for the expenditure of any restricted grant funds.

We will NOT fund:

- General appeals i.e., a request for a general contribution to a larger project, where an identifiable aspect has not been defined.
- Projects taking place abroad.
- Political promotion, including political party activity.
- The support or promotion of a religious doctrine; mission; proselytism or promotion of the beliefs of a particular faith (beyond basic religious/cultural awareness raising)
- Medical research, medical equipment or medical treatment
- Activities that are for the sole relief or benefit of animals or plants. The Foundation is interested in the difference its funding makes to Cheshire's people.
- Retrospective or deficit funding
- Activities which a statutory body is responsible for
- Organisations requesting funding towards reserves or which have significant financial reserves, except in exceptional circumstances. We accept that it is good practice for organisations to maintain an appropriate level of reserves and this will be looked at on a "case by case" basis
- We can only consider funding capital projects involving land or buildings if the applicant organisation can demonstrate that they either own the premises in question or have security of tenure for a significant length of time. This will be assessed on a "case by case" basis.
- Any application to the Foundation should be for a single project. The Grant Panel can only consider one application per organisation at any one panel meeting. If an application is declined, the organisation can apply for a different project at any time. If a grant is awarded, the Panel may consider further applications from the same organisation but, under normal circumstances, a cheque would not be issued for a second project until the Foundation receives satisfactory monitoring of the first project.
- Applications involving sport will be considered on a "case by case" basis. The Foundation welcomes applications for projects that intend to use sport as a tool to tackle a social issue or bring a community together, but is reluctant to fund sport for sport's sake, as there are other sources of funding for sport in Cheshire.

Full Cost Recovery:

- The Foundation is currently in the position where it can only consider applications for the direct costs associated with delivering a particular project. Whilst it recognises the importance of achieving Full Cost Recovery wherever possible, unfortunately it does not have the financial resources available at the present time to commit to this as a general principle.

Year on Year Funding:

- The Foundation recognises the need for staff posts in the voluntary sector to have some security, but it is not currently in a position to routinely guarantee funding for more than one year at a time. The Foundation itself is in its infancy and therefore has limited donor funds at its disposal. As our donor base develops and grows we hope to move to a position where we can offer secured, multi-year funding for staff posts but this will always be conditional on stringent and satisfactory annual monitoring of impact on beneficiaries and service users, as defined by the Foundation and agreed by the applicant organisation, as well as on the availability of funds.

Panel Decisions and Appeals:

- Grant Panel recommendations are considered by the Foundation's Finance Risk Operations and Grants Committee at the earliest opportunity. The only circumstances in which the Grants Committee would veto or alter the recommendations of the Panel are:
- Where the Finance Risk Operations and Grants Committee feels that the Panel's recommendations are in breach of some duty for which they, as Trustees of the Foundation, are responsible or
- Where the Finance Risk Operations and Grants Committee is in possession of significant information relating to the application, to which the Grant Panel was not privy.
- Panel recommendations, once endorsed by the Finance Risk Operations and Grants Committee, are final. The only grounds for appeal by an applicant organisation are under the following circumstances:
- Where the organisation feels that the Foundation's representative (including panellists) showed prejudice in considering the request, or
- The organisation believes that Cheshire Community Foundation (including panellists) did not follow the correct procedure in considering the application.

Number of grants an organisation can apply for at any one time:

- An organisation can only hold one grant per CCF grants programme at any one time. Further funding can be applied for - to either continue the existing funded project - or apply for a different project, at the point when the monitoring on the existing grant has been satisfactorily received. The organisation will need to be able to provide convincing evidence of the differences the CCF grant has made to the lives of disadvantaged people they have worked with and the learning that will be applied going forward (where applicable). **Note:** If, due to the timings of grant rounds, the existing grant award has not been fully and satisfactorily closed, through the submission of an End of Grant Monitoring Report (*but would be closed before the outcome of the new application is made known*), we would consider the application - however payment for any new grant award would not be issued, until the Foundation receives satisfactory monitoring of the existing funded project.
- If an organisation currently has a Main Grant they can apply for a Small Grant – if it is for a different project working with a different cohort of people, and vice versa.
- In addition to any grants made under our own CCF programmes, applicants are also able to apply to any partner grants programme distributed by CCF on behalf of other organisations for example "New Beginnings", "Building a Stronger Britain Together", "Comic Relief", "Youth Social Action" etc. however the project applied for must be different to those already awarded under our own programmes.
- Applicants are strongly advised to talk to CCF in the event of wishing to apply to multiple programmes, to ensure advice including and realistic chances of success is sought.

Re-applying after an unsuccessful application:

- If you receive an email/letter informing you that you have not been successful. You will receive a summary note of the panellists' comments, detailing why you have not been supported. You can apply again to the Community Foundation and do not have to wait 12 months to re-apply, if you can fully address all feedback provided.
- However, if the sole reason for the application being unsuccessful (as outlined in the feedback provided) was due to insufficient donor funds being available for the project activity, it may be worth considering whether the work involved in reapplying to CCF, would be better directed towards other sources of funding, which have a stronger fit with your project – as it could be the case, that CCF continue to lack donor funds for your specific project activity, geography or beneficiary group.
- Please note: Some programmes are only available for a short period of time and may no longer be open, to reapply to.