

Bristol Impact Fund

Evaluation 2017-19

Evaluation of Bristol City Council's Impact Fund: The first two years

Executive Summary

1. Bristol Impact Fund (BIF) is a four year funding programme (2017-2021) for the city's Voluntary and Community and Sector (VCS). BIF represents a new approach to funding the VCS sector, developed by Bristol City Council in partnership with VCSE representatives and other funders. It was bold and innovative and set a new standard of co-design and collaboration to support the sector and get the best outcomes for the city.
2. BIF combined grant streams and aligned resources to enable maximum impact on targeting the persistent causes of disadvantage and inequality, reaching the individuals, communities and groups most seriously affected.
3. The design of the Fund aimed to reshape the sector, using a Theory of Change approach to enable VCS organisations to design their own approaches to identified needs in order to meet an agreed set of challenges and outcomes produced by the co-design group.
4. This independent, largely desk based evaluation was commissioned by Bristol City Council to explore and analyse the impact and achievements of the first two years of the Impact Fund, and the extent to which the new approach contributed to this. The aim is that this learning should inform future approaches to funding of the VCS sector.
5. There is evidence of significant success in the way in which the fund has been able to reach and impact on disadvantaged geographical communities, based on the monitoring of beneficiaries.
6. The evaluation also shows that the BIF process reached some groups, in particular equalities led groups, which have historically struggled to access grant funding. However, further work is needed if equalities-led groups of all sizes are to be strengthened sufficiently to gain long term capacity for delivery and influence.
7. A reduction in Bristol City Council resources after the initial development and implementation phase of BIF meant it has not been possible to maintain the same level of joint working, learning, and development of the programme.
8. The Theory of Change enabled VCS organisations to use their skills and knowledge to develop their own individual outcomes and indicators. The

evidence of the first two years shows that this enabled the organisations to offer non judgemental, holistic solutions to complex problems.

9. However the absence of shared indicators and measures has made it difficult to quantify the overall impact on the five challenges. Therefore we do not currently have any common indicators or measurements between all BIF funded projects which we can easily aggregate, to assess impacts on the challenges or make comparisons between projects.
10. It is possible to identify the level of impact on the five challenges based on the numbers of people participating. Furthermore, qualitative evidence on the impact on the five challenges is strong, with some powerful case studies and stories which demonstrate the degree to which the funded organisations and partnerships are able to reach directly into the communities they serve and build people's ability to survive and make positive changes in their lives.
11. Whilst the Impact Fund has a focus on preventative measures, for some groups in particular, meeting urgent needs – those around food, fuel, money, safety, is an essential starting point for other activities to follow.
12. Analysis of numbers of participants in relation to the five challenges demonstrates that the most impact is being achieved in the areas of addressing health and wellbeing and improving access to services and opportunities.
13. Reducing social isolation and improving mental health and wellbeing has been shown to be fundamental to unlocking people's ability to benefit from the activities and services which address the other four challenges. It is also an outcome of addressing the other four challenges.
14. The programme demonstrates how, with the right support at the right time, people can move from a situation of extreme need and insecurity into taking an active role in influencing and shaping their own lives and others in their community. Engagement with the VCS is totally life changing for many people.
15. The funded organisations have fully implemented the four ways of working set out in the prospectus and provided robust evidence of how they have contributed to addressing the challenges.
16. The Impact Fund has enabled the VCS sector to unlock an additional 67% of money in match funding, and involved over 7,000 volunteers to provide added value to the initial investment.

Recommendations

- Bristol City Council should refresh and rebuild the success of the initial collaborative, co-design approach used to develop BIF, by bringing VCSE organisations together with other funders and infrastructure organisations to further test the original hypothesis, share learning and explore the development of shared impact measurements.
- The outcomes achieved through BIF demonstrate that the VCSE sector is unique in its ability to reach into and build on the strengths of people and communities to address inequality. The body of evidence for this needs to be strengthened through a citywide approach to agreeing shared and consistent social impact measurements, which link clearly with the Bristol One City Plan.
- The initial strength based approach of BIF has since been further advanced with the implementation of an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach across the city. Consideration should be given to how the city can best utilise the combined strength and assets of the VCSE, community groups, residents and community workers to build capacity and resilience in geographical and equalities communities.
- Future funding programmes should build in a resource for evaluation from the very beginning. This would be a sound investment in a formative approach which would enable action learning to shape the programme as it evolves and ensure funds are targeted for the best impact.

Part one: Background Information

1. What is the Bristol Impact Fund (BIF) and how is it different from previous VCS funding in the city?

In 2017 Bristol City Council changed the way it was funding the Voluntary Sector and Community Sector (VCS). The Bristol Impact Fund Prospectus set out this new approach and explained how the council was proposing to fund voluntary and community sector organisations over the four years from 2017 to 2021. £3.4 million was made available per year over the four years – a total of £13.6 million.

For the first time, with some necessary exceptions, all grants made to the VCS across different council departments were pooled into one fund. Funding specifically allocated for community transport was ringfenced within the overall Impact Fund.

The fund invested was significant, but the economic climate and the Council's consequent need to make savings, meant that a tapered reduction was built into the funding to encourage VCS organisations to work towards sustainable business plans.

The main elements of the new approach were:

1. A **co-design process** was undertaken, where the Council worked together with VCS organisations to create a shared view of how to address needs in the city.
2. There was an acknowledgement that the VCS is uniquely placed, and equipped to shape and deliver change at a local level.
3. Partnerships and collaborations were encouraged though not prescribed.
4. The co-design process led to an agreed set of **five challenges** and **four ways of working**, leading to **three main impacts**.
5. Voluntary organisations were then invited to develop their own **individual theory of change** to address the challenges, deliver the impacts, and measure change, based on their knowledge and experience.
6. The intention was to invest all the grant funding available in a way which generated the **best possible impacts for individuals, geographic communities and communities of interest, living with or at risk of disadvantage and inequality**.
7. The fund was divided into **large and medium grants** which were allocated over four years. These were tapered in Years 3 and 4 by 10% and 5% respectively.

8. There was also a **small grants pot** which was allocated every two years using a proportionate process designed to make it as accessible as possible for small and equalities led groups, particularly black-led groups.
9. A grants advisory panel was established and included representation from other funders to promote a more joined up approach.

1.1 The Co-design Process

The Impact Fund process was developed over more than a year of workshops, conversations and independently facilitated sessions to explore different thinking and approaches to building the sector's funding relationship with the council and setting it within the context of a whole city approach.

It was collaborative in style, co-designed by Bristol City Council officers working alongside representatives from the VCS. Other funding bodies were also involved in the discussions and in decision making, although the final decisions still lay with democratically elected members.

The process sought to model the overall change that the Council wanted to bring about. It promoted connection and collaboration and worked to enable the VCS sector to have the freedom to shape their funded activities in a way which played to their unique strengths and worked best for their communities of beneficiaries. However, it also developed and agreed the five key challenges, and three impacts which the sector needed to align in addressing, in order to achieve the maximum impact for the city.

1.2 The Theory of Change

The co design group therefore, used a **Theory of Change** model.

A 'theory of change' explains how activities are understood to produce a series of results that contribute to achieving the final intended impacts

The Theory of Change was used on two levels:

- a) It was used to develop the **Impact Fund Grant Prospectus** which sets out the overall approach to the funding programme. It was agreed that, in order to make the scale of the changes needed, BIF funded organisations should work towards addressing three main impacts:

The three Impacts

- ✓ **Reduced disadvantage and inequality**
- ✓ **Improved health and well being**
- ✓ **Increased resilience (People's ability to manage)**

The 'series of results' which were identified through the design process as needed to contribute to these impacts were set out in the **five challenges**:

The five challenges

- ✓ **Reducing financial food and fuel poverty**
- ✓ **Tackling employment and under employment**
- ✓ **Improving access to information, services and opportunities in the city and increasing digital inclusion**
- ✓ **Reducing social isolation and improving mental wellbeing.**
- ✓ **Enabling influence and participation in the community**

- b) **Each VCS organisation** applying for medium or large grant funding was required to use a Theory of Change Model which sought to ensure that the organisation used its expert knowledge and experience to show how and why their proposals would achieve the intended impacts. This is summarised in the following panel:

Questions for VCS Organisations to Answer

- ✓ What needs to change and why?
- ✓ How will you work to make this change?
- ✓ How do you know this will create change?
- ✓ What will you look at and measure to see if change is happening?
- ✓ How will this contribute to our three Fund impacts?

1.3 The Ways of Working

A key element of the theory of change model was based on a fundamental belief that VCS organisations in the city have a unique set of skills, experience, working methods and ability to reach into communities, which can make a significant difference in addressing the disadvantage which affects individuals, geographic communities and communities of interest.

It also recognised that those individuals and communities have the skills, knowledge and assets to make their own changes, given the right support, conditions and confidence to do so, and that VCS organisations are well placed to provide this support. BIF asked the sector to capitalise on this by focusing on **four ways of working**:

The four ways of working

- ✓ **Giving the right help at the right time**
- ✓ **Helping people to help themselves and each other**
- ✓ **Building on the strengths of people and communities**
- ✓ **Connecting people and organisations with and across communities.**

The Impact Fund approach therefore, was also informed by an 'asset or strengths based approach'. At the time of the development of the Impact Fund, Bristol City Council's Community Directorate was exploring asset based approaches to building capacity and resilience in communities.

