



Small grants,

big impact

November 2023



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**This is an
interactive
document**

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Tobin Centre,
Northern Ireland



Chief Executive foreword

Barrow Farm Riding for the Disabled,
England

Chief Executive foreword

Our new **It starts with community** strategy places social connections and community activity at the heart of creating healthier, happier lives and a flourishing society. From our engagement with communities and our work, we know small grants are the vital building blocks of community.

Small grants are where we see the furthest reach: they've reached **90%** of local authorities across the UK and provide support to local community projects, led by local people, thanks to players of The National Lottery.

This is where we've seen the most significant impact, creating more volunteering opportunities and reaching more people. It's where we've welcomed most first-time customers to The National Lottery Community Fund, particularly those unfamiliar with us and our work in communities.

Small grants is our most flexible and fast funding route. The grants support communities with funding to deliver the activities the things that matter to them.

That's why the very first hallmark of our strategy published earlier in 2023 was to double down on our grassroots community funding. We committed to doubling the size of possible grant award and the time any project can run for, which is the biggest change to National Lottery funding for a generation.

We've delivered on this and through National Lottery Awards for All, community projects can now apply for funding between £300 and £20,000 at any one time, receiving a maximum of £20,000 in a 12 month period. Groups can take up to two years to deliver their project and as soon as they have closed one grant award with us, they can choose to reapply for a new project.

This puts funding flexibility in the hands of communities themselves and means groups can receive a maximum of £20,000 within a 12-month period, and £40,000 within a two-year period. We're excited to see the ideas communities come up with now we've unlocked more funding and more flexibility.



82%

of all our grants made in 2022-2023 were for under £10,000, representing 11,600 of the 13,800 grants made in that financial year. The majority of these small grants were made through National Lottery Awards for All - supporting grassroots organisations at the heart of communities all over the UK to take action on the issues that matter most to them.

Looking back further, over the last five years we have seen £3 billion awarded in almost 76,000 small grants, reaching communities across the UK. Each year, over 3.1 million people benefit from National Lottery Awards for All projects.

Earlier this year, I visited one of our National Lottery Awards for All funded projects with the Minister for Civil Society. Based in Liverpool, the brilliant organisation Daisy Inclusive UK supports young people with disabilities or in vulnerable situations to reach their full potential, through services including education and employment support, and specialist mental health advice.

Over football and tea, I felt the life-changing difference just this one small grant has had on so many lives, as well as the passion and pride they all felt for their community as Liverpool held the Eurovision Song Contest.

Our National Lottery Awards for All funding has also enabled groups to celebrate key national moments, such as the 75th anniversary of the arrival of HMT Empire Windrush in Britain. The Nottingham News Centre was able to plan a series of brilliant events and educational resources to showcase the significant role played by former industrial workers in their local areas, many from the Windrush generation.

We've been inspired to reimagine National Lottery Awards for All because of what we've seen, felt and heard about the huge difference small amounts of funding make every day. I hope this report, and the stories it tells, inspires you as to what can be achieved when we know that it starts with community.

David Knott
Chief Executive
The National Lottery Community Fund





Introduction

Unity Hubb,
England

Why small grants?

The National Lottery Community Fund has spent nearly three decades supporting incredible projects that serve as the backbone of their communities, thanks to players of The National Lottery and their support for good causes across the UK.

As the largest funder of community activity in the UK, we know that social connections and community projects are at the heart of creating healthier, happier lives and a flourishing society.



The Ashton Group Theatre
England

At the core of our funding programmes are small grants, which we award to community projects across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. In November 2023, as a part of our strategy to 2030, we are recommitting to smaller grants as we update our biggest open-to-all funding programme, National Lottery Awards for All. **We are doubling both the size of the possible grant award available to £20,000 and the time any project can run for (up to two years).**

This makes sure that community projects can maintain flexibility in how they apply for and use our funding.

From our long experience and evidence, we know our small grants are the most effective way we have of supporting local organisations and people who are the lifeblood of their communities.

Small grants are easily accessed through one application form which is light-touch and enables money to reach communities quickly. Small grants bring people together, keeping community buildings and spaces open. They allow community projects to give lonely and older people a warm and welcoming place to meet, make sure that people of all ages have access to community gardens, and provide mental health support.

We have also used small grants to bring communities together to mark memorable national moments, most recently to celebrate the 75th anniversary of Windrush, to mark the King's Coronation and to support communities to welcome Ukrainian refugees as a part of the 2023 Eurovision Song Contest celebrations.



