



The National Lottery Community Fund

# Making a difference





Images in this booklet feature our grant holders across the UK.

Front cover left to right:

1. Hull Sound Circles
2. Longstone School
3. Shantona Women's Centre
4. Cardiff Community Housing Association
5. Hull Sound Circles
6. PARCA

Arts Etká, Northern Ireland

## Supporting people and communities to thrive

The National Lottery Community Fund is the largest community funder in the UK and is proud to award money raised by National Lottery players. At the heart of our work is the belief that when people are in the lead, communities thrive. We listen, collaborate and fund so that we can support great ideas that make good things happen.

Last year we funded over 14,000 projects and awarded £590 million in grants to every local authority in the UK. We are very proud that almost 60% of our grants in 2019 were awarded to new grantees and supported 30,000 active projects in 2019/2020 alone. Our funding reflects our commitment to value the diversity of communities and their creativity. We support charities, community groups, and people with great ideas – local or national, large or small.

We can't reflect on the difference our funding made to communities over the last year without acknowledging the radical shift in the UK in early 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic reached the UK. During the coronavirus crisis people have really felt the importance of civil society and community projects.

We accelerated our operations to respond at speed and awarded over £474 million of National Lottery funding, with over 16,000 grants supporting organisations across the UK since lockdown began in March through to December. We will continue to work with others, sharing our experience, intelligence from communities and expertise gained from insights drawn from people and communities as we all continue to renew our thinking and response to the COVID-19 crisis. Our funding continues to provide crucial support - building and maintaining strong communities and networks.

**£474m** National Lottery funding to over

**16,000 organisations**

across the UK since lockdown began

# We're based in the communities we serve

Our funding reaches every area in the UK, going into every Local Authority, constituency and over 90% of wards across the UK in 2019/2020.

Our support ranges from small grants under £10,000 to strategic multi-million-pound investments supporting key policy areas, the work we fund supports people throughout their lives. We listen and respond to what matters now and help prepare communities for the future.

In total

## 27,000 projects

projects we funded were active in 2019/20, one in every local authority in the UK

We fund all parts of the UK, including large cities, towns and rural areas. We have been levelling the playing field across communities in the UK for 25 years. Over 30% of our funding last year went to the 20% most deprived areas in the UK and over the last five years, over half of our grants went to organisations in the 30% most deprived areas now covered by the UK Government's levelling up agenda.

We believe our funding staff should be close and accessible to communities, that is why we have a model of our funding teams living and working across UK regions and nations. This countrywide network means we are always learning from local knowledge and culture to continuously improve our offer.

**60%** of our grants go to **small organisations** running on less than £100,000 a year.

"Not only do I look forward to the many activities and events I attend, but being in the company of so many new people, many of whom I now think of as great friends."

Derrick



Newtownabbey Senior Citizen's Forum, Northern Ireland

## Communities know what they need



Ullapool Sea Savers, Scotland

Children's marine conservation charity Ullapool Sea Savers held a socially distanced, community-wide, prawn appreciation party to support local fishermen and boost morale during the COVID-19 lockdown.

After buying two days' catch of prawns from a local creel boat, the children – with help from parents – inspected and then divided the catch, which they offered for free online and distributed around the village. Ullapool households then posted photos of the meals they cooked on social media.

### Action in Caereau and Ely (ACE)

ACE is owned and run by the residents of two council estates in western Cardiff. Started as part of Communities First, a Welsh Government anti-poverty programme, it works to improve and regenerate its communities. Projects range from crisis support to community arts and crafts – and, like most organisations, ACE has had to rethink how it operates to meet the challenges of COVID-19.

The National Lottery Community Fund has supported ACE since 2012, including a £498,343 grant as part of the Helping Working Families programme, and a specific grant of £9,288 for its Your Local Pantry scheme.

