

# Our grant making strategy during the Coronavirus period and beyond



## Operating principles

Community Foundation Wales supports charitable organisations, we find and fund local projects that help strengthen communities across Wales. We are a local funder that understands and cares deeply about people and places in Wales, the sector is supported by the work of more than 30,000 charitable organisations, which deliver key services and support local communities. We strive to engage personally with our grantees and partners, listening to their needs and responding to opportunities to work together. With this in mind, and using learning from our Coronavirus Impact survey, the following principles will guide us through this Coronavirus crisis:

**Our focus is on the needs of grassroots groups** – these small, local charitable organisations are the lifeblood of communities and can really help shape a sense of belonging to a county, town or village. Working on the ground, they are best placed to react and adapt to the changing needs of those they engage with on a daily basis. These groups, who often have the least access to funds from major donors or large fundraising events, will remain our priority.

**We will make applying for a grant as easy as possible** - we have adjusted our processes to make it even more straightforward for groups, with light touch but robust assessment and reporting. We will continue to undertake our usual due diligence checks to filter out fraudulent applications at assessment stage. We have increased payment runs to ensure we can get money out to where it is needed as quickly as possible. Our donors and fund holders trust us to use their money where we see fit; we in turn trust the people working in local communities to get on with what is needed, when and where it is needed.

**We will support groups for the long term** - the needs we will prioritise initially are the immediate ones, of groups responding and adapting their service to support those that are most vulnerable to the pandemic crisis. However, we also want to support groups and communities to be viable in the post pandemic future, whenever that may be. Where we receive applications from charitable groups who have lost and will continue to lose significant fundraising/trading income due to having to close their doors for the duration of the pandemic we will defer these applications until we have an improved picture of how the future will look. At this time, we will review these applications on a case-by-case basis to ensure fair decisions will be made based on geography, on issue and on need using any new knowledge and understanding of need we have obtained during the crisis.

**We will regularly review and analyse our grantmaking data** – using the data gleaned from our continuing Coronavirus Survey and from our grant making we will ensure we are supporting the needs of all those who are facing hardship across Wales. We will target areas where we are seeing fewer applications. Where we see gaps in our support to groups working with people in crisis we will take time to target these groups, to talk to them, to listen and to better understand how we can best support them to add value to their work, ensuring that services to those in some of the most vulnerable situations in Wales can continue. We will be transparent, honest and clear about who we are funding, ensuring our data is publicly available to ensure it can also support the analysis of others.

**We believe the health and vibrancy of the sector lies in the health and vibrancy of its people** - throughout this period of time we will aim to support people who want to champion and lead social change in the longer term, not simply to sustain organisations.

**There will be some hard choices** - we expect demand will exceed the amount of funds we will have at our disposal and we will not be able to satisfy all requests. However, we will do what we can and make sure we stick to these principles when those hard decisions have to be made.

**And we know we won't be able to fund everything** - we can't fund the cost of laying off staff or keeping them on a retainer, all charities will need to look to their own assets and reserves & government employment support if available to assist with viability.

**Finally, we believe in Generous Leadership** - now is not the time to lose sight of our charity's core charitable aims, to chase funding or to seek to undermine another organisation when it is weak. We believe wholeheartedly in generous leadership and consider the values and behaviours we exhibit now determine the community and society we create post pandemic. Partnerships are important to us; we will work positively with partners to ensure that funding in Wales is used most effectively. We believe that by working together we will recover stronger.

## Grantmaking Framework

**March 2020** - Create a survey to collate the Impact of the Pandemic on the Welsh Third Sector. Survey to remain open throughout the crisis and reviewed regularly to shape funding programme.



**March 2020** - Open Grantmaking programme to respond to the needs of local, grassroots community groups, awarding grants in line with National Emergencies Trust (NET) directive to those most at risk of Coronavirus and using Community Foundation Wales (CFW) funding where the need has been well evidenced but the beneficiaries are not deemed to fit within NET criteria.



**May 2020** - Check the findings of the survey and analysing grantmaking to identify gaps and ensure we are meeting the needs of the sector. Findings will help us to make any changes to criteria and enable us to target areas/groups that are known to be cold spots and to make any strategic grants we think are needed.