Longwood Community Woodland,
Wales

Targeting areas of need

Our small grants funding is available to all communities and we take an equity-based approach to our delivery. We aim to support communities to build from their strengths by funding what matters most to them. This means across our work we'll invest most in places, people and communities who experience poverty, disadvantage and discrimination.

In the last year:

- In England, just under 50% of grants were awarded to the 30% most deprived areas of England.
- In Scotland, 40% of grants were awarded to the 30% most deprived areas of Scotland.
- In Northern Ireland, just under 50% of grants were awarded to the 30% most deprived areas of Northern Ireland.
- In Wales, just under 40% of grants were awarded to the 30% most deprived areas of Wales.

Our impact

Each year The National Lottery Community Fund supports **5.2 million people** through our funding with **3.1 million accessing small grants**.



60%

of our awards go to organisations with turnovers of less than **£100,000**. Our average award size is just over **£8,000**.



80,000

In a typical year, our grants directly fund the recruitment of **80,000** new volunteers, enabling grant holders to collectively work with around **290,000** volunteers in total.

In 2022-2023 we awarded **11,600** small grants, totalling just over **£99m**

That amounts to just under **one-sixth** of our total funding.

40%

In 2022-23, over **40%** of the organisations we funded received our grants for the first time.

In 2022-23, the top four themes across our small grants were:

- 1. Community / coming together**
- 2. Health and wellbeing**
- 3. Education and learning**
- 4. Environment**

A photograph of two women in a greenhouse. The woman on the left has short brown hair, wears glasses, and a blue polo shirt. She is smiling and looking at a tomato. The woman on the right wears a dark blue cap and a dark green t-shirt. She is using pruning shears to harvest a tomato. They are surrounded by tomato plants with green and red tomatoes and yellow marigold flowers. The greenhouse structure is visible in the background.

L'Arche Village,
Northern Ireland

Overview of changes

It starts with community

We launched our new strategy, **It starts with community** in the summer of 2023 and through it we've committed to spend £4 billion by 2030, supporting activities that create resilient communities, strengthen society and improve lives across the UK.

As a part of our strategy we've introduced four community-led funding missions:

- support communities to come together
- support communities to be environmentally sustainable
- support communities to help children and young people thrive
- support communities to enable people to live healthier lives.

Our funding has always supported these areas. Now we're going further, focusing our funding, impact and work with partners around these to make a bigger impact.

Alongside the missions one of the three key hallmarks of the strategy is to change how we approach grassroots community funding, as we know this is where our funding has furthest reach and where it supports and creates the most volunteering opportunities.

Central to the strategy was our promise to deliver changes to National Lottery Awards for All and our ambition to further support grassroots community projects across the UK. In November 2023, the biggest change to National Lottery Awards for All for a generation will be in place.

Bangor Foodbank and Community Support,
Northern Ireland



Summary of key changes

From 15 November 2023, we are increasing the funding we're handing out to smaller community projects across the whole of the UK.

Through National Lottery Awards for All, community groups from across the UK can now apply for funding between £300 and £20,000 at any one time, receiving a maximum of £20,000 in a 12 month period. Groups can take up to two years to deliver their project and as soon as they have closed one grant award with us, they can choose to reapply for a new project.

This puts funding flexibility in the hands of communities themselves and means groups can receive a maximum of £20,000 within a 12-month period, and £40,000 within a two-year period.

These changes will apply to all projects across England, Northern Ireland, Wales and community-led projects with a community focus in Scotland ¹.

Giving projects up to two years for completion will mean more flexibility for projects as well as giving project teams themselves a longer commitment to deliver on the ground.

National Lottery Awards for All has the broadest reach of all our funding and is often the first grant award a community applies for from The National Lottery Community Fund. Through our new equity focus — on communities experiencing poverty, discrimination and disadvantage — our refresh aims to expand its reach to those who didn't think they would receive funding as well as improve accessibility to even more communities now and in the years ahead.

We've raised the upper limit groups can apply for up to £20,000, in part because we recognise that project costs have changed over time and that National Lottery Awards for All is here for every community as a simple way to seek essential grant funding.

Our funding priorities for National Lottery Awards for All haven't changed. They are:

1. Bring people together to build strong relationships in and across communities.

2. Improving the places and spaces that matter to communities.

3. Helping more people to reach their potential, by supporting them at the earliest possible stage.

4. Support people, communities and organisations facing more demands and challenges because of the cost-of-living crisis.

¹ Groups applying for NLA4A grants that have primarily an arts or sports focus will continue to be funded through our partnership with Creative Scotland and Sportscotland under our existing rules. This means groups will be able to apply for up to £10,000 and their project duration cannot be longer than 12 months.