**“If I'm unsure about anything, money, bills, housing or the kids and school, I pop into ACE as they know me, listen, don't judge and they can help me.”**

Emma

## Supporting community renewal

Our funding helps to improve, regenerate and support communities to realise the vision they have for their community. We believe that communities know what they need, and how to achieve it, funding community groups and the services they provide can yield great societal benefit and good value for money. We find that small sums can offer big returns. Our funding often goes to groups who are mostly, or entirely, voluntary. In total 60% of our grants go to these organisations operating on a shoestring – often with turnover of less than £100,000 a year, but touching many lives.

### Nu Life Furniture

Nu Life Furniture upcycles and renovates donated furniture and white goods and then offers them to local people at affordable prices, helping over 500 households. More than that, it's saved over 100 tonnes of material going to landfill and offered more than 10,000 hours of volunteering opportunities for young people who have learned skills that help their career prospects.

James hasn't had a stable job in the nine years since leaving school and his mental health was being affected. His support worker suggested he volunteer at NuLife.

**“Now I volunteer here every day. I've got skills now and it's given me more confidence. It's given me a reason to get up in the morning. I don't know where I'd be without it.”**

James

## Small sums making a big difference

### Microgrants enabling people in the lead

In November 2019, to celebrate the 25th birthday of The National Lottery, we built on our experience of awarding microgrants with #CelebrateNationalLottery25, making £2 million available for people to apply for funding up to £1,000 to bring people together in their community. 54% of applicants were applying to us for the first time. Grants were awarded in 2020.



Guinness World Records™  
largest cream team party

In June, for the second year running we supported the West Midlands Mayor's Community Weekend. Working in partnership with the West Midlands Combined Authority, we offered small amounts of funding to communities across the West Midlands for community events.

**52% of successful applicants had never applied to us before.**



Mayor's Community Weekend, England

## Flexible and long-term funding

We know that backing organisations with long-term funding can be one of the most valuable things we do. Long-term support gives grant holders the breathing space to develop the solutions they know will make the most difference.

Through our Strategic Portfolio we are investing over £500 million across England to tackle long-term societal challenges in innovative ways. This funding is being delivered through five long-term programmes which support people from birth through to later life: A Better Start, HeadStart, Talent Match, Fulfilling Lives and Ageing Better.

These five major programmes were set up to trial new approaches to service design, which aim to make people's lives healthier and happier, from babies and very young children through to those in later life. Due to current need, we recently announced an additional £14.7 million for the HeadStart and Ageing Better programmes to ensure that young people will receive support with their mental health and loneliness will be tackled in older people across all corners of England.

We focus long-term funding on other areas of national importance. Youth Social Action for example is a long-term commitment where we believe we can make a real difference and unlock investment elsewhere through our work.

Last year we announced our £100 million Climate Action Fund to help communities, marking a ten-year commitment to enable charities and communities to work together to try and affect positive environmental change from a group-up movement. We hope this will act as a catalyst to spur greater action both from the communities we directly support, but also through inspiring other funders and activists that we see long-term sustained change across the UK.



"When being involved in change, as an expert, it can give you a sense of pride. That your experience is valid, that there is a hope to improve the service for future."

Expert panel member

Fulfilling Lives Conference, England

## We convene communities of practice

We are privileged to be in a position to look across the work of thousands of organisations. Greater openness and honesty about our successes and challenges can enrich everyone and we actively bring people together to share and learn from each other.

**Our funding colleagues work as a nationwide network, gathering learning and helping ensure we are supporting people to strengthen their communities as they see fit.**

Throughout 2019/20 we held events across the UK bringing together projects who tackle loneliness, organisations delivering social prescribing, and convening communities of practice for early years and supporting elderly people.

While the COVID-19 pandemic continues, we are holding similar events online.



St Joseph's Hospice, England



Birmingham loneliness policy breakfast

## We share insight and learning

We want to continue to support the exceptional work made possible by people working with and for their communities. This requires more than grant-making alone. By connecting people across the UK and harnessing the learning and insight generated by the thousands of projects that we support – we can support more collaboration and shared solutions. Our Evidence Library launched in 2019 is helping make our intelligence drawn from evaluations and wider research accessible to external audiences. During the pandemic we've shared our learning at pace through digestible voices from the ground, helping to inform our thinking and generate insight in a fast moving situation.