1.4 Individuals, Groups and Communities targeted for benefit

As outlined earlier, BIF’s intention was to achieve the best possible impacts for individuals, geographic communities and communities of interest, living with or at risk of disadvantage and inequality. Applicants for the fund were asked to refer to the Bristol Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2015 for evidence of need, or, in recognition that this document did not necessarily capture all need, to provide their own evidence of need.

Bristol Impact Fund (BIF) recognised that deprivation and disadvantage are not purely geographical. It aimed to reduce inequality for the people in the city who are more likely to face disadvantage.

The prospectus identified these groups as: BAME people, disabled people, women, lesbian gay and bisexual people, transgender people, young people and older people.

It also set out how, within these groups, there are people who face multiple disadvantage as result of systems: financial, educational, social and class systems, historic, economical and geographical factors, and as a result of discrimination.

1.5 How the fund was distributed

The fund was distributed between medium and large grants over 4 years, with a taper, and small grants over two years, as set out below. A second round of small grants was allocated to start in January 2020.

How the BIF Fund was distributed

Small Grants (2017 – 2019):	Medium/Large Grants (2017 – 2021):
Total: £313,020	Total: £11,177,335 (10% & 5% taper in years 3 & 4)
20 Projects were funded	17 Solo Projects 10 Partnership Projects 2 Community Transport Partnerships Projects

1.6 The Wider Context for the Fund

It’s important to highlight some of the key elements of the social and economic context within which BIF is operating and the scale of the challenges being faced.

The impact of the **austerity measures** which followed the economic crash in 2008 has fallen predominantly on the most deprived communities and therefore increased inequalities. A New Economics Foundation (NEF) Report from 2014 – “Surviving Austerity - Local Voices and Local Action in England’s Poorest Neighbourhoods” reports those most affected by austerity measures as “the unemployed, low earners, the young, the very elderly, disabled people and women.”

Evidence shows that, within this context, BAME communities have been particularly hard hit. A 2017 report by the Runnymede Trust ‘Intersecting Inequalities -The Impact of Austerity on BAME women in the UK’ concludes that “the injustice of inequality has been exacerbated by cuts to benefits and services that have hit the poorest hardest. Women are losing more than men and BAME households are losing more than white households”

Bristol also saw the **roll out of Universal Credit** from June 2017 with, amongst its many challenges, the need to apply online, and a six week wait between making a new claim and receiving any money, leading to a crisis situation for many families and individuals.

The first two years of BIF are also set against the backdrop of **Brexit**, following the UK vote to leave the European Union in June 2016. The divisions in the country fuelled by Brexit is seen as a major factor in the increase in hate crime recorded by police in England and Wales. Between 2016 and 2018 all recorded hate crimes increased, with a 14% increase in recorded race related hate crime and 40% increase in religion related hate crime.

Since all of this of course, **Covid-19 in 2020** has had a massive effect on VCSE organisations and their communities, seriously impacting the local economy, sustainability, social activity and support, health and wellbeing, at the same time as demonstrating impressive examples of community strength and resilience through volunteering and collective action. It’s already clear that the most disadvantaged communities are again being the hardest hit and the implementation of measures to understand and mitigate the impact of this will continue to be urgent and significant.

Bristol Impact Fund: Summary of the Approach

For some people in Bristol who are facing disadvantage
Individuals- Geographic Communities-Communities of Interest



We are focusing on 5 key challenges

- Reducing financial and food poverty
- Tackling employment and underemployment
- Improving access to information, services and opportunities in the city and increasing digital inclusion
- Enabling influence and participation in the community
- Reducing social isolation and improving mental health and wellbeing



And we ask VCS organisations to use their skills, experience and focus and to work sustainably.

To make a difference and create change by the following

Ways of Working

- Giving the right help at the right time
- Helping people to help themselves and each other
- Building on the strength of people and communities
- Connecting people and organisations with and across communities



That will deliver these three impacts

- ✓ Reduced disadvantage and inequality
- ✓ Improved health and wellbeing
- ✓ Increased resilience (people's ability to manage)

Part two: the evaluation

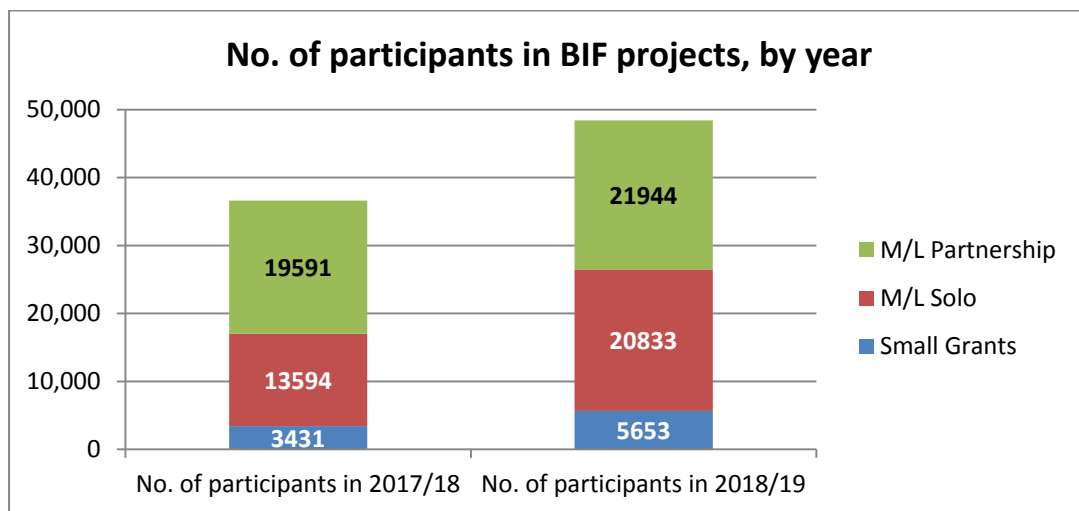
In order to understand the impact on making the changes for the city that BIF aimed to achieve, this evaluation looks at a number of key questions, which are set out below. It's important to note that this evaluation covers just the first two years of a four year fund.

Details of the lines of enquiry taken and the methodology used to undertake this evaluation are set out in [Appendix A](#)

2. What has been the Impact on making the intended changes in the first two years of Bristol Impact Fund?

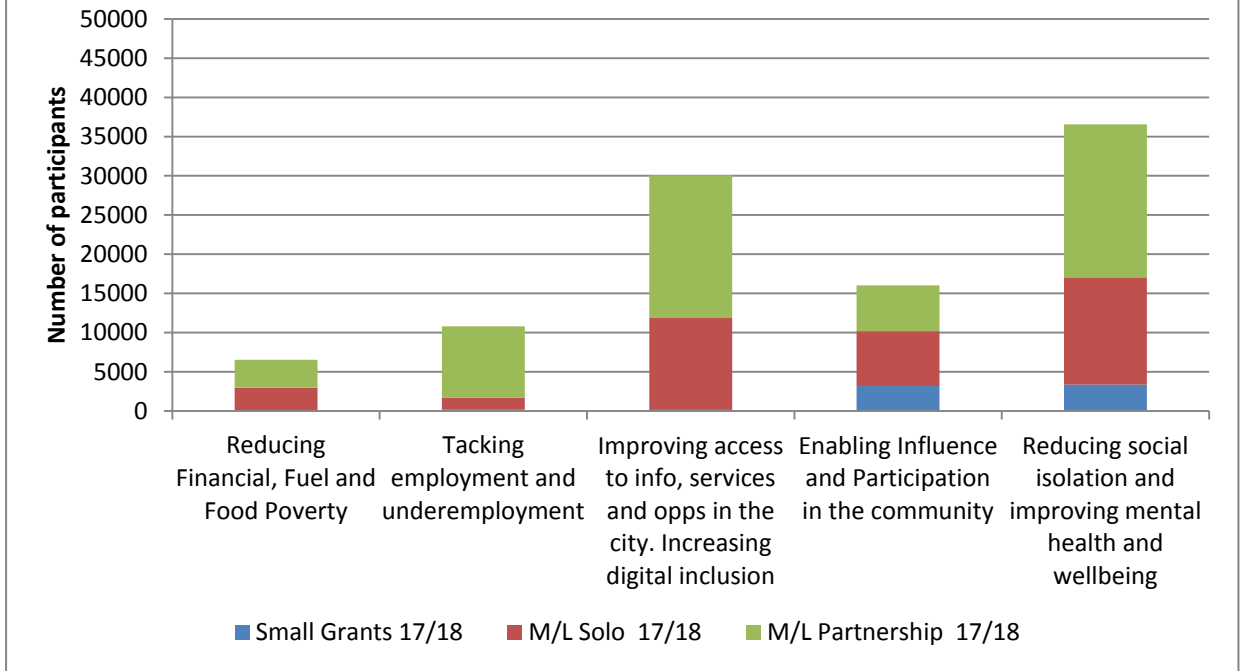
2.1 What is the scale and nature of the impact on the five challenges?

Over the first two years of BIF 84,796 individual records of participation in the 49 funded projects were reported. A number of these participations reported are likely to include individual citizens counted across both years. The chart below sets out recorded participation by year.

