

Community Capacity & Resilience Fund

Round Two Evaluation Report
November 2017



Summary

About

The Community Capacity and Resilience Fund (CCRF) allows small third sector organisations to access Scottish Government funding that would otherwise be out of reach.

Awards

The average grant awarded by the Fund in this Round was £4,500, and evidence shows that the Fund is reaching its intended audience - grassroots organisations with an income of £200k or less - as the average income of the organisations who were awarded CCRF during this Round was £74k. Furthermore, 22% of these organisations deliver their essential front-line services with an entirely voluntary workforce.

Impact

CCRF is being used in innovative ways by organisations to tackle the impact of welfare reform and poverty that is being experienced in their own communities. In Round Two the projects and services delivered reflected the growing need to address food poverty, with 33% of CCRF projects providing support to overcome this. Support around advice, advocacy and financial management was delivered by 26% of organisations.

Frontline funding

Funding the frontline directly, and therefore trusting community-based organisations to develop targeted and effective solutions, is a successful means of alleviating the effects of welfare reform, poverty and social exclusion. 91% of organisations reported that the Fund was extremely helpful in meeting the needs of their communities and the key partnerships formed and developed in the delivery of projects could not have happened without it.

Approach

The Fund's flexible, light-touch and supportive approach is valued by organisations, as well as the space provided for peer support and sharing of learning.

The future...

Offering funding for more than eight months would allow organisations to maximise the impact of their projects and provide the time and space to promote projects and engage more fully with individuals and the wider community.



Context

Launched in April 2015, the CCRF is a pilot funding scheme which assists community-based third sector organisations with an annual income of £200,000 or less to pilot innovative and creative projects, and increase their capacity to deliver their core services to mitigate the impact of welfare reform and social inequality. Grants of between £1,000 and £5,000 were available to deliver activity over a six month period.

The ambition for the scheme was to deliver funding directly to the frontline, providing resource and capacity to organisations with unique insight into the needs of their communities. The Fund's focus on supporting grassroots organisations in their funding applications means that those who have their fingers on the local pulse and know their communities' needs have a better chance of receiving funding, rather than being out-bid by organisations with the resource to submit more competitive applications.

With further investment from Scottish Government in 2016 we were keen to continue to target grant support to grassroots organisations in the same flexible and supportive manner. Round 2 of CCRF was launched in September 2016, with an online application process supported by detailed guidance notes, FAQs and practical examples. We also extended the delivery period to eight months.

We received a total of 129 applications, and following an assessment process we provided grants totalling £311,693 to 68 organisations throughout Scotland to deliver projects/activities from January 2017.

This report documents the information gathered via our final evaluation survey distributed to all organisations who received CCRF Round Two grant funding and the information collected from application forms. The report is divided into the following sections:

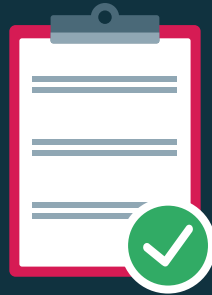
- 1. CCRF Facts**
- 2. Engaging with organisations**
- 3. Organisation Profiles**
- 4. Types of Projects**
- 5. Fund Impact**
- 6. Lessons Learned**
- 7. Success Stories**
- 8. Recommendations**

1 CCRF Facts



84%

of respondents said that they could not have developed key partnerships without the fund



85%

of respondents said that the application process was 'easy' or 'very easy'



91%

of respondents said their CCRF projects were extremely helpful in meeting the needs of their community



88%

of respondents said they either 'fully' or 'mostly' achieved what they set out to