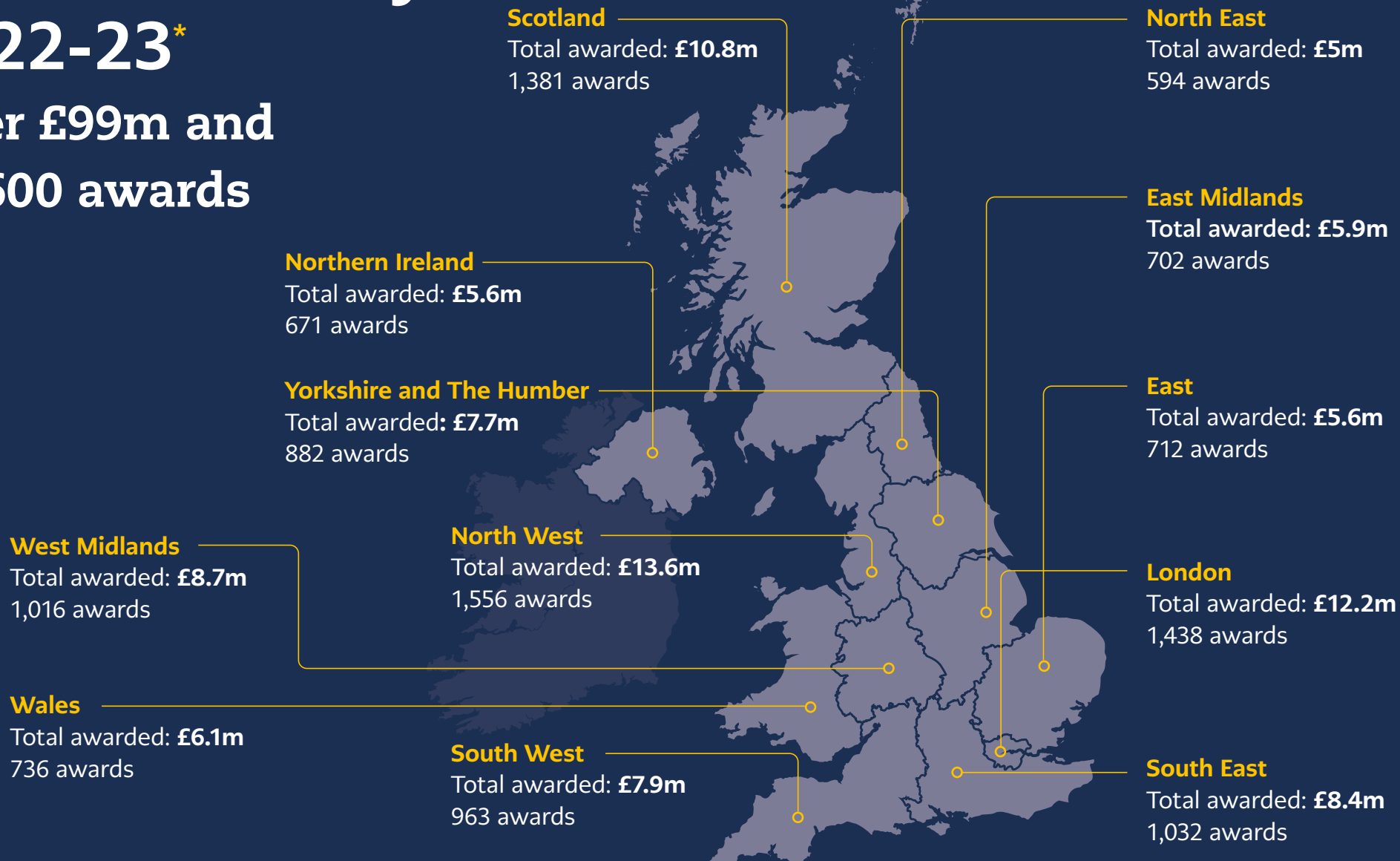
Regional reach

Nottinghamshire Chinese Welfare Association
England

National Lottery Awards for All

2022-23*

Over £99m and 11,600 awards

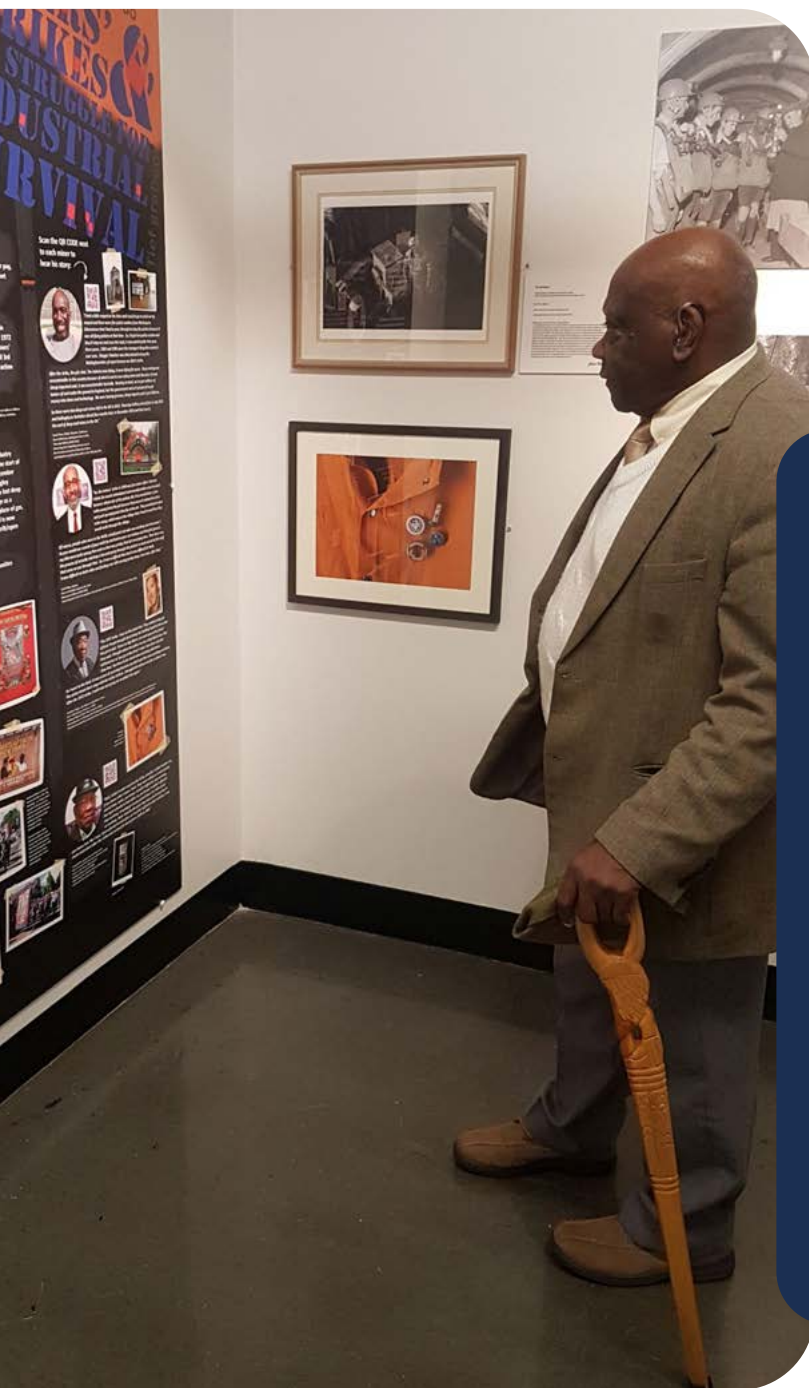


(*) Measured from 2022/2023 financial year



Case studies

Balnamore Community Centre
Northern Ireland



We've provided a few examples of how our small grants funding supports local communities across the UK, be it through projects which bring people together, work to improve people's health and wellbeing, increase their learning or work to better the environment.

“Over the past ten years, our group has been collating, preserving, and sharing our diverse, industrial heritage. We relish moments like this where communities can come together to share and hear memories, lived experiences and achievements of the Windrush generation, their descendants and legacy.

Thank you to National Lottery players for supporting our progress and journey towards diversity and inclusion through heritage.”

Norma Gregory,
Diverse Heritage Leader at
Nottingham News Centre

Project story

Industrial Voices of Windrush - Nottingham

Location: Nottingham

Awarded: £9,700

The Industrial Voices of Windrush Nottinghamshire project aimed to increase learning on the significant contributions of former ‘heavy industries’ workers to their local area, many from the Windrush generation, through promoting cultural diversity and bringing people together.

This is the first time the Nottingham News Centre applied to The National Lottery Community Fund for funding. With their National Lottery Awards for All grant, they were able to host a film screening event and heritage presentation on Windrush Day (22 June 2023), as well as a touring exhibition by the Black Miners Museum and providing free diverse educational resources over the months of June and July.