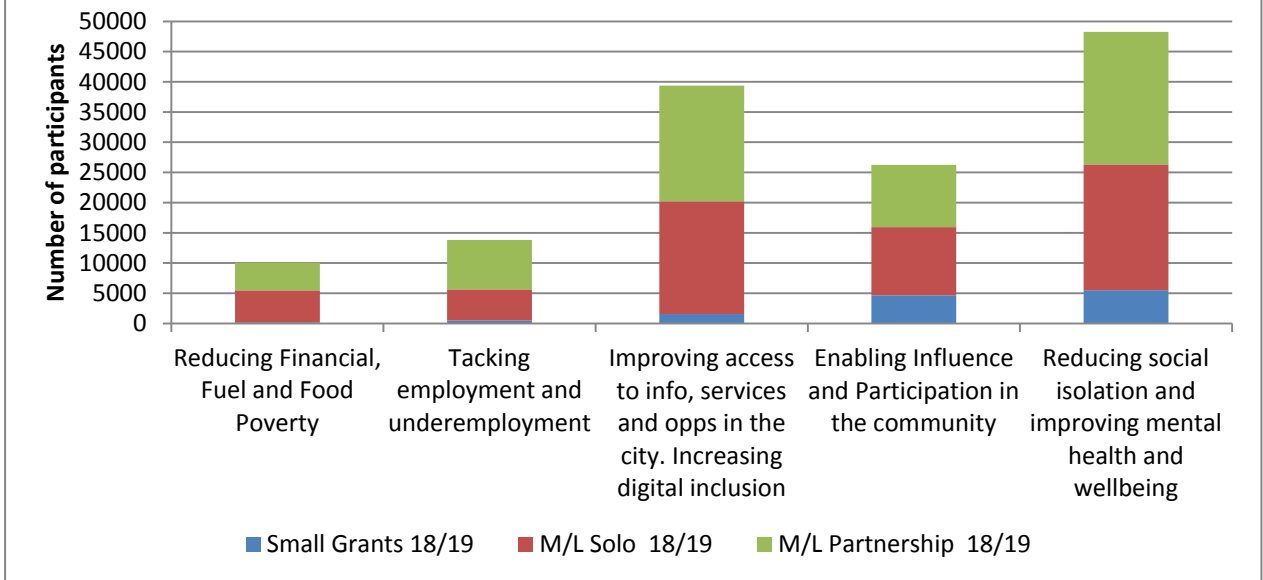


By grouping these individuals into the projects they engaged in and the challenges addressed by those projects it's possible to gain an understanding of which of the five challenges have been most strongly addressed by the BIF in each of the first two years and the scale of involvement, as set out in the following two graphs.

Number of citizens that participated in BIF projects in 2017/18, by challenge area



Number of citizens that participated in BIF projects in 2018/19, by challenge area



Looking at individual numbers of participants gives a strong sense of the scale of involvement in BIF funded projects. However, it is only a part of the story. The quality,

depth and nature of people's experience is also important. Organisations which work with small numbers and on complex issues which take a lot of time and skill to address can have a huge impact on people's lives, and their families and communities, as some of the snapshots and case studies in the following paragraphs demonstrate.

As part of this evaluation an analysis was undertaken to link the outcomes of each funded project or organisation with the five challenges. This was not a scientific exercise but was based as far as possible on a logical assessment of the likely impacts. It provides a guide to understanding which types of activity impact on which challenges and has informed this report. The relevant charts can be found in [APPENDIX B](#)

The organisations receiving **small grants (Round1)** in particular, would inevitably be working with relatively small numbers which is why they don't register on all the challenges shown in the graphs. For more information, see the section on Small Grants in Section 2.2 on Page 23.

The following analysis explores both the quantitative and qualitative impacts on the five challenges.

As the graphs show, the challenge which was most frequently addressed for participants was **reducing social isolation and improving mental health and wellbeing.**

This is as we would expect. All of the activities and services being provided by the organisations, if successful, should inevitably lead to improved mental health and wellbeing. This is in addition to the projects and activities which are solely focused on health and wellbeing outcomes

In other words, improved mental health and wellbeing and reduced isolation are an extremely likely by product of delivering activities which enable people to access services or information, reduce their financial stress or fuel poverty, build their skills and confidence, and, where appropriate, help them into employment.

Furthermore, in most cases, improving people's mental wellbeing and reducing their social isolation is an essential starting point before they are able to access and benefit from other types of activity, enabling them to influence and participate in the community, and shape and create the kind of support needed for themselves and others.

Therefore the range of organisations which are delivering on that challenge is wide. Broadly it covers:

- Organisations delivering services and activities focused on specific health issues (eg Terrence Higgins, Mindline)

- Organisations which provide community and social support of a more universal nature eg community centres, city farms
- Organisations who provide specific services and activities not directly related to health needs such as benefits advice, family support, refugee support, hate crime and discrimination services.

For example, the Bristol Asylum Seeker and Refugee Hubs evidenced multiple benefits for their service users in improvements to health and wellbeing and reducing social isolation through accessing the drop-in, taking part in ESOL classes and taking up volunteering. Numbers accessing these activities exceeded initial targets.

Case Study

Bristol asylum seeker and refugee hubs 2017-19

- ✓ 1,258 Refugees and asylum seekers accessed a drop-in for social contact, advice and support
- ✓ 5,777 English (ESOL) classes were accessed
- ✓ 59 Refugees and Asylum Seekers participated in volunteering and increased confidence

Also at the more acute end of the spectrum Bristol Mindline which provides out of hours telephone mental health support, was able to evidence real change for people who were suicidal.

Case Study

Bristol Mindline 2017-19

- ✓ **395 people using the service who stated an intention, plan and method of suicide, stated by the end of the call that they were no longer intending to take their life**

Quotes from callers:

“I started phoning MindLine years ago rather than overdosing and have not taken an overdose since. MindLine has saved my life,”

“Last year I felt like ending my life, but have turned things around with your help.”

Despite some significant work funded to address acute need, the Impact Fund's stated intention was that *'the greater part of the grant will be targeted at prevention and early help work'*, and the majority of health and wellbeing indicators selected by organisations focus more on reducing isolation, and building confidence, self-reliance and social networks. However, the impact of addressing these factors should not be underestimated.

Examples of these over the two years are as follows.

Case Study

Dundry view health & wellbeing (Hartcliffe Health and Environment Action Group)

- ✓ **1101 people reported increased stability and improved family, social and community relationships**

"Positive Minds has greatly helped me manage my thoughts and feelings and create a structure within my life. I go out more and get involved with other people, both family and groups. It has helped me to see that I am not alone and that by sharing and being with others I can manage day to day life better" **Quote from participant.**

Building confidence is a strong theme which underpins the health and wellbeing challenge. The following is a quote from a woman engaged in the One 25 project which is funded to provide specialist support for women involved or at risk of being involved in street sex work.

Case Study

One25 Project

"Going through peer volunteering gives you huge amount of confidence; it turns what you thought was a 'bad' experience into a good, your life doesn't seem a waste. Turning a bad experience into something positive could be the making of you." Poppy, One 25 Project.

- ✓ **89 women used the drop-in regularly**
- ✓ **76 women took part in creative, skill building and recreational activities.**

The significance of the challenge of reducing social isolation and improving mental health and wellbeing is that it is both an outcome from, and a starting point for addressing the other challenges.



Improving health and wellbeing is integral both as a cause and an outcome in relation to the other challenges.

SPEAR, Social Prescribing for Equality and Resilience is a partnership project in the Impact Fund programme which demonstrates this interconnection very clearly. The programme has a holistic approach to supporting individuals referred by GPs, other organisations or self-referred. The outcomes they developed for the project through their theory of change were:

- Participants will take greater responsibility for their own health and wellbeing
- Participants will have improved personal wellbeing and be less socially isolated
- Participants will be able to address the social issues affecting them and engage with opportunities in the community, including, training, employment and volunteering.

Case Study

SPEAR - Social Prescribing

John, a 62 year old man was referred to social prescribing by his GP as he had become socially isolated, had practical support needs, was felt to be over reliant on NHS services and needed to improve his self-care.

John rarely left his home. He had been out of work for a long time, and following a car accident had become very isolated. His mobility was limited and he was quite depressed. He also had problems with debts that felt overwhelming.

His social prescriber referred John to St Mungo's, where he started counselling sessions and received help to manage his debt.

At the end of this John joined the Wellbeing Group run by ACE St Mungo, where he made some good friends. A referral to Filwood Hope (Advice Service) helped John to fill out the forms needed to make a benefits claim. ACE St Mungo's also supported John to get a grant to buy a fridge and a carpet for his home.

When the social prescriber checked in with John, for his last session she found him to be a 'different person'. He was a lot more positive and felt he was a much more resilient person. He had made some good friends and was getting out and about a lot more on his own and with his new friends. John's wellbeing score had gone up from 3.5 to 8.5 out of 10.*

* measured on the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS)

The above case study illustrates how an outcome of improving health and wellbeing and a reduction in social isolation has been achieved by increasing access to information and services.

We can start to see here how the way in which BIF provided the framework for organisations to make holistic applications, based on what they identified was most needed by their participants, has led to projects being able to produce holistic outcomes, which enable people to genuinely move forward in their lives.

**Improving access to information, services and opportunities in the city.
Increasing digital inclusion.**

Further analysis in grouping indicators across the programme under the five challenges demonstrates that the improving access to information challenge was, almost without exception, only achieved alongside addressing the improving health and wellbeing and reducing social isolation challenge. They are inextricably linked, and vital steps on the way to increasing resilience.

An example of this is Home Start, which provides support for disadvantaged families in Bristol by matching them with a trained volunteer.

Case Study

Home start - Confront Disadvantage in Bristol

“We know that isolation and mental health are interlinked with the majority of parents identifying both as needs when referred to Home-Start. As mental health improves, confidence grows and parents increase family centred activities, become more physically active and engaged with their children.”