67%

of respondents reported unexpected positive achievements



Organisations gained at least

£170k

in benefits for claimants



Directly assisted more than

2,000 people

by providing services and support



2 Engaging with organisations

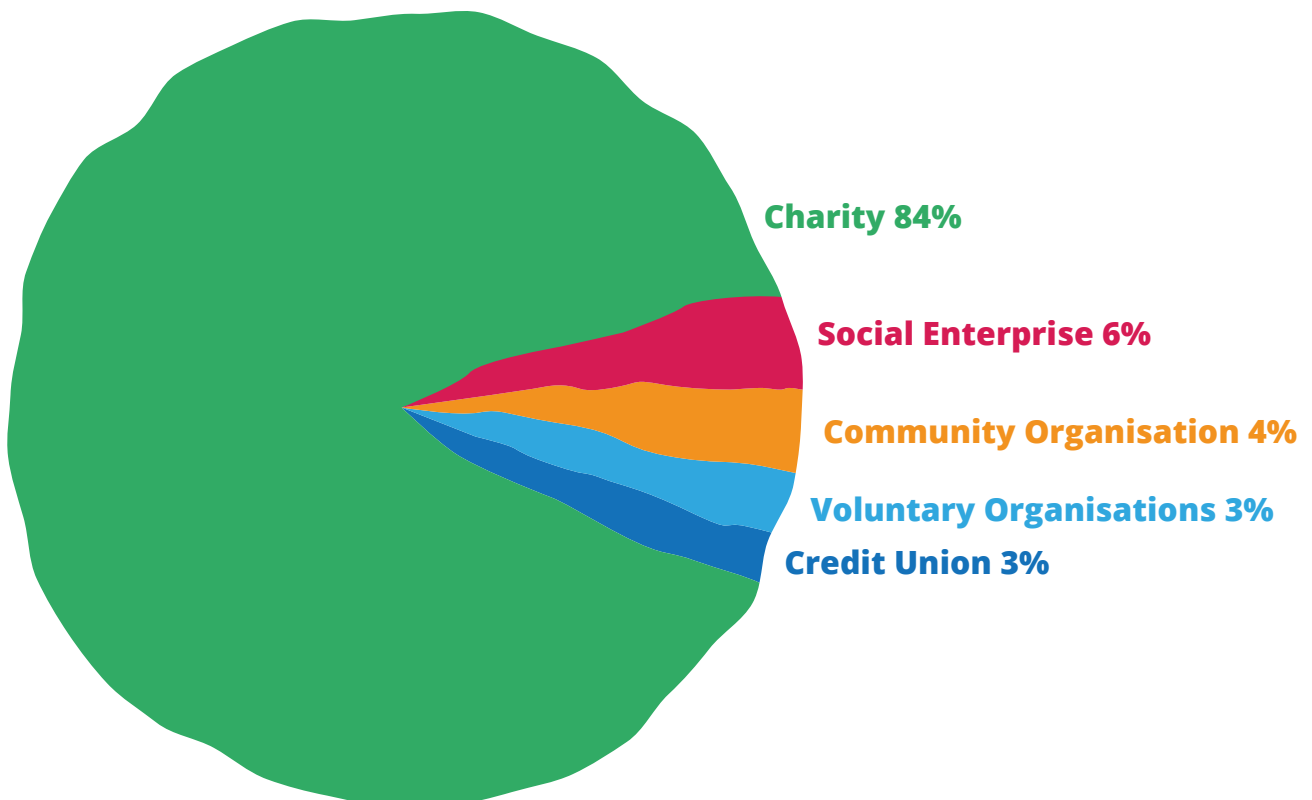
When Round Two opened to applications our engagement strategy recognised the need to ensure we reached those small community organisations that could benefit. We promoted the fund via SCVO's social media channels, website, bulletins, networks and Third Force News.

We received a total of 129 applications with three subsequently withdrawn; four not eligible and one duplicate. The value of the 121 applications going forward for assessment was £537,680 from organisations across 27 local authority areas.

SCVO staff were available to provide support to organisations in relation to the application process and this support included talking through project ideas, identifying potential opportunities and/or constraints, connecting them to other funding/support.