Project story

Let's Celeb:rate! - b:friend

Location: Sheffield

Awarded: £9,991

We provided just under £10,000 to b:friend to deliver a series of events for older community members to celebrate a number of national moments in 2023, including the King's Coronation, Eurovision and the 75th anniversary of Windrush across South Yorkshire.

The project aimed to introduce and increase befriending support in local communities, benefitting close to 165 people over the age of 65 who live alone and experience loneliness and isolation.



Project story

Unity Hubb - Be men together

Location: Birmingham

Awarded: £9,700

Unity Hubb is currently running a men's project, and funding means the group can now deliver weekly activities for socially isolated men, or those experiencing grief or loss, from various ethnic backgrounds living in and around the area of Ward End, Birmingham.

They offer a variety of activities including woodwork and gardening to bring these men together, providing them with a support group that helps increase their confidence, build self-esteem and reduce feelings of loneliness.

“The ethos of our work is based around an approach called asset-based community development...what we do is provide a safe space for people to come, to meet neighbours, to get connected with people they don't know, to learn about each other.”

Rashta Butt,
Community Development & Centre Manager





Project story

Queer Emporium Community Program - The Queer Emporium Outreach

Location: Wales

Awarded: £9,850

The Queer Emporium was set up in 2021 as a pop-up shop to tackle loneliness, and it has since grown into a key part of the LGBTQ+ community in Cardiff and South Wales.

Accessing funding from National Lottery Awards for All for the first time in 2023 enabled the Queer Emporium to set up a community programme of events and run pilots for events including “Speed Friendshipping”, an ongoing event run by a psychologist to help bring people together, as well as a coffee morning and “Clwb Cymraeg”, an informal chat session for LGBTQ+ people to speak in Welsh.

Project story

Eurovision @ Exeter Phoenix

Location: Exeter

Awarded: £9,050

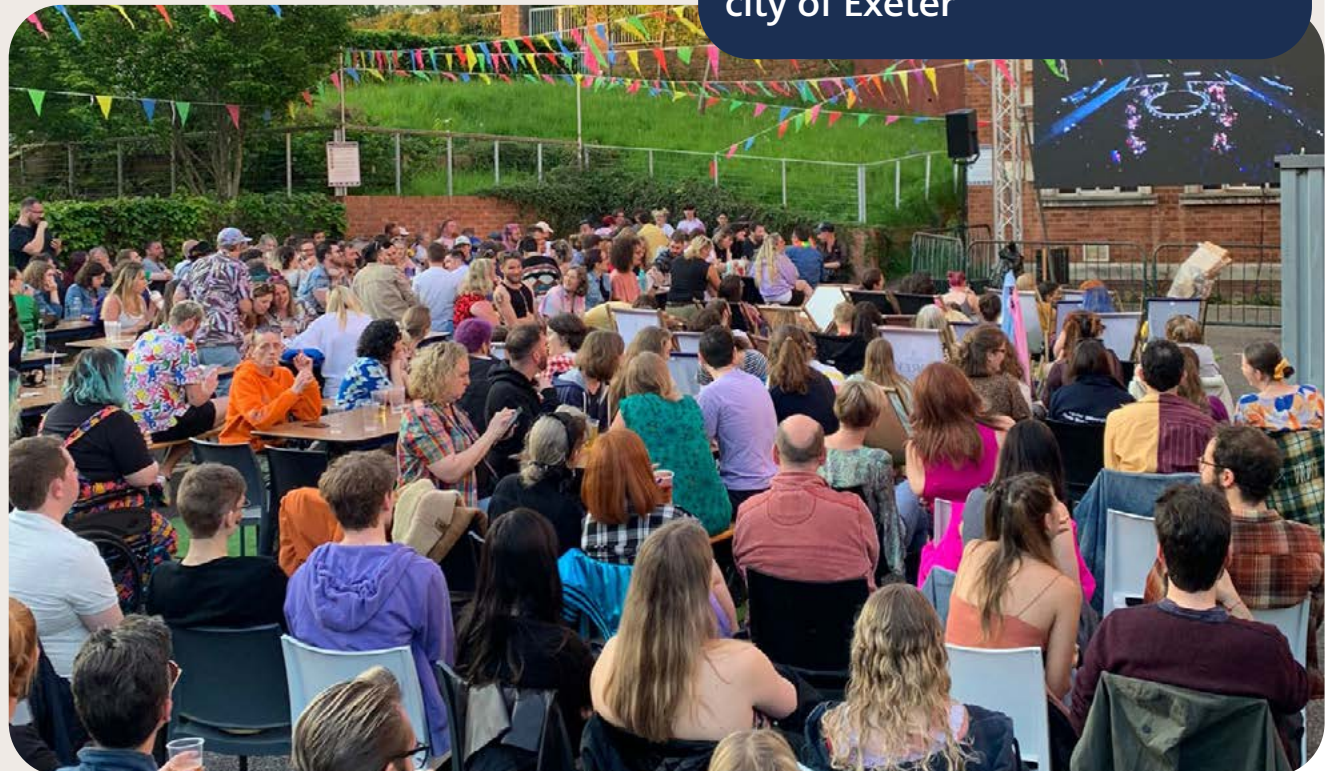
Exeter Phoenix is an inclusive and welcoming arts venue and charity, situated in the heart of the city. They provide their community with access to hundreds of activities, performances, exhibitions and opportunities each year. Their events span contemporary visual arts, digital, film and music, to dance, theatre, comedy and spoken word.