As a result of their engagement with Home Start in Year 2 of the Impact Fund

- ✓ 61 parents (94% of the total) reported improved mental and emotional health
- ✓ 63 parents (97%) had accessed new services. Including: counselling, groups, fitness classes, cafes, dentist, GPs, employment support, museums, libraries, parks, nursery, farms and garden centres.

Organisations were able to achieve this in challenging circumstances due to their unique skills and experience. For example, Nilaari has a long history of providing culturally appropriate support and understanding of diverse communities experiencing mental health problems- often complex and challenging. Their BIF funded project worked to encourage referrals and self-referrals for BAME men, and reduce numbers needing to access secondary care.

Many of their clients have mental health, drug and alcohol problems and a pattern of behaviour which means they are in a cycle with the criminal justice system. Nilaari had gathered evidence that BAME males are more at risk than others of failing to

access relevant services to assist their recovery and their Jabari Men's project seeks to address this.

Case Study

Nilaari - jabari men's project

Results for year 2 of the Project - Pathways for BAME men with complex mental health needs.

- ✓ **24 referrals were made to West of England Works for support with employability**
- ✓ **16 referrals to Bristol Wellbeing Therapies for Cognitive Behavioural therapy**
- ✓ **4 had applied for had an interview at for college or university**

Enabling Influence and Participation in the Community

People's ability and sense of their ability to influence and participate in their community is key to improving wellbeing and addressing disadvantage and inequality. There is clear evidence for this in the 2010 Marmot Review (Updated in 2020) 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives', which sets out six priority objectives which it has evidenced will contribute to addressing health inequalities. One of these is to: 'Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capability and have control over their lives'.

The BIF Prospectus refers to evidence that in 2015 only 25% of Bristol residents in Bristol felt influential in their neighbourhood. Many people face multiple barriers to participation and this is greatest in disadvantaged geographical communities and communities of interest. An inability to influence leads to a reduction in opportunities for those communities and risks a downward spiral. A clear example of the difference in influence across the city is the turn out for the Mayoral and local elections in 2016, which was 61% in Henleaze and 27% in Hartcliffe.

Therefore supporting and enabling people to overcome barriers to influence and participation is a vital element to achieving the desired Impacts for BIF.

Evidence from the numbers of citizens engaged in projects which addressed this, indicates that this was the third most widely addressed challenge. Some projects focused on this challenge as a main purpose.

For example, East Bristol Citizen's Alliance is a partnership project between Up Our Street and Vocalise. It has focused on increasing community knowledge, influence and participation and building resilience. One of its three main outcomes was: "more

residents will be skilled to address local issues themselves, and influence decision-making.”

Case study

East Bristol citizen’s alliance

- ✓ **771 residents participated in community meetings and planning**
- ✓ **475 residents were involved in researching local issues**
- ✓ **76% of residents have reported an increased sense of community ownership.**

Some projects focus on developing specific skills to enable people to have more influence.

Knowle West Media Centre’s project ‘Our Digital City’ works to address digital exclusion and its impact on social exclusion through delivering a programme of activities to support disadvantaged communities in Bristol to gain digital and communication skills. The aim is to enable people at risk of social and digital exclusion to access information and services and develop new digital tools to enable more people to take up their right to contribute to their city. This project therefore addresses the challenges both of access to information and the ability to influence and participate.

Case Study

Knowle west media centre: Our Digital City

In Year 2 (2018/2019)

- ✓ **2411 people from disadvantaged communities accessed digital skills**
- ✓ **1828 contributed their information, ideas and creative thinking, shaping services and informing community direction**

Several projects give people opportunities to influence and participate after they have met their immediate needs. For example, within the Bristol Refugee and Asylum Seekers Hub, Borderlands identified a target that asylum seekers and refugees who participated in volunteering and/or participate in member consultations will have improved self-confidence. Over the two years 54 people were able to take up this opportunity. This demonstrates how people can be supported to move from a situation of extreme need and insecurity, into taking an active role in influencing and shaping their own and their community's lives.

Tackling Employment and Under Employment

Bristol Impact Fund Prospectus identified how certain areas and groups suffered from persistent worklessness and faced significant barriers in the labour market, despite Bristol's relative affluence as a city. The Prospectus was realistic about the Impact Fund's ability to impact on this deep seated issue, but its defined aim was to 'start to tackle some of the complex issues that lead to unemployment and underemployment'

In recognition of this complexity, there was inevitably a lesser impact on this in the first two years than the top three challenges addressed. Nevertheless, in year 1, 10,799 people participated in support and activities to support their move towards employability, and 13,385 in Year 2.

In the majority of cases, support for gaining employment was offered as part of a holistic range of support, which happened most frequently in local community settings such as City Farms and Community Centres. The benefits of these were that they were local to people, non-judgmental and could offer activities and services which nurtured people at their own pace and built confidence. In addition, people could move between the different activities on offer when they were ready to do so. Employment-related support most frequently offered in these settings were: volunteer opportunities, work placements, accredited qualifications, job search skills and IT skills to support job applications.

Case study

Windmill Hill City Farm

R

R was a young man who had suffered from significant mental health problems. Following his discharge from hospital after a psychotic episode he was very isolated and his care-co-ordinator encouraged him to undertake a work placement at Windmill Hill City Farm. Over time this gave him the confidence to go back to college for a Tourism and Hospitality Course.

R continues the story: “I did well on the course then carried on volunteering in the cafe after I’d finished. I did some volunteering in different areas of the farm including animal care and in the gardens. Although I had enjoyed kitchen work, this volunteering experience made me decide to apply for a university degree in Wildlife and Ecology Conservation Science. My experience at the farm added to my UCAS statement and I secured a place at UWE to start in September 2018.

I’ve grown a lot as a person. I’ve been on a journey with the farm, going from feeling inadequate to feeling able to do a full-time job in the future and get a reference and the next step of university is a step towards that.”

Lawrence Weston Community Farm's Go For It Project aims to address a range of issues experienced by people living in Kingsweston, Avonmouth, and Henbury. It provides holistic support and activities to help address social isolation, poor mental health and wellbeing, lack of confidence and experience, low levels of employment and food poverty. A significant element of the project is the provision of training, volunteering opportunities and work placements. By the end of Year 2, 50 unemployed people who had undertaken volunteering or a work placement at the Farm had gone on to employment or further training.

St Werburgh's Community Centre identified as one of their three outcomes 'Local people will improve computer skills and employment prospects', and provided a very accessible range of support, much of it using what they described as a 'there and then' approach where help for job related support (and other types of signposting and support) was available for people on a walk in basis. 358 people in Year 1, and 424 people in Year 2 used the open access support to carry out job searches and make job applications.

Julian House Employment and Skills Social Enterprise provides BIF funded, specific employment support for their existing client group, who are people with experience of homelessness, substance misuse, mental ill health or offending. They therefore face entrenched barriers to work and great disadvantage in the labour market. Most have employment as a medium or long term goal but feel some way from being work ready.

The type of support available is access to a Build a Bike Course and Employment Support Sessions. The following is a snapshot of benefits

Case Study

Julian House Employment and Skills Social Enterprise

At the end of Year 1

- ✓ **People felt positive about their employment prospects**
- ✓ **33 people gained national accredited qualifications in bike maintenance**
- ✓ **People using the service gained improved skills for finding work.**

Reducing Financial, Food and Fuel Poverty.

The Bristol Impact Fund Prospectus refers to the 2014 Quality of Life Survey which found that 13% of responders across the city found it quite or very difficult to get by financially.

The level of inequality becomes clearer when looking at responses by ward with, unsurprisingly, the areas of deprivation facing more financial challenges. However, more than by ward, the responses from equalities groups showed an even greater variation, with 23% of disabled and BAME people, 18% of carers and 51% of people of Muslim faith having financial difficulties.

It may therefore be the case that although the actual numbers of people impacted upon by funded activities to address financial, food and fuel poverty were the least of all the challenges, the scale of individual need addressed was significant and it also appears that the help was well targeted at specific groups, in the context of addressing other wider needs.

It's also important to note that funding for Community Advice Services was not allocated through the Bristol Impact Fund but were provided separately and aligned to the objectives of the BIF grant prospectus. Therefore needs related to this challenge would have also been addressed through the BCC funded Information, Advice and Guidance Grant.

In relation to BIF, this challenge was largely, although not exclusively, addressed through the large partnership grants – in particular the Bristol Asylum Seeker and Refugee Hub, SPEAR (the social prescribing service), Bristol Fuel Poverty Partnership, and BOOST (financial advice and support services in Lawrence Hill).

The Bristol Asylum Seeker and Refugee Hub partners were in many cases meeting urgent and basic needs for food, clothing, toiletries, bus fares, whilst also starting to support people longer term to gain access to services like English classes, advocacy, and other kinds of advice via a triage approach. This then led to a greater awareness of their rights and opportunities, building resilience and self reliance.

Case Study

Bristol asylum seeker and refugee hub

Financial, Food and Fuel Support Year 2

- ✓ **2726 parcels providing food and other basic needs given out**
- ✓ **507 bus tickets provided for refugee women to travel to access services and support**

BOOST has a specific focus on providing local accessible advice and support for financial advice. It frequently provides support for people whose situation is urgent, as the following case study shows.

Case study

BOOST- Providing financial advice and business start up and self-employment support in Easton and Lawrence Hill.

- ✓ **545 people living in Easton and Lawrence Hill gained knowledge and skills to be more in control of their finances in 2017-19.**

MS. E

Ms. E first attended BOOST Finance after her husband, who was also her refugee sponsor, had left her.