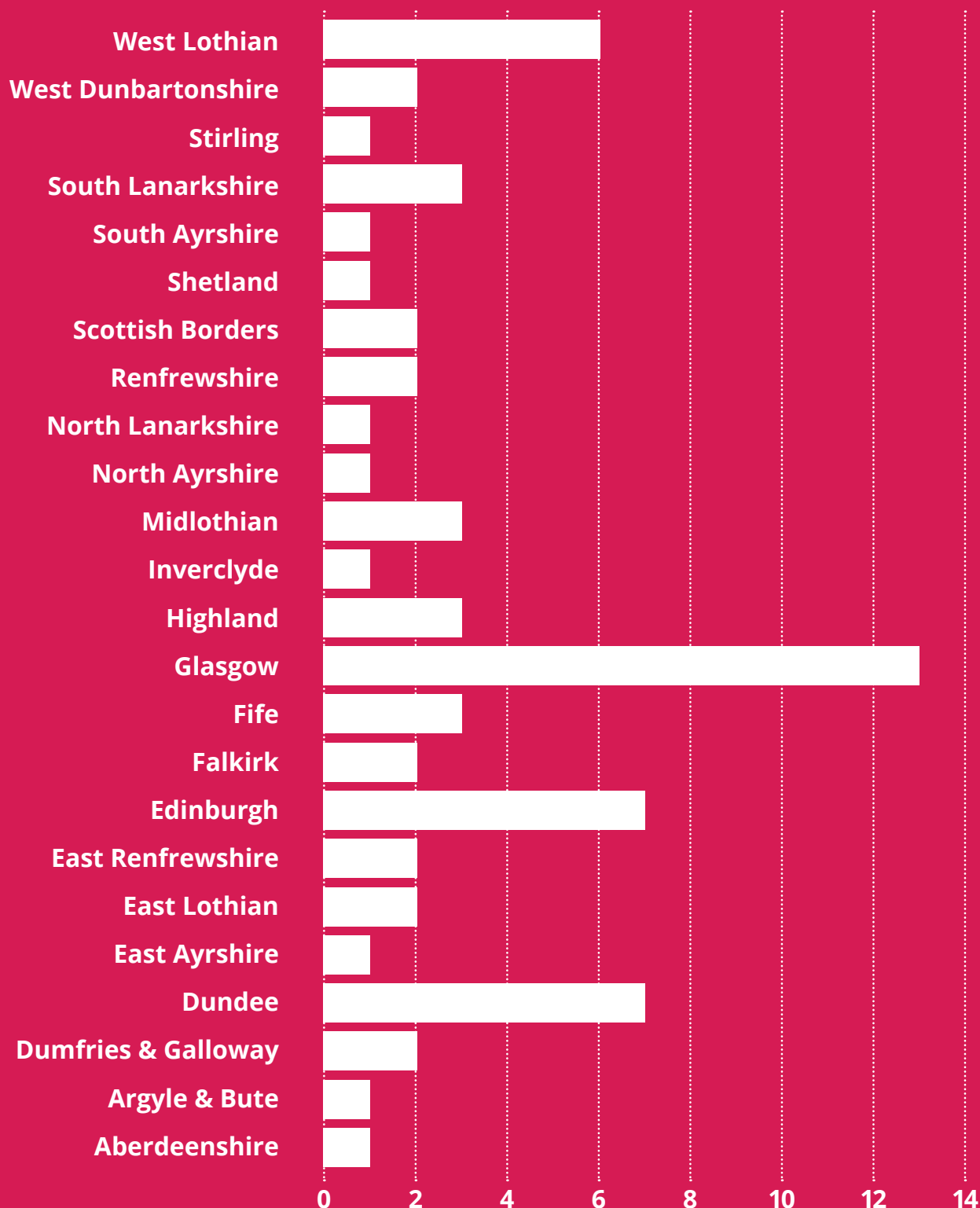
Organisational profiles

This information relates to the 68 organisations who received CCRF Round Two funding and was gathered from applications:



3 Local Authority areas

Funding was granted to organisations in 24 local authority areas shown in the table below:



4 Types of projects

This report showcases the benefits of delivering funding directly to frontline organisations. The types of projects and activities that were funded in Round Two demonstrated once again the diversity and innovation that exists within the sector and indeed the passion and commitment those at grassroots level have in supporting individuals, families and communities.

The average award during Round Two was £4,500, and projects were delivered over an average nine month period, Perhaps not surprisingly, a third of the projects funded were focussed on food provision, including the extension of food bank services, cooking sessions, planting and growing fruit & vegetables, providing meals using fresh food surplus from local shops/restaurants, food budgeting, nutrition, up-skilling volunteers and meal provision to children. These food projects were delivered across 12 local authority areas:

Dumfries & Galloway (1 project)

East Lothian (1 project)

Falkirk (1 project)

Highlands (1 project)

Midlothian (3 projects)

West Dunbartonshire (1 project)

Dundee (3 projects)

Edinburgh (3 projects)

Glasgow (4 projects)

Inverclyde (1 project)

South Ayrshire (1 project)

West Lothian (2 projects)

We also supported projects/activities involving welfare advice, support to those with disabilities, money management, community engagement and information events, volunteer development, employability, upcycling, peer support and befriending.

