



Case study: Community Transport Calderdale

August 2021

Community Transport Calderdale (CTC) help people who do not have access to their own transport and face challenges getting around due to ill health, disability and/or poverty. Volunteer drivers use their own cars to take people to appointments and go shopping.

CTC received £42,414 from the Coronavirus Community Support Fund (CCSF). The CCSF is a funding programme supported by a grant of £200 million from Government, distributed by The National Lottery Community Fund, to help organisations in England respond to the COVID-19 crisis and increase community support to people affected by the pandemic.

How was the CCSF grant used?

COVID-19 had a significant impact on the people who use CTC services, most of whom are aged over 80 and needed to shield. This left many isolated and unable to buy basic supplies or go to medical appointments. CTC also found it more difficult to support people safely because of the need to socially distance and clean vehicles between uses. Their volunteer numbers fell as many were shielding themselves.

Lockdown restrictions also prevented CTC from running its Minibus Hire and Trips Service, which took isolated clients on outings. This service was an important source of income for CTC and as a result of it being unable to run, they had to furlough ten staff members to protect their finances.

CTC consulted their service users early on and determined that the most pressing need they faced was being able to get food whilst their normal transport options were unavailable or unsafe. They then applied for CCSF funding partly to run a shopping service to address this identified need.

The funds were also used to recruit and train new volunteers and to buy the personal protective equipment (PPE) they needed to make services safe. The organisation also used around a third of its CCSF grant flexibly to cover core costs such as administrative staff salaries, vehicle maintenance, IT and communications equipment, rent and utility bills.

In this way, the grant made up for lost income in other areas, and helped the organisation keep going.



A lot of our work revolves around trying to work with people who are at risk of loneliness and isolation, and suddenly everybody's isolated, everybody's stuck at home. So, it's hard to overstate the impact of that on the communities we work with. – Staff member

Quick facts:

Grant period: **July 2020-January 2021**

175 people supported

483 shopping trips made

406 medical appointments/vaccine trips made

35 volunteers used to support delivery

Three key messages:

- ① The majority of CTC's regular volunteers were unable to help because of the need to shield themselves from the virus
- ② Most of CTC's new volunteers were recruited via social media channels
- ③ Staff, volunteers and beneficiaries felt the service's most important benefit was that it increased clients' social contact

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What difference did the CCSF grant make?

For people and communities

CTC report that they successfully helped 175 vulnerable and isolated local residents to:

- Receive food, toiletries and essential household items (25-49% of those supported);
- Access NHS healthcare appointments and operations (50%-74%); and
- Increase their social contact (75-100%).

CTC highlight the increase in social contact as being particularly important as many of the people supported experience loneliness and isolation, which was made worse by COVID-19. Feedback from those supported suggested that CTC's help had been a 'lifeline'. One client said she felt confident that CTC would be there for her for as long as she needed them and that there was 'no way at all' that her experience could have been better. The most important benefit was the friendship she made with her volunteer as this was the only person she saw over much of the grant period.

CTC also helped people to save money. They only charged for volunteer expenses and so transport was a lot cheaper than a local taxi service, which would have been the only alternative for many.



Up to the pandemic, I used to go on an access bus to go to the local supermarket to do my own shopping. Once I'd been told to stay at home and shelter, I had no other way of getting my shopping until [CTC] contacted me and offered me the shopping service. – Shopping Service Client

For volunteers

CTC used the CCSF grant to recruit a new group of volunteers as quickly as possible. They shifted their focus to younger people, who may have been furloughed and were looking for something to do with their time. CTC also increased its use of social

media to encourage new volunteers. This proved to be very successful and has given CTC valuable lessons in how to engage with different parts of the community

Volunteers appreciated the opportunity CTC gave them to 'give back' to the community. They also enjoyed the opportunity to 'become friends' and chat with the people they helped.

Volunteers felt that CTC had set up the service well and it was easy to get involved. One volunteer was so positive about their experience that it had inspired her look into other volunteering roles.



It was a good experience; I'd do it again and I'd definitely recommend it. It was a good thing for [CTC] 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. – Shopping Service Volunteer

For the organisation and its staff

The CCSF grant enabled CTC to bring back five staff from furlough and to recruit ten new volunteers very quickly. The grant also helped CTC to move as many services and processes as possible online, for example volunteer training and coordination.



We had no other money coming in because... all our regular jobs stopped. So the support from the grant, we were desperate for it, and it supported us in all different sorts of ways. – Staff member

CTC staff said the grant enabled them to reach more people than would have otherwise been possible. They also said that without the funding, they may have had to make some employees redundant and close or scale back services during a time when they were acutely needed.

Key learning from experience:

Moving volunteer recruitment, induction and training online has helped CTC speed up its volunteer recruitment processes. They have decided to continue doing this online after the pandemic.

Want to know more?

Website: ctcalderdale.co.uk

Twitter: https://twitter.com/CT_Calderdale

Facebook: facebook.com/communitytransportcalderdale