She presented as a single mother with 3 children under 5 with no leave to remain and no access to public money. She was struggling to feed her children as all benefits were in her husband's name. Ms E scored herself at a 1 in terms of her feeling she had any control over her finances, ability to make any decisions or overall confidence. She was referred to our Family Services as well as Next Link for additional support.

Ms. E had concerns around her property and the threat of eviction, as she had no means to pay the rent. The Somali Resource Centre BOOST coordinator was able to make some enquiries into the community and mediate the transfer of the property from the father to the mother to ensure the children kept a roof over their heads. With the tenancy being signed over to her, as well as the housing benefit for the property, Ms E is no longer under threat of eviction.

2.2 A note on Small Grants- Impacts in Round 1

As highlighted earlier, in the first two years of BIF 20 small grants between £ 2,500 and £10,000 were awarded to small and equalities-led groups, particularly black- led

groups, and to geographical areas which were particularly excluded. These groups often have one or no paid member of staff, and rely heavily on volunteers. Therefore the application process was developed to be as accessible as possible and support from Voscur was made available to help with applications.

Consequently it is important to note that small grants projects, whilst as a group of projects address all the challenges to some degree, they are inevitably dealing with smaller numbers of people, than the medium and large, and because of this, their impact on some of the challenges does not show up on the graphs at the beginning of this section. The chart below sets out the reported numbers of participants in Small Grants projects over 2017/18 & 2018/19

However, the reach of those groups into the most marginalised sections of the community is a really important factor in assessing their impact on the challenges. This is covered in more detail in the next section.

In terms of numbers of people benefiting they performed most strongly on Reducing Social Isolation and Improving Mental Wellbeing, and on Enabling Influence and Participation in the Community. In year 2 the numbers of people supported to Access Information and Services was also significant. In terms of Tackling Unemployment, 8 out of the 20 projects had outcomes which addressed this.

The Misfits Theatre Company, with their small grant, aimed to build the skills and confidence of people with learning disabilities and challenge perceptions through public performance.

Case Study

Misfits theatre company

Enabling Influence and Participation in the Community

- ✓ **By the end of Year 2 had reached 3,575 people through training and performance**

Including:

- ✓ **17 awareness sessions for health and social care staff**
- ✓ **7 short films**
- ✓ **3 showcases of drama, movement and poetry workshops**
- ✓ **4 poetry performances at the Central Library**
- ✓ **97% of training participants said their understanding of people with learning disabilities had been changed**

2.3 To what extent did the Impact Fund reach and make a difference to the targeted groups- BAME people, disabled people, women, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, young people, older people, people of faith?

The Impact Fund has a clear priority to reduce disadvantage and inequality and a vital element of this is ensuring that it makes a tangible difference in reaching the people in the city who are most disadvantaged.

The graphs on the following page are based on the analysis of respondents to equality monitoring for the first two years of the fund. It should be noted that not all participants in BIF projects completed demographic monitoring forms so this does not give us the full picture.

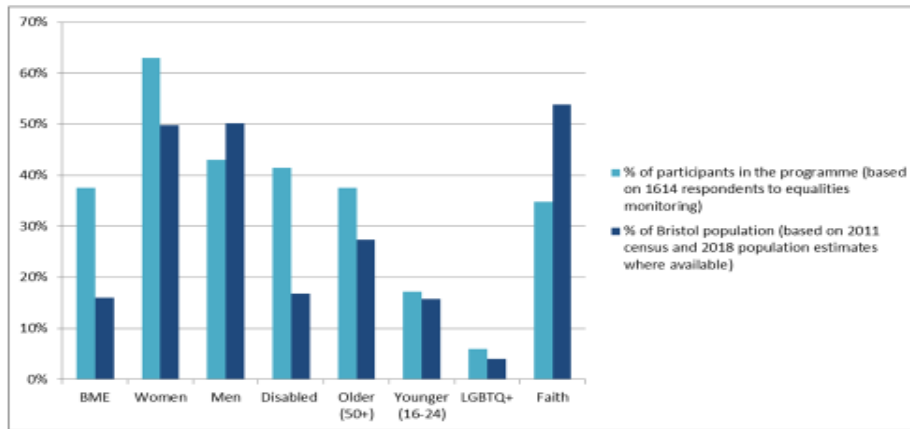
The first graph, analysing the impact of small grants demonstrates that, particularly people from BAME groups, but also women, disabled people and older people have had proportionately greater participation in those activities, when compared with the general population.

The second graph looks at medium and large projects and shows a greater benefit to BAME people, LGBT, women and disabled people when compared with the whole population, whilst the benefit to younger and older people was proportionate to the general population.

These statistics indicate that during its first two years the BIF can evidence engagement with those specific groups of people in the city who have been identified as likely to be facing the most disadvantage.

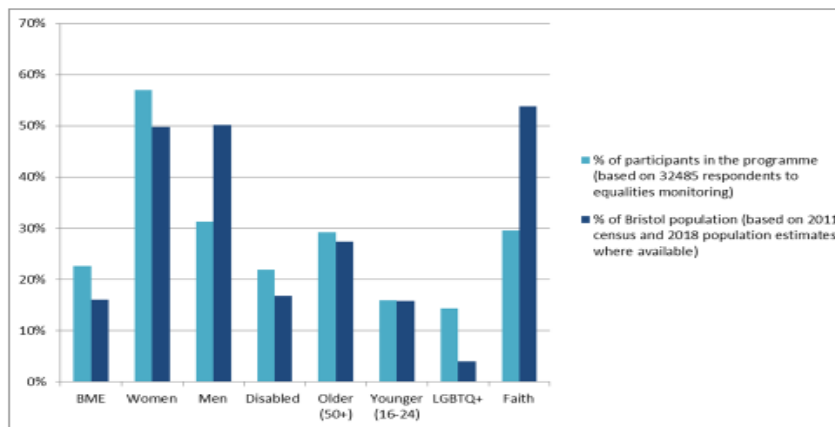
In terms of actual numbers of people, the monitoring shows that the Medium and Large grants reached a total of 32,485 people from equalities groups, and the Small Grants reached a total of 1614.

The 'focus on reducing disadvantage and inequality' Small Grant Projects Years 1 & 2



a strong preferential benefit to most of the equalities groups in the city – BME groups in particular – and disabled, women and older people in Year 2

Medium/Large Projects Years 1 & 2



a clear preferential benefit to BME, Women, Disabled equalities groups in the city; benefit to Younger and Older people was proportionate to the city population

As referred to earlier, the Small Grants pot, from which 20 grants were awarded, was targeted at smaller groups to enable them to build their capacity, in particular equalities groups. The outcome in terms of which type of groups actually benefitted is set out in the following:

Small Grants broken down by equality groups.

BAME citizens

- ✓ 8 Groups led by BAME citizens
- ✓ 7 projects targeted to benefit BAME citizens

Women

- ✓ 2 projects targeted to benefit women

Men:

- ✓ 1 project targeted to benefit men

Disabled:

- ✓ 3 Groups led by Disabled citizens
- ✓ 6 projects targeted to benefit disabled citizens

Older People:

- ✓ 3 projects targeted to benefit older citizens

Young People:

- ✓ 4 projects targeted to benefit younger citizens

LGBTQ+ People:

- ✓ 0 projects targeted to benefit LGBTQ+ citizens

Faith:

- ✓ 0 projects targeted to benefit Faith groups

Not targeted at any Equalities group:

- ✓ 5 projects not targeted at particular equality groups

This indicates success in reaching new groups who have historically faced barriers to accessing funding. Whilst this is a positive move in the right direction, after the first two years of funding there is little tangible evidence of long term sustainability for groups which weren't already well established. Further work is needed to explore this.

Medium/Large grants were awarded to 29 projects delivered by individual organisations and collaborations between organisations. Altogether 50 organisations are funded through the 29 projects.

The Equalities-led organisations and specific equalities communities targeted as participants is set out below:

Medium/Large Grants

BAME citizens

- ✓ 6 Groups led by BAME citizens
- ✓ 10 projects targeted to benefit BAME citizens

Women

- ✓ 5 projects targeted to benefit women

Men:

- ✓ 1 project targeted to benefit men

Disabled:

- ✓ 3 Groups led by Disabled citizens
- ✓ 10 projects targeted to benefit disabled citizens

Older People:

- ✓ 5 projects targeted to benefit older citizens

Young People:

- ✓ 1 projects targeted to benefit younger citizens

LGBTQ+ People:

- ✓ 1 Group led by LGBTQ+ citizens
- ✓ 2 projects targeted to benefit LGBTQ+ citizens

Faith:

- ✓ 1 project targeted to benefit Faith groups

Not targeted at any Equalities group:

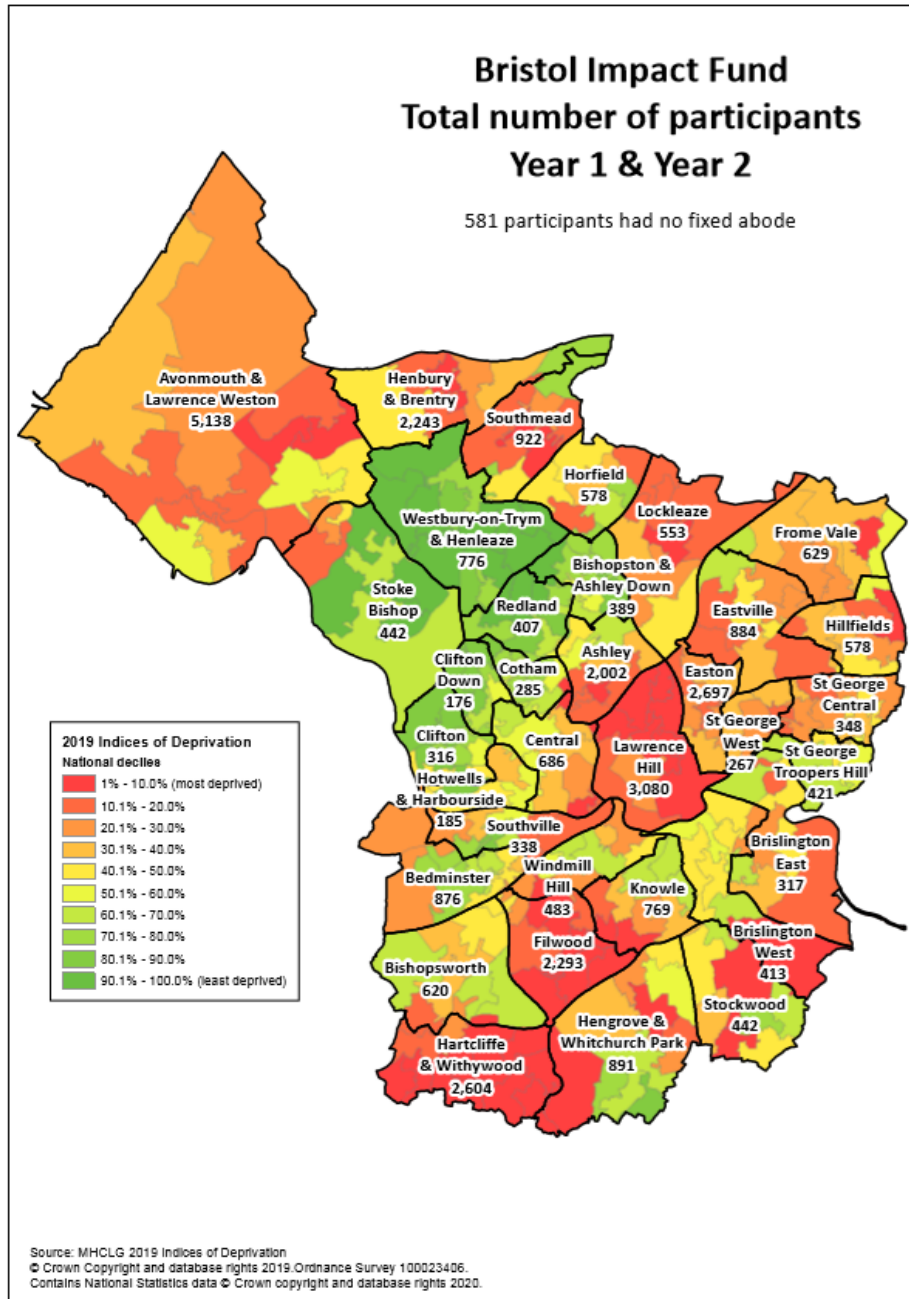
- ✓ 9 projects not targeted at particular equality groups

The 2018 BAME Sector Review 'We Want to Change and They Have the Power' carried out by Black South West Network (BSWN) for Power to Change, found a sector facing major challenges, exacerbated by austerity, particularly in its ability to fundraise and undertake business development and its capacity to exercise

influence. 33 organisations were surveyed, of which 42% had no paid staff and 30% had annual budgets below £5,000.

Evidence indicates therefore that the Impact Fund’s aim to redress the balance for equalities groups was well founded and made a very positive start in the first two years, but capacity building and infrastructure support for equalities led organisations is still a major piece of work to be progressed across the city.

2.4 Which Geographical areas most benefitted from the Impact Fund?



The above map shows the geographical areas and numbers of citizens benefitting from the Impact Fund projects and activities, set against the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). The wards where the most numbers of people benefitted (based

on those with 1000+ beneficiaries) are Lawrence Hill, Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston, Henbury and Brentry, Ashley, Filwood, and Hartcliffe and Withywood.

Ward boundaries in Bristol have changed since 2015, but the Impact Fund's key areas of benefit do largely mirror the pattern of deprivation, with people in the most disadvantaged areas benefitting, from locally based projects and/ or from citywide projects targeting specific groups in need. The map does show significantly high numbers of participants in Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston, and Henbury and Brentry. This is due to particular open access organisations in those areas recording high footfalls of people. This illustrates again that numbers of people benefitting is an important guide to the scale of benefit, but that the level of complexity of intervention and support for people is also a vital factor when assessing impact.

In terms of a comparison between the IMD in 2015 and 2019, the greatest deprivation at Ward level remained the same in 2019: Hartcliffe and Withywood, Lawrence Hill and Filwood.

For future planning of grant funding it is worth noting an apparent shift in geographical need, in that central areas of Bristol have seen a decrease in levels of relative deprivation while outer areas have seen an increase. Further analysis is needed to understand the details of the picture behind this and to what extent it may be, for example, about the movement of disadvantaged people, due to gentrification, rather than a genuine change in the disadvantage of particular groups. Importantly, since 2019, the impact of Covid-19, particularly on BAME and other equalities communities needs to be properly assessed.

3. How much did the elements of new approach contribute to achieving these outcomes?

As has been described, the Bristol Impact Fund represented a new approach to how the VCS sector in the city was funded. The aim was to shift the landscape from how funding had previously been allocated, in order to encourage new ways of working to tackle disadvantage and inequality. The council wanted a clearer focus on participants rather than organisations and it looked to the voluntary sector to use its skills and experience to make the necessary changes.

Change was needed because, deprivation and inequality in the city remained persistent, in particular neighbourhoods and for particular groups of people. The economic climate was (and remains) hard with funding for local authorities continually being restricted and the environment for the voluntary sector also very tough.

The spirit of the fund was about refreshing the relationship between the council and the VCS as a partnership, building a collective approach, bringing together

the resources, skills, knowledge and experience in both sectors, and engaging with other key funders, to make the most positive difference to the city. Departmental budgets in the council were pooled as far as possible so that resources were aligned to make the maximum possible impact on the agreed priorities.

Focussing the fund on five agreed challenges and three main outcomes encouraged a real alignment of resources and shared goals.

3.1 Shifting the Landscape

There is evidence that the co-design approach taken by Bristol City Council was valued by stakeholders. A case study on the new approach taken by BIF undertaken by the Institute for Voluntary Action Research (IVAR) in 2017. Council representatives, independent funders and members of VCSE organisations were interviewed.

Respondents to IVAR commented that “the co-design process gave the VCS more voice than it had previously, and that the new Fund increased the chances that council grants would respond to what local organisations want and need. Consolidation also meant that voluntary and community organisations would no longer have to squeeze themselves into a specific departmental pot but could overflow the boundaries in a way that is more natural to them”

However, making change like this is challenging. The Fund was of course heavily oversubscribed. 49 projects were approved, involving 70 different organisations. 26 of those organisations had never received council funding before so this was a success in terms of enabling new organisations to benefit. There were also casualties - 29 organisations which had been funded previously did not gain funding this time around, at least not from the Impact Fund.

Having independent funders on the funding advisory panel helped to gain a more collective overview of the city’s needs and the other funding available to meet those needs in the context of the VCS. One independent funder in IVAR’s study said the process allowed:

“potential for other funders to get involved further down the line to support unsuccessful applicants or to think about where they fit in the local funding jigsaw, rather than operating in isolation. It helps us to think about where our money could have the best impact in the area and be operating, not in isolation but filling a gap.”

Since the Impact Fund began, this approach of allocating and aligning funding in a more co-operative way at a local level has become more usual and indeed essential when funds are so limited and the need is persistent. It enables funders

to mirror the way in which they want and need the VCS sector to work – they can't be joined up if funders are not working together too.

3.2 Theory of Change

Each organisation or partnership was required to develop its own theory of change, in line with addressing one of the three main agreed impacts. Having identified and agreed the challenges, the VCS sector was trusted to know what was needed and how to deliver it.

The theory of change (TOC) is well established, particularly in the not for profit sector as an effective methodology for planning projects, activities to bring about social change.

This approach encouraged organisations to review and rethink, to challenge their own assumptions about what they had done for a long time and how and why they had done it. They were encouraged to explore how their work contributed to the wider aims of the city and ensure a robust evidence base for what they proposed to do and how. There is much evidence in the range of impact achieved against all five challenges, that it also enabled them to design projects in a holistic way rather than trying to fit into a prerequisite shape.

3.3 The Challenges of the New Approach

One of the main challenges of the new approach was that it was not possible to sustain the level of input and collaborative working which had gone into in the design and early implementation of BIF.

Re- organisation and restructure within Bristol City Council from 2016 meant that there was insufficient ongoing capacity, and key people involved in developing the fund were no longer there or in the same role. Voluntary Sector infrastructure organisations were also under strain. As the IVAR Report identified:

“Everyone across the statutory and voluntary sector is overloaded with no space for networking, or for building relationships and trust, to reflect, adjust and learn”

For the same reason, the intentions to develop the joint working, collaboration and co-design, and to develop a set of common impact measures in the first two years of the grant programme did not happen, despite some bringing together of BIF groups to start the conversation. Ideally an ongoing learning and evaluation resource would have enabled VCS organisations to re-examine and compare their theories of change, and share learning across the city with each other and with funders.