Some of the funded projects were directed at specific groups, including Syrian refugees, black and ethnic minority groups, lone parents, those aged over 60 years, those with mental health issues, those with additional support needs, school pupils, ex-offenders, those who are homeless and care experienced young people.

The impact of the Fund will continue to be felt through materials produced, skills developed, equipment purchased and partnerships harnessed as a result of the projects and activities that took place.



5 Fund impact on individuals and families

The Scottish Government's Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland: 2015/16 report reveals that 1.05 million people – including 260,000 children – in Scotland are living in relative poverty.

The Fund has had an impact on addressing issues that are preventing people from fully participating in communities and achieving their potential, by directly funding third sector organisations to deliver services that help many vulnerable people across Scotland get access to a wide range of support, information and advice. This evaluation has focused on quality of services rather than quantitative research. However, based upon projects which provided figures in their responses, we know that funded projects have gained at least £170,000 in benefits for claimants and directly assisted more than 2,000 people.

Through the CCRF, people have been supported and empowered to:

- **develop new skills via training courses, workshops and volunteering opportunities**
- **obtain knowledge, awareness and information via community engagement events, audience specific booklets and drop-in services**
- **increase their resilience and prevent crises**
- **engage with their community.**

The inclusiveness of the funded projects has also seen intergenerational activities take place.

Church House Bridgeton ran a block of parent and child cooking sessions, which encouraged families to cook together and learn new skills that could then be used at home. Isolation is an area that Outside The Box – via their Life Boost Café – made a great impact on by improving social networks for the over 50's.

West Lothian Foodbank were able to expand their service and add two new foodbank centres in Armadale and Craigshill, saving clients from walking several miles to get food. Minority Communities Addiction Support Services (MCASS) delivered support to individuals and their families to enable them to access appropriate health services, maintain tenancies and contribute to community activities.

Frontline organisation such as these have the knowledge and understanding of the needs within their communities and through this can respond positively to provide support when and where it is needed most.

Fund impact on communities

The CCRF has shown that one of the most effective ways to tackle the pressures of poverty, welfare reform and social inclusion is through facilitating community involvement in the provision of services to more vulnerable members. Of the funded organisations which responded, 91% said the Fund was extremely useful in helping them to meet the needs of their communities.

“The funding has been crucial for the delivery of this project. Because of this we have been able to achieve three main outcomes 1. In making a real difference to the lives of the local residents through the meeting of the identified needs on the estate. 2. Creating a real sense of Pride for those living on the estate. 3. Strengthened the relationships between the partners now working through the Hub on the estate”
CCAST Highland

“Our very mixed international group of volunteers have felt valued by our society, some for the first time, and our Project has benefited from better trained volunteers and a better service for our service users. We also had a lot of fun as well as serious moments during the training”
Castlemilk Community Church

“This project has raised awareness among the host community about the realities of being an Arab/new Syrian arrival in Scotland, and brought people, women and communities together to share common interests. It helped overcome barriers to participation in various activities, particularly for girls/women. It increased the confidence and self-esteem of people by allowing them to learn, play, and work in a safe and supportive environment, without fear of intimidation or harassment. It also allowed them to make friends from different backgrounds, and learn more about each other’s lives, leading to greater mutual understanding and respect”
Fife Arabic Society

“The Fund has enabled us to get the good money management message out to thousands of people and households who we could not otherwise have contacted”
Sovereign Credit Union

Fund impact on organisations

One of the clear findings from SCVO's 2014 mapping report, Third Sector and welfare reform on the frontline, was the positive impact that comes from strong relationships and trust between statutory agencies and third sector organisations. Partnerships are a crucial element in making organisations more robust in the face of the significant challenges that welfare reform and budget cuts presents, and the CCRF recognises this with its collaborative working focus.

The wide variety of partnerships formed by CCRF projects included community organisations, schools, churches, local businesses, housing associations, councils, NHS boards, DWP, jobcentres, colleges, universities and a range of third sector services. In some cases these were new partnerships which have opened the door to greater collaborative working in the future. Of the funded organisations who responded, 84% said that they could not have developed key partnerships without the fund.