We hope what follows gives a sense of some of the work happening around the country every day, funded thanks to National Lottery players. These examples inspire us daily and by sharing them, we hope to inspire others to think about what can happen when people are in the lead.

**Nearly 10,000 people have used these learning resources since launch in the summer of 2020.**



Reaching Families, England

## Building connections

Every year The National Lottery Community Fund supports thousands of projects that bring people together by celebrating diversity, creating friendships and connections, and reducing loneliness and isolation. Since the COVID-19 outbreak, even more of the activity we support has moved online or taken place over the phone.

Loneliness affects millions of people of all ages across the UK and in the last year £105 million has been awarded to nearly 2,000 projects tackling loneliness and social isolation.

We fund projects like the Time to Talk Befriending project who uses National Lottery Awards for All funding to match volunteer befrienders with vulnerable older people who would otherwise have minimal or no other social contact, or our Reaching Communities grant to The Voice That Makes A Difference, based in Northampton, which brings over 1,000 young disabled people together to enjoy films by providing 24 hour accessible screenings at local cinemas.



Time to Talk Befriending

# Backing communities to thrive

Charities and community organisations across the UK help make vibrant, diverse and active local communities, and growing the resilience of civil society is vital in holding these communities together and maintaining social fabric.

A key component of this is empowering people with lived experience. Our Leaders with Lived Experience Pilot Fund was developed and co-produced through workshops across the UK involving more than 70 lived experience leaders. It aims to embed experts by experience in all aspects of an organisation's operations, learning how people with first-hand experience can become leaders and how funders can support them. Its success has seen us now launch a second round to maintain momentum in this important area.

We believe a thriving civil society is a diverse and inclusive one. That's why we are one of 13 charitable foundations who have formed a coalition to tackle issues that stop diversity, equity and inclusion from flourishing in charities.

We are actively exploring partnerships, like the recently announced Phoenix Fund, committing £1.4 million to a partnership with the Global Fund for Children. The funding will support a new black and ethnic minority-led fund that will support BAME communities and leadership in England.

## Other ways we're championing change

Diversifying grant-making workforce by backing 2027 and Change 100 (in association with Leonard Cheshire Disability)

Our £15 million Digital Fund was set up to enable organisations to use digital tools to take a major leap forward or to scale/increase their impact