A further challenge was that by tapering funding in Years 3 and 4, BIF was aiming to encourage VCS organisations to actively seek ways of becoming sustainable beyond the end of the funding. A meeting of BIF funded organisations instigated by Bristol City Council in June 2019, began, amongst other items, a detailed and useful discussion on how organisations were dealing or planning to deal with the taper. It highlighted the major differences in organisations ability to work towards sustainability and being less grant dependant. This depended on a variety of factors, including the scale of organisation and numbers of paid staff, the nature of their work, their capacity and opportunity to negotiate on and deliver external contracts, and ownership of assets from which to generate income.

It was agreed that more work was needed on this vital issue and that the sector needed further support to network, share ideas and challenges, working with BCC, Voscur, Quartet and BSWN, amongst others.

3.4 The Ways of Working

The unique offer of the VCS in addressing inequality is set out in the four main ways of working set out below.

- ✓ **Giving the right help at the right time (WoW 1)**
- ✓ **Helping people to help themselves and each other (WoW 2)**
- ✓ **Building on the strengths of people and communities (WoW 3)**
- ✓ **Connecting people and organisations with and across communities. (WoW 4)**

Through clearly identifying these ways of working, BIF emphasises that it is not only ‘what’ is delivered which is important but ‘how’ it is delivered.

We can already see from the reach into both communities of interest and geographical communities that VCS organisations are well placed to be able to connect with and support some of the most disadvantaged people in the city.

People are able to voluntarily engage with organisations when they are ready to do so, and at a pace and over a period of time which works for them. There are no thresholds, no deadlines or sanctions and minimum bureaucracy. Giving the ‘right help’ sounds simple but is actually a fundamental and complex element of what the VCS offers. The sector is able to provide holistic support, taking into account people’s mental, physical, social and emotional needs, and building their capacity to cope in future, not just fixing a problem.

BIF funded organisations were specifically asked in their monitoring to describe how they had used the four ways of working to achieve their outcomes and there is a rich store of examples and case histories to evidence this across the medium, large and small grants activities and services.

Like the five challenges, the ways of working do not happen in isolation but are overlapping and integrating. The following examples therefore reference which of, sometimes several, main Ways of Working they illustrate. They are just a tiny part of the whole picture but offer a snapshot of how the ways of working are able to bring about tangible change for people and communities.

Bristol Impact Fund: Ways of Working Examples

Case Study – Small grant - Oasis Community Hub

Ways of working illustrated – WoW 1 and WoW 2

***Oasis Community Hub** runs a shop in the heart of Lawrence Weston, offering basic sewing and textile skills workshops for local residents, and the opportunity to make and sell items in the shop.*

Participant Quote “I have mental health problems and am often afraid to leave the flat. Walking back from the Co-op one day I saw the Oasis shop and decided to go in and see what it was. The workshop leader came over and talked to me and explained what the shop is all about. Since then I have been going to the workshops every week and finally feel I belong in the community. I have made a cushion and a teddy and helped others to learn blanket stitch. I now volunteer every Friday in the shop. Even if I feel I can’t get up, I know I’m going to the shop and it helps me to get going.”

Case Study – Medium grant

Unseen supports survivors of Modern Slavery and Trafficking. It provides the only specialist support in the city. They offer 100 hours of support to each survivor.

Ways of working illustrated – WoW 1 , 2 , 3 and 4

Unseen Report:

“Our holistic approach starts by carrying out a detailed needs assessment of every client.

We look at every element of their situation, including need for immigration and asylum assistance, legal assistance, emotional and mental health services, physical health services, understanding benefits, housing and practical support, building safe relationships, budgeting and money management, education and English-learning, training and volunteering, community building, faith and spirituality, leisure activities and hobbies.

All of this is done with the aim of supporting each client to reach a place where they feel safe and have the hope and choice to be able to manage their own future. “

Case Study – Large grant

Bristol Hate Crime and Discrimination Services:- a partnership of five organisations providing support for victims of hate crime.

Ways of working illustrated – WoW 3 and 4

Much of the work evidences WOW 1 and 2 very strongly but the following quote from SARI shows how this also leads to wider benefits: “We always have a strong service user (past and present) attendance at our AGM. The high spot is contributions from former clients. There is plenty of anecdotal evidence that current clients find this very helpful and supportive. It is inspirational to hear testimonies from clients who have braved the abuse they have suffered and then recovered their lives. This experience also can give them confidence to do more to make a difference in their local communities. Several service users who have spoken at our AGMs have gone on to contribute to other events or training”

Case Study – Large grant

Bristol Refugee and Asylum Seekers Hub is a partnership of organisations, all of which are often one of the first places refugees and asylum seekers come to when they arrive in Bristol.

Ways of working illustrated – WoW 3 and 4

Again these organisations clearly employ WOW 1 and WOW 2 but also they help people connect across communities. Borderlands, one of the partner organisations reports:

“In recognition of the faith background of Borderlands as an organisation, the multiple faiths represented in our volunteer team as well as the high representation of people of faith among our beneficiaries, we are developing a multi-faith approach. We put on an Iftar meal in Ramadan this year in recognition of the Muslim faith of most of our beneficiaries and many of our volunteers. This was attended by our Chair of Trustees, who is a Catholic Priest, as well as many Christian volunteers, and people of no faith. We are connecting individuals across religious lines and finding common ground”

As the above examples demonstrate, similar to the connections between addressing the challenges, the ways of working underpin participants’ ability to follow a journey. It might start with an immediate need for help or support, leading to the building of resilience through greater knowledge, increased confidence, access to sources of support and networks, and the ability to support others and connect with the wider community.

An example of this is Hassan who came to Bristol Refugee Rights when his claim for asylum had been refused.

“When Hassan found out about BRR he signed up as a volunteer interpreter; he also joined the public speaker training course which helped him gain back some confidence. Now that he has been granted refugee status he is able to work again and started to earn his own livelihood. He says “I came to BRR when my case was refused. Since I joined my life is getting better, I understand my options. Although I am an educated person ... I did not understand my rights at all in this country. I was so happy to find something to be able to help others, be busy, and use my skills. If I had known about this support earlier, I think my life would have been absolutely different. Thank you BRR.”

VCSE Partnering with the Statutory Sector

An additional added value of the Ways of Working which should be highlighted is the degree to which the sector enhances and facilitates the work of the statutory sector where that is appropriate.

This is described well in the [Joint Review of Partnerships and Investment in Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Organisations](#), produced by VCSE representatives, Department of Health, NHS England and Public Health England in 2016

The report recognises that ‘For mainstream practitioners it can be hard to tune into the complex needs of socially excluded groups and allocate sufficient time and tailored interventions to meet the complexity of their needs’.

In the BIF programme there are numerous examples of how the VCS contribute, and add value to the work of statutory services including housing, health and social care, the police, and the NHS.

Unseen provided the following quote in their monitoring report:

Chief Inspector Gary Haskins, Local Area Commander for East Bristol, said:

“Unseen have been an invaluable partner to us throughout 2018. They have supported us on safeguarding visits to premises which we suspect are being run as brothels, ensuring we can help vulnerable and potentially trafficked persons understand the support services available and how to access them”.

3.5 Added value brought in through VCSE

As well as the unique style and reach of its working methods the VCSE was able to bring in added value to the work of the Impact Fund both in terms of volunteers contributing to the work and additional match funding. This is significant, as the following tables demonstrate.

Added value over 2 Years

Small Grant Projects	Medium/Large Grant Projects
<p>Volunteers contributing to projects Year 1 & 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular volunteers: 346• One off volunteers: 131• Local Trustees: 78	<p>Volunteers contributing to projects Year 1 & 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular volunteers: 2205• One off volunteers: 3776• Trustees: 537

The combined monetary value of the volunteers, as set out above, based on Office of National Statistic rates of £14.43 an hour is a remarkable **£10.3 million**.

This is in addition to the match funding brought in as leverage over the two years as set out in the chart on the next page. The small grants shows that additional funding secured from elsewhere by groups more than doubled the amount available to address the challenges. Medium and Large grants added around two thirds to the original grant package.

‘maximum impact on the major challenges faced by the city’ - Added value in Years 1&2

Small Grant Projects

Additional funding achieved:

- **£363,000** (against 2 year Small Grants investment of £313,020)

a leverage rate of **133%**

Medium/Large Grant Projects

Additional funding achieved :

- **£3.9 million** (against 2 year Medium/Large Grants investment of £6 million)

a leverage rate of **67%**

a combined leverage rate of 67.5%

4. Recommendations

1. Furthering the Evaluation and Learning from Bristol Impact Fund

As BIF started off as a collaborative and co-designed programme, it would be very logical to bring the funded groups together again in Year 4, to contribute to a collaborative approach to furthering the evaluation and testing out the original hypothesis. As in the original co-design, other funders and VCSE infrastructure organisations should be brought in at an appropriate point to contribute and maintain the shared overview.

A session or series of sessions could be used to ask some key questions, share learning, and develop shared impact measurements, exploring:

- How good were the individual theories of change?
- What have the organisations learned?

- The development of some shared indicators across the five challenges, now that this evaluation has provided more information on which challenges individual organisations are impacting on.
- To what extent has the addressing of the five challenges achieved the three main impacts? What measures can be used to assess that?
- What new partnerships and collaborations developed as a result of BIF? How well did they work? How can this approach be developed and sustained?
- The impact of Covid-19, what does sustainability look like now?