"We have made valuable connections which we will be looking to expand on in the future. We have also learned a lot about partnership working in its practical sense - needing to plan effectively so that everyone can be in the same place at the same time, how to ensure members don't have to tell the same story multiple times and how to look at meetings in a way that ensures that everyone gets what they need from the experience. We will be looking to expand this work in the future and also will be more open to new projects if they come along"

West Dunbartonshire MEA

"The event has contributed significantly to strengthening of ties and partnership working and collaboration between all involved. As a result of the event the Scottish Borders Men's Shed network has been strengthened with regular meetings now taking place to discuss joint initiatives. This network now involves the 'shedders' working alongside representatives from a number of public and voluntary sector organisations. The event also allowed a strengthening of partnership and sharing of information between locally based and national orgs"

Volunteer Centre Borders

6 Lessons learned

1 Feedback from fund recipients in relation to the extended delivery period of eight months was varied, with some saying it was not a long enough time to establish a new service, and others reporting that the time period met their needs and helped them to focus. Mid-way through Round 2 SCVO sought comments from organisations relating to any future funding – some organisations supported longer term funding, with many saying 12-18 months would enable more effective delivery of new services. Organisations were also in favour of shorter term funding to enable more targeted projects to take place. SCVO and the Scottish Government have taken on board these comments and Round 3 of CCRF has been changed to reflect this.

2 Organisations have provided feedback that indicates the support from SCVO in the application process and the access provided to evaluation workshops and a Learning & Sharing has been appreciated:

“SCVO organised training sessions that enabled us understand the evaluation process. The trainings also enabled us network with other organisations”

Spiritual Warfare Wisdom Ministries

“A funding strand that seems to understand and respond to social need. Supplementary training an absolute boon in these complex times. We were so pleased to be able to offer those we engaged with both training and to deliver a project that benefited the communities we engage with”

Bridgend Inspiring Growth

“We found the support very helpful and having someone at the end of an email very reassuring. SCVO knows the challenges that welfare reform brings and this was evident in their understanding of what the projects were trying to do. The scope to try different things – not always successfully – was liberating and encouraged different approaches and styles of addressing issues”

South Ayrshire Healthy Living

“We have found this funding so useful for our organisation to start a project that we can continue to deliver”

Clydesdale CAB

3 Fund recipients reported that the increased capacity provided by the CCRF allows for more resource intensive services such as one-to-one support, peer training of vulnerable people and increased opening hours leading to successful outcomes. The funding also enabled focused support and creative approaches to take place as well as carrying out research which provides a source of information to local people.

“This project allowed us to develop a new home visiting service, further developing the capacity of the organisation to support those affected by welfare reform and who are at risk of financial exclusion due to unemployment, ill health, caring responsibilities and the additional challenges that are faced by those living in rural communities. In the project period we trained 6 new generalist advisers, developed procedures and eligibility criteria for home visits, carried out over 30 home visits and raised £8,597.60 in Client Financial Gains”

Kincardine & Mearns CAB

4 By using qualitative rather than quantitative reporting, small community-based organisations were able to provide information on the difference their projects have made to individuals and communities with organisations providing quotes/testimonies from people who have benefitted. Our Learning & Sharing event held midway through round 2 delivery period provided grant recipients with the opportunity to come to together to share their success to date and challenges faced

“The Learning and Sharing Event was great. It was brilliant to meet other Fund beneficiaries, hear about their projects and create links. Hearing about others’ challenges and triumphs was very inspiring and useful. The chance to raise our heads from delivery of our own project, and to consider the wider picture was much appreciated, as was the opportunity to give feedback to SCVO, to those individuals within the government responsible for strategic decision making in this area and to the Minister herself. It gave a strong sense of the important role of grassroots community groups within the government’s vision”

The Ridge

At the Learning & Sharing event organisations commented that a communication channel being set up at the outset with all funded organisations would have further supported them as they delivered their projects and would have also led to more cross organization development. We will take this on board for round 3.

SCVO has learned through feedback from some grant beneficiaries that the Survey method (on-line survey monkey) used to gather information for this final report was not particularly user-friendly with comments including too many questions: unable to view questions before completing; unable to save the form: repetitive. We will take this on board for round 3.

7 Success Stories



ADVOCACY FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN SOUTH LANARKSHIRE

Speak Out Advocacy is an independent project in Hamilton that supports people who are unable to communicate their views due to disability or illness.

The organisation had experienced an increase in requests to support people to appeal benefit sanctions, support visits to disability employment advisors and meet with other members of staff who work within job centres etc.

