

Spotlight Findings Paper 3

Meeting the short-term basic needs of beneficiaries

Evaluation of the Coronavirus Community Support Fund

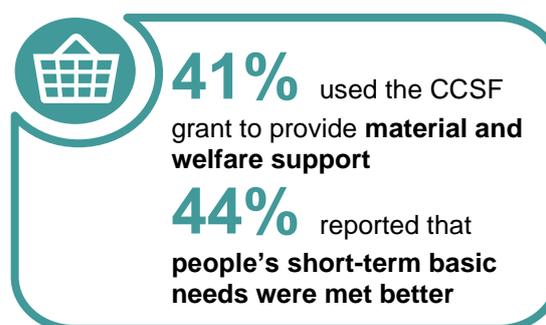
September 2021

The Coronavirus Community Support Fund (CCSF) is a funding programme supported by a grant of £187 million from Government, distributed by The National Lottery Community Fund, to help Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations in England respond to the COVID-19 crisis and increase community support to people affected by the pandemic. Ipsos MORI and partners have evaluated the programme. This is one of a series of papers which focus in depth on themes that have emerged from the evaluation.

During the pandemic, the ways in which people and communities lived significantly changed due to the risk of COVID-19 and the associated restrictions. Some people found themselves in particularly challenging circumstances, for example, **being put on furlough, becoming redundant or shielding at home** all had implications on people's ability to access basic items. For some, this was a financial challenge and for others, they would be putting themselves or others at risk by leaving their homes.

Reflecting these challenges, two fifths (41%), representing an estimated 3,050 grantholders, reported using their CCSF grant to provide **material and welfare support**, for example, support packages, household items, food, or emergency accommodation. This was higher

amongst those grantholders supporting homeless people, asylum seekers and / or refugees, and people and families facing financial hardship.



Base: (1) Grantholder survey respondents who used the funding to adapt existing services, develop new services, or respond to an increase in demand during the Coronavirus pandemic (6,058); (2) All grantholder survey respondents (6,712)

When asked about the difference their CCSF-funded activities and support made for people and communities, a similar proportion (44%), or an estimated 3,580 grantholders, thought that **people's short-term basic needs were met better** – for example, financial, food, clothing or shelter needs. These grantholders were generally confident that their support had benefitted most of their beneficiaries – around half (53%) estimated that all or almost all of their beneficiaries (75-100%) had their short-term needs met better, and one in five (19%) reported that most of their beneficiaries (50-75%) had. Grantholders who provided material and welfare support tended to report that their beneficiaries

Funded by



In partnership with

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY
COMMUNITY FUND

Independently evaluated by



Ipsos MORI



had their short-term basic needs met better¹. Among grantholders who supported beneficiaries with meeting their short-term needs, the most common type of support was the provision of **food** (by an estimated 2,850 grantholders), followed by **toiletries and hygiene products** (by an estimated 1,990 grantholders) and **essential household items** such as cleaning products (by an estimated 1,680 grantholders). Smaller proportions provided clothing, emergency cash grants and accommodation.

Grantholders who supported people’s short-term basic needs provided...



Base: All grantholder survey respondents who stated that their CCSF-related delivery was perceived to have better met the short-term basic needs of the beneficiaries (2,944)

One in three (33%) grantholders also stated that they offered ‘**other**’ support to beneficiaries. Evidence from the qualitative research provided more detail on these different types of support and the impact on people’s day-to-day needs, which is detailed below.

Prior to the pandemic, some grantholders provided material and welfare support as part of their existing delivery model, for example, food banks. However, there was clear evidence that

other grantholders had identified that access to these items was an increasing need within their community and therefore adapted or developed new activities to respond. This often coincided with grantholders supporting **different types of beneficiaries** and **reaching more beneficiaries** than before. The CCSF Process Evaluation also identified an increased focus on grants that support basic needs compared with before the pandemic, which represented a change for The National Lottery Community Fund.

“

One of my members of staff fed back to me – she said, ‘It’s about survival.’ They were the words she used. I didn’t, at the time, appreciate the gravity of that but it was true. All of a sudden we had people asking for food, we’ve never had that before. People asking for phone credit. The little things that they’ve usually been able to provide for themselves, all of a sudden people were in a position where they could no longer provide the basics. We utilised some of the funding to go towards food, activity and well-being products and parcels that we dropped off at doorsteps and supported people on a doorstep.