The project has a history of National Lottery Awards for All support, and the Eurovision @ Exeter Phoenix was their second grant after their first in 2017, which supported the organisation to create a creative community work hub.

This time around, the funding was used to combine the local Pride and Eurovision celebrations into one event, celebrating and supporting both the LGBTQ+ and Ukrainian refugee communities living in Exeter. The idea behind this project was to provide an opportunity to engage local marginalised groups, connecting them to their communities.

And as one happy person said, the funding has made a big difference:

“This process of creating art together in a shared space has given me a renewed hope and faith in community and in the city of Exeter”





Project story

South Shields Community Garden and Caterpillar Kitchen - NECA

Location: Newcastle Upon Tyne

Awarded: £10,000

This project provides a community garden and kitchen in an area where access to growing space is limited but the benefit to families and the wider community is invaluable. NECA work across the Tyne and Wear area and are experienced grant holders, having accessed funding for various projects supporting their popular community assets, helping to deliver community cohesion through events, groups and activities.

This year their second National Lottery Awards for All grant has meant the NECA team were able to build a caterpillar kitchen in their community garden.

The kitchen is key to the project ethos of taking food from seed to plate and means local families can come together, grow produce, and learn to prepare, cook and/or preserve the food they've grown. In the winter, the kitchen doubles up to provide a warm indoor space for the local community, delivering year-round activities to address issues around social isolation and mental wellbeing.

Project story

Ashes to Gold

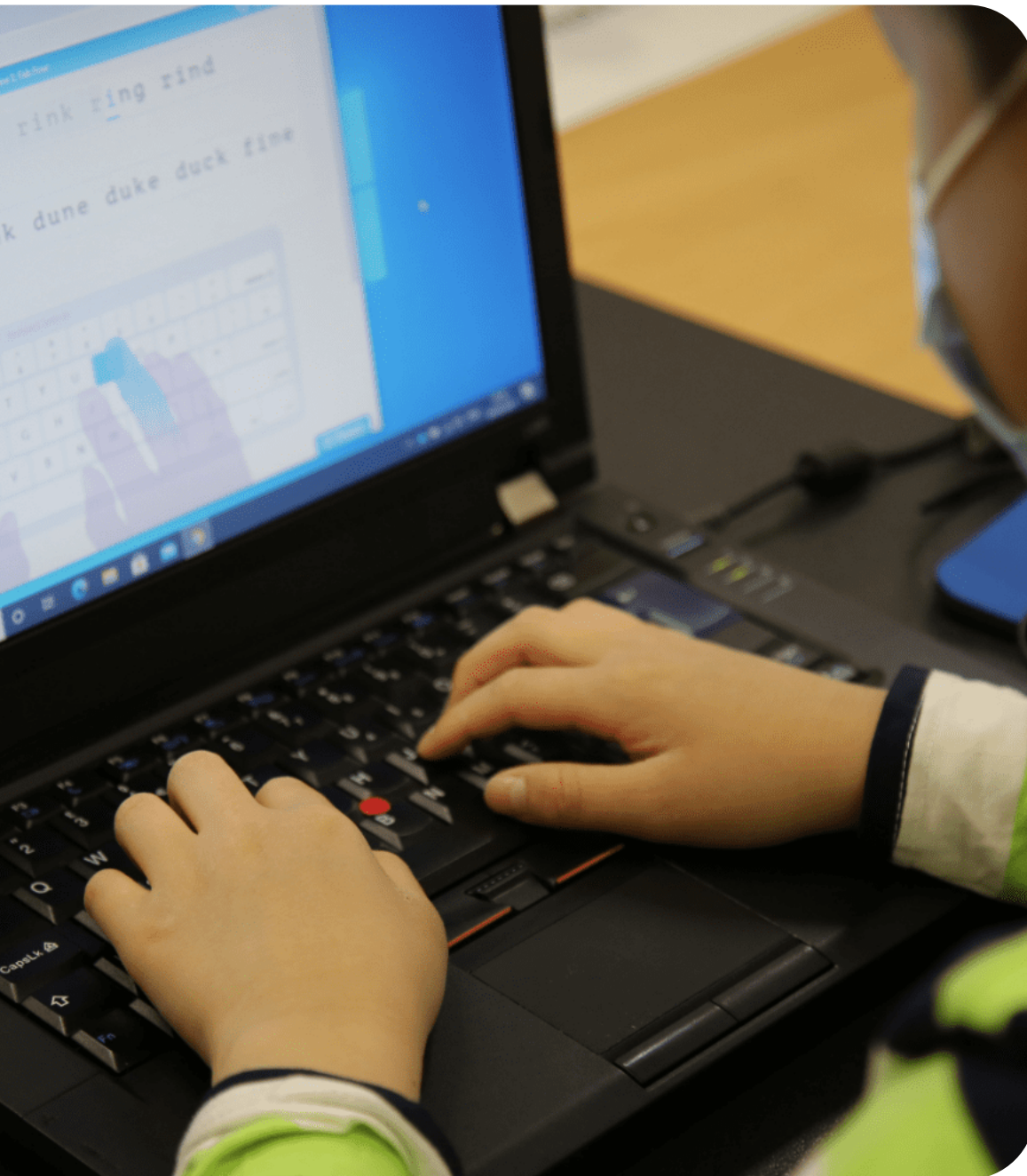
Location: County Londonderry, Northern Ireland