Their application to the CCRF to increase their capacity to deal with this demand was successful and they were awarded a grant of £5,000. From January to June 2017 they delivered 'Speak Out Extra' and during this time applied for benefits such as ESA, PIP and Attendance Allowance for people who had learning disabilities or communication support needs.

Of the 25 applications that were made, all were successful. All those supported were either awarded, or retained the benefit that they were applying for, and the team experiences some unexpected positive outcomes too:

“While working with a middle aged woman who had been denied the Severely Mentally Impaired council tax exemption we discovered that neither of her elderly parents, both of whom had long term health conditions, had heard of, or were claiming Attendance Allowance. A claim was made for both, and the applications were successful. This family were really struggling - the middle aged woman that we originally worked with lived in a serviced flat, and her council tax was very expensive, and her parents were also struggling, despite both having very small occupational pensions.”



Success Stories cont.



West Lothian Foodbank was founded in 2012 by Whitburn Pentecostal Church, and opened its first distribution centre in Whitburn in November 2012. Since then they have partnered with seven local churches to open distribution centres across West Lothian, with the aim of ensuring help is in easy reach for everyone in the area.

Due to the increased demand for their services and the widespread rural areas within West Lothian, the organisation applied to the CCRF to support the opening of at least two new distribution centres in 2017 and support their operations at other sites. They received a grant of £5,000 and were able to open centres in Armadale & Craigshill.

The grant ensured the team had the necessary equipment and support in place to expand and improve their services, helped towards client transport costs and allowed them to purchase equipment that eased their distribution of food to their centres. This now means clients in Armadale and Craigshill can access foodbanks nearer to them and any clients who previously had to walk to services can receive bus tickets to get home with their groceries:

“We had a man walk for 2 ½ hours from his home to Whitburn to get food because he didn’t think he would last another day. He had no credit in his phone and hadn’t eaten all weekend. He came with a ruck sack because he was expecting to walk back. Having the ability to give a client some food for now and later, some advice and a bus ticket was very humbling experience.”

8 SCVO Recommendations

- 1** Future CCRF rounds offer grants of up to £10k to pilot/test new approaches and services for a 12 month period. This is in addition to offering grants of £1k - £5k for shorter term projects and activities.
- 2** The facility to scale-up pilot/test projects and extend the delivery period to support increased impact
- 3** SCVO to provide a Fund Induction session prior to projects commencing to provide information on reporting requirements, introduce information on evaluation methods, provide guidance on project management, enable grant holders to establish their preferred group communication methods to enable peer support and knowledge exchange.
- 4** Continued accessible support and guidance from SCVO to allow small organisations to compete for funds and deliver projects and services that make a difference to lives of people in their communities.
- 5** SCVOs grant management of CCRF should be considered as a template for other funding streams targeted at smaller organisations.

Conclusion

The Community Capacity & Resilience Fund has shown that a flexible, supportive and light-touch approach to grant management is an effective way of enabling grassroots and community based organisations to create projects and activities that meet the needs of their communities and make significant differences to individual lives.

By providing evaluation training, on-going guidance and information these organisations are supported to develop and grow in confidence. Participation in this fund has increased the capacity of organisations to deliver much needed services, to develop the skills of staff and volunteers, to establish and nurture partnerships with other organisations and public bodies and gain confidence to explore other avenues of funding to continue with their efforts to mitigate the impact of welfare reform, poverty and social exclusion.

SCVO will continue to manage the CCRF in a flexible and supportive manner to enable organisations with unique insight into the needs of their communities to increase their capacity and pilot innovative and creative approaches to mitigate the impact of welfare reform, poverty and social inequalities.

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About us

The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) is the national body representing the third sector. There are over 45,000 voluntary organisations in Scotland involving around 110,000 paid staff and approximately 1.3 million volunteers. The sector manages an income of £5.4 billion.

SCVO works in partnership with the third sector in Scotland to advance our shared values and interests. We have over 1,900 members who range from individuals and grassroots groups, to Scotland-wide organisations and intermediary bodies.

Our governance and membership structures are democratic and accountable – with an elected board and policy committee from the sector, we are managed by the sector, for the sector

We work to support people to take voluntary action to help themselves and others, and to bring about social change.

Further details about SCVO can be found at
www.scvo.org.uk