”

Grantholder

Delivering food and prepped meals

Grantholders identified that people were struggling to access food for multiple reasons. This included people and families struggling financially as well as people who were vulnerable and shielding finding it more difficult to go to shops or get support from others – for example, visits from family members. In response, grantholders, including those who did not previously provide food, started **shopping pick-up and delivery services** or prepared and delivered **home-cooked meals**. For example, one grantholder previously provided face-to-face activities for children and young people but used the CCSF grant to transition to delivering food and meals for families in need, including those of the young people they previously supported.

¹ This finding was identified through a latent class analysis – see Spotlight Paper 6 for more information.

Findings from the volunteer survey also demonstrated a shift towards food provision compared with volunteer activities prior to the pandemic.



They weren't worried about calling us if they needed a food hamper or a delivery ... they knew their children were safe with us in the holiday club, and we were feeding them. We did hot meals for the children that we knew were going to struggle and maybe wouldn't have a hot meal at home.



Grantholder

Grantholders strengthened or developed partnerships with **local foodbanks, supermarkets, and pubs/restaurants** to purchase food or prepare meals. The frequency of deliveries varied – food shop deliveries often occurred **weekly** while some grantholders provided meals **every day of the week**. The CCSF funding helped grantholders especially when there was increased demand enabling them to adapt by **recruiting staff or volunteers or purchasing additional equipment and/or food**. Some delivery models donated food to beneficiaries while other grantholders set up **bespoke payment systems** that enabled beneficiaries to pay for their shopping and/or meals (often using discounted prices).

Although the primary purpose was to ensure people could access food (and therefore improve their physical health and nutrition), both grantholders and beneficiaries talked about the **positive effects these activities had on people's mental health and wellbeing**, by easing anxiety relating to having enough food for themselves and their family. It also provided more **social connection**, which was especially important for people living alone and shielding who had limited contact.

² The CCSF Learning Hub was an online platform set up to enable grantholders to build connections and share learning during COVID-19.



They would ring the doorbell, put the shopping in the passage, they'd just say, 'How are you doing today?', it was, 'Let's have a chat at the front door,' which broke the monotony of the day. I wasn't seeing anybody, so it was really lovely to know somebody was coming.



Beneficiary

Grantholders catered to dietary requirements and special requests to help people feel looked after and give them a **sense of consistency** from their life prior to the pandemic. Grantholder views from both the qualitative research and the CCSF Learning Hub² also highlighted that offering culturally sensitive meals, for example, halal, was important for successfully reaching communities.



What they wanted from us was good quality, home style food, food they're used to eating, and they wanted it hot.



Grantholder

Household items, toiletries and hygiene products

Often together with food parcels, grantholders purchased and delivered other essential household items, including toiletries and hygiene products. These were items that could typically be purchased alongside food in supermarkets and delivered together to provide people with the everyday items they needed. Some grantholders delivered '**wellbeing packs**' with small luxuries to boost the mood and wellbeing of beneficiaries.



It was food and essential toiletries. So, toothpaste, toothbrush, shampoo, conditioners, moisturisers, and that sort of thing. Then the food provision was mainly cereals and soup and those sorts of canned foods – things that can be kept for a while.



Grantholder

Again, a key benefit for the people and communities supported was that **they did not expose themselves to the risks of the pandemic**, especially if they or family members were vulnerable.



It was a good thing for [the grantholder] to offer and it helped a lot of people who just felt safe and secure in the knowledge that they didn't need to go out.



Volunteer

Prescriptions and medicines

Grantholders also picked up and delivered prescriptions and medicines for beneficiaries, developing **close links with local pharmacies** who did not have delivery services. This support was critical for some beneficiaries with repeat or regular prescriptions that they require for long-term conditions.



Getting the medication is a basic need but it also becomes a source of big worry and mental stress for people. So, it's a bit more than just the physical side of things ... I think there's probably a big mental well-being aspect to that as well as physical well-being.



Volunteer

Grantholders who worked with specific groups of people, for example, those with visual or hearing loss, or those with learning or physical disabilities, used the CCSF grant to **ensure they had any equipment or items they needed for daily activities**.

Some also helped take beneficiaries to their vaccination appointments, which was also noted by a CCSF Learning Hub activity that asked how grantholders were supporting the vaccine rollout in their communities. A small number of grantholders also delivered outreach activities to people who had not been vaccinated and

information sharing about how to access the vaccine.