**June 2020** - Consider moving into the next stage. Look at applications that have been deferred, identifying which are critical to bringing communities back together. Consider how and when our other funding programmes can best add value to Coronavirus Resilience funding to support the essential costs of key groups who will also be continuing to respond to the needs of their communities. Check again on the findings within the survey to help shape what this may look like.



**August/September 2020** - Launch a new programme of grantmaking aimed at building resilience within the sector, recognising inspirational leadership and innovation, building new partnerships and supporting groups to diversify funding streams to strengthen sustainability. Interrogate the monitoring and evaluation to identify what groups have learnt during lockdown - what has worked well, what they will change as a result and how this learning will enhance their future work. Use this information to help inform our decision making process.

## Supporting the Welsh Third Sector to recover stronger

The Coronavirus Pandemic is affecting all aspects of people's lives: financial, education, health and wellbeing. The Pandemic comes close on the heels of devastating widespread flooding in Wales, further affecting the lives of people who are just coming to terms with the loss of homes and businesses. Findings from the Wales Community Foundation's online survey and feedback from groups supported by the Foundation, has shown how severely impacted these groups have been by the pandemic, as they struggle to support the Coronavirus response, deliver services and adapt to new ways of working whilst the need to generate income/fundraise remains crucial to survival.

Everyone is facing the pressure of uncertainty. We already know that many organisations in Wales, especially the smaller more local organisations require support in the short term to help them with managing cash flow; adapting delivery models and diversifying income streams to building resilience. As a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic they will now need to develop new ways of working and new services to meet emerging needs as well as addressing sustainability issues.

This is a great opportunity for groups in Wales to raise their game and drive change. Additional funding is required now more than ever before, to support voluntary and community organisations across Wales, to help them to maintain their service in the short to medium term. We should consider building on our relationships with other funders and with infrastructure partners to ensure that support for groups includes:

- Training, advice and guidance, including cash flow forecasting, financial and business mentoring
- Peer to peer networks
- Relevant grant funding

A key challenge for the Wales Third Sector as a whole, is how we collectively, over the medium to long term, harness the partnership work and close collaboration with Welsh Government, WCVA, National Lottery Community Fund, Wales Funders Forum etc. that has happened as a result of Wales response to the pandemic, capture the learning and together build a stronger and more resilient future for our communities.

The needs of people in Wales as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic will be different and the pressure on our communities greater. By working within the heart of our communities, and with a range of cross-sector partners, Wales will be able to renew and become stronger over the longer term.

Additional funding is required to ensure that voluntary and community sector organisations addressing key priorities within our communities, are sufficiently resourced and can continue to make a positive difference in the lives of those who are most disadvantaged. Working in partnership, this longer-term support should include:

- Community development work
- Seed funding for trialing new, co-designed, innovative ways of working (that may have been identified by adapting services)
- Partnership programme
- Training, advice and guidance for voluntary and community organisations
- Relevant grant funding

## Community Needs

The situation pre March 2020 i.e. Pre Coronavirus Pandemic:

- **Older and vulnerable people:** ageing population, social isolation and loneliness, mental health, rural isolation,
- **Poverty and deprivation:** 1 in 3 families living in a situation of poverty, rural deprivation; lack of services, poor public transport links
- **Housing and homelessness:** poor housing stock, high incidence of homelessness in some areas.
- **Health and wellbeing:** obesity, unhealthy lifestyles, depression, anxiety, self-harm and suicide, access to GPs particularly in rural areas.
- **Skills, education and employability:** low educational attainment, youth unemployment and education and skills gaps, long term unemployment, lack of skilled employment opportunities, seasonal employment, young skilled and talented young people moving away to find employment
- **Crime:** Increase of nearly 18% of violent crime between Sept 2018 and Sept 2019. Anti-social behaviour reports are also rising, as are incidents of fraud and cyber-crime.
- **Third sector:** core costs funding, longevity of funding, fundraising, sustainability, robust governance