Awarded: £9,880

Based in Northern Ireland, improving lives and promoting positive mental health is at the heart of the Ashes to Gold organisation. Ashes to Gold have been awarded five National Lottery Awards for All grants since 2017. This time around, funding will enable the organisation to deliver horticultural and woodwork sessions to groups of adults with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and brain injuries. The total number of sessions run across one year will be 26 six-hour sessions.

The project makes a difference to the users by providing an outdoor learning space with accessibility for adults with physical disabilities. Choices for social interaction with outdoor activities in the local area are limited for groups with disabilities, so the project will make a difference to users and provide respite to families and carers.





Project story

Computer Learning Programme - Sovereign House GH

Location: Salford

Awarded: £10,000

With three rounds of National Lottery Awards for All funding between 2020 and 2023, the Computer Learning Programme run by Sovereign House GH is an ongoing project, aiming to enhance the life chances and self-esteem of children living in Salford, Greater Manchester, reaching children that do not have access to technology. Salford was chosen by the organisation due to the high levels of poverty in relation to neighbouring localities.

The project teaches children digital and other life skills that they need to build their confidence and ability for their future employability. Classes are all inclusive and of mixed age and ability, and each child takes part in the project for a minimum of 12 months. Some of the courses which students can complete include Project Constructs, Website design, Programming Languages, E-Safety, Cyber-Security, Data Programming, Cloud Computing.

Project story

Overcoming Health Inequalities - Over 50s Black Men's Forum

Location: Essex

Awarded: £10,000

Formed in 2018, the Over 50s Black Men's Forum is an organisation that provides a support network for black men aged 50+ to identify and address issues of concern to them, and to collectively tackle the issues of ageism and ethnic inequalities.

This funding is a great example of National Lottery Awards for All grants helping to continue a previously funded project. In 2022, our grants were used to deliver a health education seminar and workshops for older Black men in Essex, for example through CPR workshops and a live YouTube chat with medical professionals.

The project aimed to promote healthy ageing, with a focus on prevention rather than cure, and support for good mental health. Following the project's success in 2022, this second round of funding for the project will enable the continuation of the organisation's community preventative health education programme.





Project story

Men Matter Scotland

Location: Glasgow

Awarded: £9,625

The charity Men Matter Scotland used National Lottery Awards for All funding to deliver a 12-week peer support service in the Drumchapel area of Glasgow. The focus is on men who are struggling with suicidal thoughts and mental health issues.

The project is run by around 20 volunteers and supports 1,000 people. The charity introduced a new project called Bros Bike Club during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was also supported by National Lottery Awards for All funding.