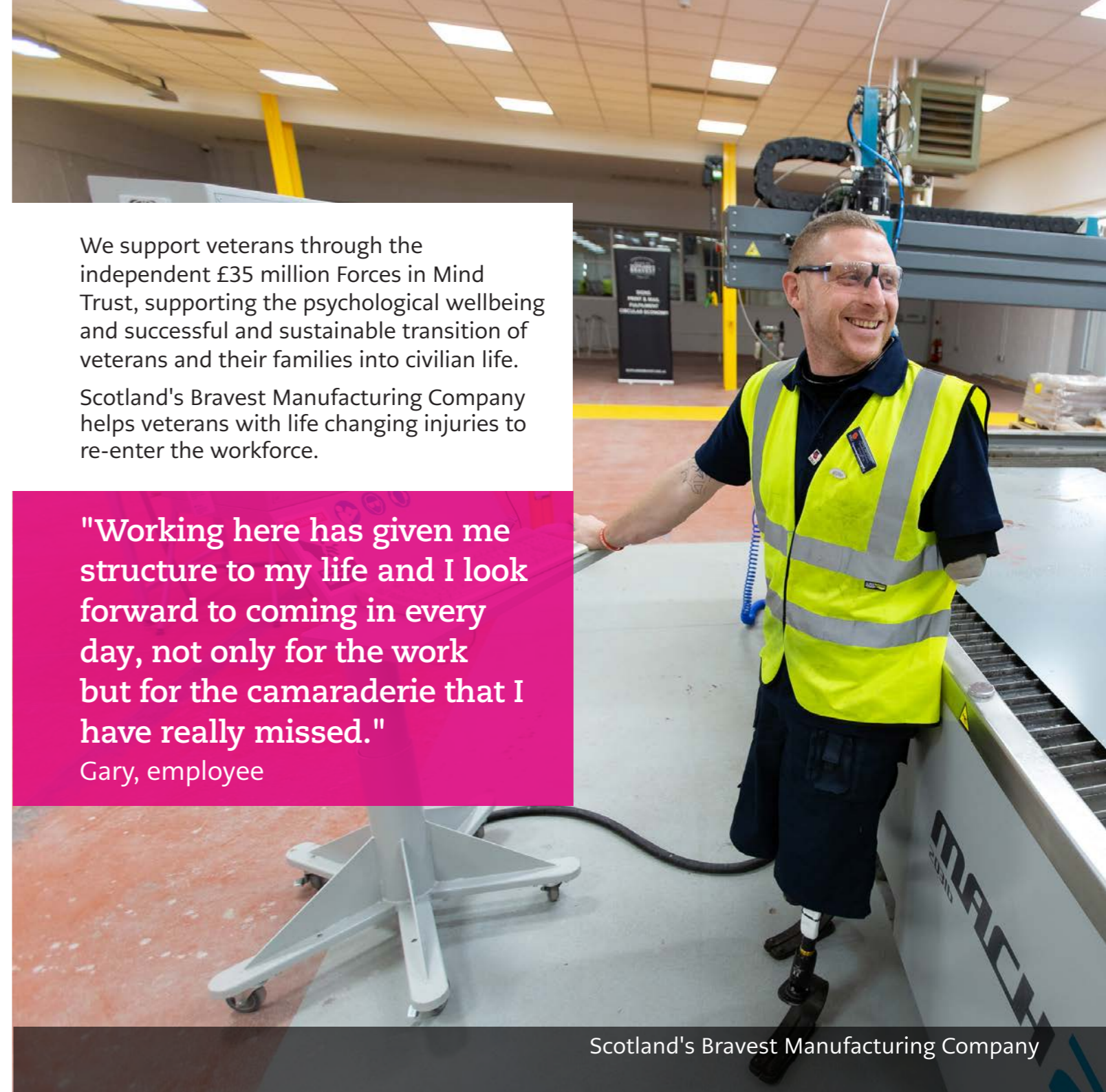
Our Emerging Futures Fund is funding organisations to look at how to transition and change to be more resilient for the future and we are sharing their stories.

We support veterans through the independent £35 million Forces in Mind Trust, supporting the psychological wellbeing and successful and sustainable transition of veterans and their families into civilian life.

Scotland's Bravest Manufacturing Company helps veterans with life changing injuries to re-enter the workforce.

**"Working here has given me structure to my life and I look forward to coming in every day, not only for the work but for the camaraderie that I have really missed."**

Gary, employee







## Celebrating The National Lottery

Some of our funding is nationwide, such as the four-year £8.6 million grant we awarded towards The Big Lunch, which saw 5.6 million people attend over 90,000 Big Lunch events all over the UK in June 2019.

Even in June 2020 and at the height of lockdown the Virtual Big Lunch saw 4.1 million join online Big Lunch events to celebrate with their communities.

We also support one-off events like achieving the Guinness World Records™ title for largest cream tea party at the Sage Gateshead in October 2019, hosting 1,054 people from all over the world.

In 2019

**90,000**

people attended Big Lunch events

Guinness World Records™ largest cream tea party

**We fund a broad range of activities  
in communities across the UK.**

The following section puts a spotlight on three chosen themes, highlighting some of the people and communities we work with: young people, the environment and digital shifts.





"I'm excited to see what we're going to achieve in the future, and I hope to be an inspiration to other young people."

Rachel, 17,  
Member, Young People in  
the Lead Advisory Group

## Spotlight on: Young people in the lead

In the last year we have funded £170 million for 5,500 projects supporting young people. We are proud that we are the largest funder of youth activity in the UK.

We have our own Young People in the Lead Advisory Group, which makes sure that young people are in the lead and are a key part of our funding and responses to issues that impact them and their peers. The group has continued to meet online throughout COVID-19 and is helping us with our crisis response.