Essential items for health and wellbeing

Some grantholders **tailored their support to the specific needs of their beneficiaries** especially as they changed throughout the pandemic and lockdown restrictions. In most cases, these **responded to emergency situations to prevent a breakdown in people's mental health**. For example, grantholders purchased **kitchen items** (such as fridge-freezers, microwaves or blenders) to help individuals cook for themselves or their families.

Case Study Example:

Society Inc are a registered charity that provides mentoring and befriending across the Greater Manchester area. During the pandemic, the charity also began receiving new types of requests for support beyond mentoring and befriending. For example, people were asking for food, toiletries or phone credit, especially those who were vulnerable and shielding. Society Inc used part of the CCSF grant to deliver food, activity and well-being products and parcels to doorsteps, including 65 Christmas hampers. They also purchased and provided computer tablets and phones to help clients engage in online activity and support.

If staff saw that a client needed a specific item that would support their physical and/or mental wellbeing, staff could 'apply' to use a portion of the CCSF grant to purchase these items.

"My fridge-freezer was broke and all the food that was in it, I had to fling ... She rang me back a few days later and said [Society Inc] were getting me a fridge-freezer. It was just unbelievable ... it's lovely."

– Beneficiary



We helped somebody, she had no carpets, no fridge, no freezer, no money, and with a family, with a son and a daughter who wouldn't go to school and we helped her to get some stuff. And the son, we helped him get a bike so he could go to work, he got a job. We helped his mum to get a second-hand fridge-freezer and that kind of thing.



Grantholder

Grantholders also recognised that some people did not have digital devices and/or the knowledge or confidence to use them to access support. As such, some provided beneficiaries with devices, such as a **mobile, tablet or laptop**, or **phone credit**, if needed. Some beneficiaries also needed support using the device – for example, **how to access support or order shopping online**.



He also wanted a phone that he could access the internet on. His contribution would be that he could top that phone up and pay for the internet, because he was able to do that financially, but he wasn't able to pay for the initial outlay of the equipment and the phone. We supported him with that and had one of our mentors doing home visits to him ... We had to teach him how to utilise the phone. It wasn't just a matter of buying it for him, it was about showing him how he could do his shopping online, where previously he'd had carers who dropped off shopping, etc..



Grantholder

Supporting other short-term basic needs

A small proportion of grantholders used their CCSF grant to support beneficiaries by providing **clothing**; offering **emergency cash grants**; or finding them **suitable accommodation**. This included organisations working with homeless people who were acutely impacted by the pandemic and restrictions. Grantholders also provided **safeguarding** and **signposted people**

to services where they needed additional specialist support in the short-term.



The priority is to meet the homeless' essential needs, so that comes down to housing as and when we can and then things like providing hygiene, food and clothing. Secondary, it would be to build up the communities' confidence of health and well-being. Once someone has been re-homed, they're offered ongoing support.



Grantholder

Other grantholders provided **activity packs for children and adults**, including books or creative tasks. While closely linked to educational development, these packs supported the wellbeing of children and families who experienced difficulties during the pandemic.

Key takeaways

Overall, for some beneficiaries, the provision of material and welfare support to support people's short-term basic needs was **critical to preventing and/or responding to potential emergency situations** given higher levels of need than usual. Providing food, medication and other items essential for day-to-day life had wider implications for the physical and mental health and wellbeing of beneficiaries.

Evidence sources:

Grantholder survey: Ipsos MORI conducted an online survey with grantholders that received funding from the CCSF. Fieldwork was conducted between November 2020 and April 2021 and a total of 6,712 grantholders responded.

Findings from the grantholder survey were extrapolated to estimate the overall figures among all grantholders. This assumes that the findings among those who did not respond to the survey would have been replicated proportionally among those grantholders that did respond to the survey. Numeric data presented in this paper represents the extrapolated data.

Qualitative interviews: Ipsos MORI, NPC and TIHR conducted a total of 266 depth interviews with grantholders, and a further 33 case studies, including interviews with 72 staff members, 25 deliver partners, 28 volunteers, and 49 beneficiaries.

The CCSF Learning Hub: The Learning Hub aimed to create opportunities for grantholders to build new connections and share learnings on the ways in which their organisations had addressed the challenges of working through the COVID-19 pandemic. From October 2020 to the end of July 2021, TIHR and Ipsos MORI coordinated a range of activities and outputs. 3,242 members signed up representing 2,713 organisations.

You can read more evaluation findings at the following weblink:

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/insights/covid-19-resources/responding-to-covid-19/ccsf-grantholder-evaluation>