“If we can increase people’s wellbeing, the ripple effects of that, the impact on their families, communities and neighbourhoods is absolutely immense”

Gregor Ritchie,
Co-Founder and Manager at Men Matter
Scotland

Project story

Stepping Stones - Advantage! Barrow Raiders Community Foundation

Location: Cumbria

Awarded: £10,000

Prior to Barrow Raiders Community Foundation weekly sessions, there were no sports facilities or fitness sessions for people with learning disabilities in the communities of Barrow-in-Furness and Southlakes in Cumbria. Advantage! seeks to make a difference to the health and wellbeing of their community, which has significant challenges around child poverty and adult health outcomes.

Following the success of various projects, the Stepping Stones project offers youngsters, who may not be initially attracted to the culture of club membership, the opportunity to participate in traditional and varied sports and activities free of charge. These include rugby, dodgeball, athletics, boxercise and ultimate frisbee.



Project story

Giggle Doctor Programme - The Theodora Children's Charity

Location: UK-wide

Awarded: £10,000

Theodora Children's Charity's vision is to contribute to the wellbeing of children in hospitals and specialist care centres across England living with illness, disability and serious health challenges. Their Giggle Doctors are professional performers such as actors and magicians who are specially trained to visit children in a medical environment, or through their virtual visits programme.



“National Lottery Awards for All funding has had a massive impact on our work. We have been able to reach more hospitals and as a result, our Giggle Doctors were able to visit more children and families. Applying for funding was a great process - any questions I had, I could find answers to. Everyone I spoke to was really friendly and helpful.”

Ellen Blessington,
Senior Community and Communications Fundraiser



How we award funding for National Lottery Awards for All

How we award a small grant will not change.

The essentials

We ask people to check our website and choose the funding page for the country where the project is based. There are some essential elements people will need to make an application, including:

- The legal name of the organisation and contact details of two people from the organisation.
- A bank account with a registered UK bank.
- The organisation needs to be a formally constituted community organisation, a registered charity, not-for-profit company, statutory body, school or community benefit society.
- The project should include community from the start, from the design, the development, through to delivery of the activities planned.



Ellesmere Children's Centre,
England

Applying

People can use our website to send us their application, and as we're getting more applications than usual, it can take up to 16 weeks from when you submit an application to get a decision from National Lottery Awards for All.

The changes to our National Lottery Awards for All programme mean that people will be able to apply for between £300 and £20,000 to pay for some or all of the project costs, for projects that can last up to two years.

Our process

During our assessment we will look at how your project delivers at least one of the following things.

- Brings people together to build a strong relationship in and across communities.
- Improves the places and spaces that matter to communities.
- Helps more people to reach their potential by supporting them at the earliest possible stage.
- Supports people, communities and organisations facing more demands and challenges because of the cost of living crisis.

At times we find we do not have enough funds to support all the applications we would like to. When this happens, we need to make some difficult decisions.

Your project should involve your community.

People know best what's needed in their communities. It's important to involve your community from the start - in the design, development and delivery of the activities you're planning.

We want to fund projects that are connected to local people and their communities, and use their existing skills and experience.

We aim to assess each application equally and fairly and our team meets regularly to discuss their assessments. Our managers approve the final decisions.

Our decision

We aim to have a decision within 16 weeks of receiving a complete application. We then ensure that the money is spent correctly and as applied for.



Conclusion

Yallaa Women's Choir
Northern Ireland

At The National Lottery Community Fund, we recognise the huge importance of our National Lottery Awards for All programme.

Our funding reaches communities directly and plays an important role in wider investment in areas across England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

As we take an equity-based approach to tackle inequality, be it through grants that support locally-led projects where people come together, encourage environmentally sustainable practices and behaviours among communities, enable local people to live healthier lives or help spread education and learning, our small grants have an enormous impact across the UK.

Following our recent strategy renewal process, we know there is room to grow this impact. The need for community support is clear, and our decision to double the amount of funding available, as well as double the time projects have to deliver, supports that need.

It is through small grants to communities and the people that live in them that new projects are born, new connections are made and community ties are strengthened, helping transform communities. We trust that this report gives you a good idea of the range of projects we have funded through National Lottery Awards for All.

We are excited to see how communities will use this major funding change to be able to deliver much-needed projects across the UK.





The National Lottery Community Fund is the largest community funder in the UK and is proud to award money raised by National Lottery players.

We believe it starts with community. We believe that social connections and community projects are at the heart of creating healthier, happier lives and a flourishing society.

Get in touch

To find out more about this report or to talk to our Engagement team:

Email: public.affairs@tnlcommunityfund.org.uk

To find out more about our funding and research:

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