### Supporting their community through COVID-19

The young people's steering committee of Black Country Talent Match has set up an online peer support group for young people who feel isolated and have low confidence and self-esteem.

We fund over

**6,000**

projects that support children and young people



Jack, Member,  
Young People in the Lead Advisory Group



Young People in the Lead Advisory Group

# Spotlight on: **The environment**

As part of our Environment Strategy, in July 2019 we launched the Climate Action Fund - a commitment of at least £100 million to enable people and communities to take the lead in tackling the climate emergency.

This is part of a three-pronged strategy that alongside our Climate Action Fund, includes ensuring that as an organisation we are as green as possible and supporting community organisations to do the same. For example, by exploring ways to mitigate their impact on the environment. Our Climate Action Top-up scheme is being piloted in Wales and this year we have awarded over £19.5 million from the Climate Action Fund to 23 projects, from Cumbria to Cornwall, and Glasgow to Gwynedd.



Climate Action Fund launch event



Shettleston Community Growing Project, Scotland

**“Not only does this project have a positive impact on the environment in Hackney, it also helps reduce social isolation and enables people to thrive.”**

Siobhan,  
Community Projects Coordinator, St Mary's Secret Garden



## Spotlight on: Digital shifts

We have always supported and continue to support people and organisations at any point of their journey, with the ability to harness digital key in creating a step change in UK civil society. We are already doing this with the Digital Fund but also through funding organisations such as CAST who add the opportunity to reach those smaller organisations that could greatly benefit from this support.

COVID-19 has also been a catalyst for change in the sector around provision of digital services and digitalised processes. Lockdown measures especially meant that many charities and community organisations had to shift rapidly to remote working and service delivery. Digital solutions are not a panacea, with many of our grant holders feeling that digital services cannot replicate all the benefits of face-to-face services, but they are part of a combined solution.

### We are With You

We awarded We are With You a grant of £492,902 from the Coronavirus Community Support Fund to help them continue to offer support and advice to people with a wide range of needs, through setting up of webchat and online groups, and development of digital programmes and individual relief funds.

While lockdown meant the team had to be creative with how they provided support, they were able to continue to help almost all their previous beneficiaries, as well as a host of new faces. They found they were able to connect with people outside of normal hours, without travel as a necessity and without the constraints of limited meeting space. This meant more people can be helped at times that suit them and are not dependent on the availability of meeting spaces or the ability to travel to a physical space.





"We understand that women and birthing people need practical support about how to adapt to changing circumstances."

Nyree-Dawn,  
Founder of Mum Bub Hub

Providing personalised, specialist help to women who are having difficulties accessing care, Mum Bub Hub's new online Support Hub is helping ensure that new mothers in London can get the support they need, thanks to National Lottery funding.

Mum Bub Hub, England

## The National Lottery Community Fund is for everyone

These things do not happen on their own – community activity requires support. We support organisations across the voluntary and community sector, from the smallest community groups to nationwide charities, both to do what they do day-to-day and to increase their resilience for the future.

We work with communities to support the areas they identify but we also work alongside other funders and with government on key agenda nationally such as climate action, loneliness, ageing better and supporting young people to name a few. We have also delivered largescale government programmes alongside our own funding when needed to do so, such as with the Coronavirus Community Support Fund.

We work to lead the way in innovative and iterative funding, testing and learning new approaches and using our nationwide network to try and address acute issues in the areas that most feel them. We work with a network of funders and voluntary and community organisations to share what we learn, informing best practice and always looking to expand our partnership approach and work and share with others.

We are nationwide and based in the communities we support, we are the largest funder of community activity in the UK and we understand the things that the many and diverse communities from every geographical region in the UK want to be supported with.

The National Lottery Community Fund is for everyone.

Last year,  
**87%**  
of new grants were for  
**£10,000 or less**



Footprints Women's Centre,  
Northern Ireland

If you would like more information or to apply  
for funding visit [tnlcommunityfund.org.uk](https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk)