2. Informing future approaches to funding and support of the VCSE

Based on the learning from BIF and in the context of the current complex and challenging environment, Bristol City Council needs to review its role and relationship with the VCS, review what the priorities should be now and how they link with the One City Plan. It should explore what type of relationship it wants and is able to have with the VCS in future. It makes sense that this happens as part of a collective citywide approach.

Activities contributing to this could be:

- Exploring developing common measurements for social impact across all VCSE in the city – can the sector be supported to do this for themselves with some additional resource? How can the learning from BIF inform what those measurements should be?
- This would over time, along with wider statistical information, help inform a greater shared understanding of the current state of disadvantage and inequality across the city, and where and how resources should be targeted to make the most difference.
- BCC working collectively with Voscur, Quartet, Black South West Network, Lottery, Locality and other stakeholders to provide co-ordinated support for the sector and work towards stabilisation and future sustainability following the impact of Corona Virus.
- This includes further exploration into the support and coordination of volunteers. BIF has shown us very clearly their added value, as has the recent huge contribution to supporting people through the Covid-19. How do we sustain and build on Can Do Bristol and other types of volunteer support?
- Identify sources of support to enable organisations to collaborate and build partnerships where there is motivation and clear benefits to doing so.

3. Learning from BIF about future approaches to Evaluation

Future funding programmes should build in and resource evaluation from the beginning using a formative evaluation to inform the programme as it

develops. This would be a sound investment in ensuring that funding is targeted where it is making the most difference as learning emerges.

4. Asset Based Approaches

The initial strength based approach of BIF has since been further advanced in the city with the implementation of an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach led through Bristol City Council's Neighbourhoods and Communities Department. The evidence from BIF demonstrates that VCS organisations can be highly effective in building strength of individuals and groups to influence and participate in their community. Consideration should be given therefore to how VCSE organisations and ABCD can work most effectively together to ensure communities gain the maximum benefit from all the resources and assets available at a community level.

Appendix A

Methodology for impact fund evaluation years 1 and 2

Table 1 Methodology for Impact Fund Evaluation Years 1 and 2

Questions to Answer	Lines of Enquiry	Method
1. What is the Bristol Impact Fund (BIF) and how was it different from previous VCSE Grant Funding? 2. What was important about the wider context within which the fund was operating?	VCSE Prospectus	Desk Research Discussions with key BCC staff, where possible, to explore original thinking. Background information and desk research on impact of austerity, roll out of Universal Credit, Brexit on the communities and individuals targeted through BIF.
3. What did it seek to change as a result of this new approach?	As above	As above
4. What has been the impact on making the intended changes in the first two years of BIF? Covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scale and nature of the impact on the five challenges • To what extent did it reach the targeted groups? • Which geographical areas most benefitted? 	Original application forms for small, medium and large grants. (SML) End of Year Grant Reports for SML grants Spreadsheets of monitoring and evaluation for 2017/18 and 2018/19 including case histories. Two Year Impact Summary of the fund in Power Point- mainly focused on quantitative data	Desk research and liaison with relevant BCC staff. Using the monitoring data from all the funded organisations to identify and collate a cluster of indicators which relate to the five original challenges . Identify which projects, activities and services impacted on which challenges. Identify appropriate numerical measurements to assess the scale of the impact on the

Questions to Answer	Lines of Enquiry	Method
		challenges.
<p>5. How much did the new approach contribute to achieving these outcomes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did the co-design and theory of change contribute to changing the landscape of VCSE funding? • What were the challenges of the new approach? • What difference did the four ways of working make to achieving the desired outcomes and impact? • What added value did the VCSE organisations bring? 	<p>As above End of Year Grant Reports including :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • case studies • information on leverage (i.e additional funding brought in as a result of the Impact Fund • the scale and value of volunteer input. <p>Feedback and notes from the 2019 BIF organisations workshop Institute for Voluntary Action Research (IVAR) Case Study 2017</p> <p>Monitoring and Evaluation spreadsheets</p>	Desk research
<p>6. What does this all tell us about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What further information is needed to understand the impact more fully and how should that be collected? • Any changes to be made during Year 4 funding and the current context for this? • How a future VCSE funding programme should be designed and delivered. 	<p>All of the above Current context and opportunities for VCSE funding and support in the city and wider. Bristol VCSE Strategy 2019 BSWN BAME Sector Review 2018 Locality, VOSCUR and Quartet – information from networks</p>	Desk research.

Appendix B

Partnerships- Impact on Five Key Challenges, based on analysis of organisations own defined outcome measures.

Organisation(s)/Project	Reducing Financial, Fuel and Food Poverty	Tacking employment and underemployment	Improving access to info, services and opps in the city. Increasing digital inclusion	Enabling Influence and Participation in the community	Reducing social isolation and improving mental health and wellbeing
Bristol Asylum Seeker and Refugee Hubs- Borderlands, Bristol Refugee Rights, Refugee Women of Bristol	X		X	X	X
Bristol BME Elders Health and Wellbeing Project Lead Partner -Dhek Bal	X		X	X	X
Bristol Hate Crime and Discrimination Services -Avon and Bristol Law Centre, Brandon Trust, Resolve, Bristol Mind, LGBT Bristol, Sari.			X	X	X
Bristol HIV Services Terence Higgins, Brigstowe	X	X	X		X

Organisation(s)/Project	Reducing Financial, Fuel and Food Poverty	Tacking employment and underemployment	Improving access to info, services and opps in the city. Increasing digital inclusion	Enabling Influence and Participation in the community	Reducing social isolation and improving mental health and wellbeing
Project					
(WECA) Bristol Integrated Community Transport Bristol Community Transport, Social Access Ltd			X		X
Bristol Social Prescribing Service for Equality and Resilience (SPEAR) The Care Forum, Knowle West Health Park, SDT, Wellspring	X	X	X	X	X
East Bristol Citizen's Alliance -Boundless Futures (CIC), Easton and Lawrence Hill Neighbourhood Management				X	X
The Network Barton Hill Settlement			X	X	X
BOOST Lead Partner -Barton Hill Settlement	X	X		X	X
Bristol Fuel Poverty Partnership	X			X	X

Organisation(s)/Project	Reducing Financial, Fuel and Food Poverty	Tacking employment and underemployment	Improving access to info, services and opps in the city. Increasing digital inclusion	Enabling Influence and Participation in the community	Reducing social isolation and improving mental health and wellbeing
Centre for Sustainable Energy, WHAM					
Bristol Sexual Violence and Abuse Partnership- Lead Partner -The Greenhouse		X	X	X	X
WECA -Select				X	X

2. SOLO GRANTS Impact on Five Key Challenges, based on analysis of organisations own defined outcome measures

Organisation(s)/Project	Reducing Financial, Fuel and Food Poverty	Tacking employment and underemployment	Improving access to info, services and opps in the city. Increasing digital inclusion	Enabling Influence and Participation in the community	Reducing social isolation and improving mental health and wellbeing
Avonmouth Community Centre		X	X	X	X
Bristol Mindline					X
Bristol Poverty Action Group- Welfare Rights Advice	X		X		X
Filwood Hope – Increase Advice in Knowle West	X		X		X
HHEAG – Dundry View Health and Wellbeing			X	X	X
Home Start-Confront Disadvantage in Bristol			X		X
Julian House and 125 Ltd – Employment Skills and Social Enterprise		X			X
KWMC- Our Digital City			X	X	X
Lawrence Weston Community Farm – Go		X	X		X

Organisation(s)/Project	Reducing Financial, Fuel and Food Poverty	Tacking employment and underemployment	Improving access to info, services and opps in the city. Increasing digital inclusion	Enabling Influence and Participation in the community	Reducing social isolation and improving mental health and wellbeing
For It					
Nilaari- Brave Men's Project			X		X
Off the Record – The Resilience Lab			X		X
One 25 -Street Sex and Risk			X		X
St Werburgh's Community Association- Community Support and Engagement		X	X	X	X
Resettlement Service for Trafficked People			X		X
SPAN- Parent Support	X		X		X
Bristol Women's Voice		X	X	X	X
Windmill Hill City Farm -Wellbeing		X	X	X	X

3. Small grants - Impact on Five Key Challenges, based on analysis of organisations own defined outcome measures

Organisation(s)/Project	Reducing Financial, Fuel and Food Poverty	Tacking employment and underemployment	Improving access to info, services and opps in the city. Increasing digital inclusion	Enabling Influence and Participation in the community	Reducing social isolation and improving mental health and wellbeing
Independent Sex Workers Against Violence			X		X
Cruse Bereavement Care				X	X
Bristol Organisation for Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia (OSCAR)					
Alzheimers Society					X
Henbury and Brentry Community Council		X	X		X
Step Together Volunteering		X		X	X
RSVP			X		X
African Carribean Men's Holistic Health			X		X
Misfits Theatre Co				X	X
RISE		X			X
Oasis Community Hub North Bristol		X			
Bristol City of	X	X	X	X	X

Organisation(s)/Project	Reducing Financial, Fuel and Food Poverty	Tacking employment and underemployment	Improving access to info, services and opps in the city. Increasing digital inclusion	Enabling Influence and Participation in the community	Reducing social isolation and improving mental health and wellbeing
Sanctuary					
Bristol Hearing Voices Network				X	X
Bipolar UK			X	X	X
Alive Growing Project				X	X
Rising Arts Agency		X			X
Bristol Zimbabwe Association		X		X	X
Trinity Community Garden		X			X
Hype Dance Company				X	X
Growing Futures UK CIC	X		X		