Current needs i.e. during the Coronavirus Pandemic as identified and funded -

- **Older and Vulnerable People – funded:**
  - Self-isolating - those without family/friend support require practical support for deliveries of food and essential items
  - Loneliness – telephone befriending support
  - Money and other concerns – telephone advice and guidance
  - Emotional wellbeing (worry about their situation, friends, family and Coronavirus news)
  - Medical support (concerns over existing conditions and recovery from Coronavirus) - those without family/friend support require practical support for deliveries of prescriptions, attending medical appointments and discharge from hospital (local pharmacies, community resilience Hubs, coordinated volunteer groups).
  - Additional support for Carers – telephone support/emergency respite/online therapeutic support
  - Young people (schools closed and youth groups closed): telephone/online support
  - Supporting needs of those self-isolating: food aid and essential supplies delivered
- **Poverty and deprivation - funded:**
  - People losing income and employment, facing new financial hardship - food aid and essential supplies deliveries
  - Money and other concerns – debt and benefit/welfare telephone/online advice and guidance
  - Families with limited resources – support for education, play and other resources

- Rural isolation – food aid/essential supplies and deliveries responding to the need of those with no transport, loneliness
- Refugees and Asylum seekers with no recourse to public funds – food and essential supplies aid, advice and support
- **Housing and homelessness - funded:**
  - Money and other concerns – telephone/online advice and guidance
  - Domestic violence – telephone/online advice and guidance, refuge provision
  - Family relationship strain – mentoring and coaching, emergency accommodation
  - Addiction – Street support, temporary accommodation, food and essential supplies
- **Health and wellbeing - funded:**
  - Emotional wellbeing (worry about their situation, friends, family and Coronavirus news)
  - Mental health needs – inability to go outside due to lockdown/shielding/self isolation. Unable to visit loved ones in care homes or in hospital
  - Bereavement – Coronavirus related or other reasons, situation compounded by restrictions limiting no. of people attending funerals
  - Stress/anxiety from homeworking, relationship breakdown, loved ones working as front line/key workers
  - Addiction support - telephone/online advice and support
  - Suicide prevention - telephone/online advice and support, emergency response teams
  - Young people – online activities and support
  - Challenge to eat healthily and to exercise during isolation especially for those on low incomes.
- **Skills, education and employability:**
  - Employment loss
  - Home education
  - Lack of momentum causing demotivation.
- **Crime:**
  - Fraud
  - Increased abuse
- **Third sector:**
  - Increased demand on services
  - Adapting service to meet needs
  - Inability to trade/fundraise

- Resilience
- Sustainability
- Lack of skills

## The future

- **Grant Making:**

- Continue to raise awareness of our funding and support groups to apply.
- Continue to ensure that our grantmaking remains focussed on addressing priority community needs
- Support groups, who are in receipt of new and existing Wales Community Foundation grants, to work flexibly, to develop their services and ways of working to best support beneficiaries who are most in need
- Ensure our usual grantmaking aligns with the Coronavirus response funding to add value, complement and develop on the learning from the conversations we have had within the sector regarding challenges and opportunity.
- Where possible preserve our usual funds until the funding available in response to the pandemic has started to dry up.
- Open our usual grantmaking funds to address gaps that Coronavirus response funding cannot fulfil e.g. Grants to individuals for educational support, refurbishment/capital costs.
- Set a strong example of partnership working and encourage those that we are funding to do the same.
- Continue to publish our grantmaking data.

- **Development Work and Funding:**

- Align our work with previously identified community needs, to improve and strengthen the Welsh third sector.
- Continue to work with new and existing local partners and key stakeholders to secure additional support to address specific community needs ensuring a joined up and consistent approach and avoiding duplication e.g. Business in the Community, Institute of Fundraising, Cranfield Trust, WCVA and the CVC infrastructure support network.
- Work with new and existing donors to secure additional donations to support future resilience.
- Continue to build a strong working relationship with National Emergencies Trust and UKCF to secure funds to support groups to respond to both the continuing emergency and future recovery and resilience
- Continue to work with National Emergencies Trust, UKCF and other partners to realise any emerging UK and Welsh Government funding opportunities
- Capture the learning within online survey, monitoring and conversations to develop and create new resources to improve our support to our new and current grantees into the future.

This Strategy document should be used to help to keep us on track as we move on from emergency response to the Coronavirus Pandemic. It should act as a reminder to consider life before the pandemic, not to lose sight of the challenges and opportunities that had been identified. The pandemic has heightened the awareness of the sector to the need for strong financial planning and the fragility of over reliance on one form of income.

It should be used to reassure third sector groups that we are considering 'business as usual' following the pandemic, and that we are working to ensure our available funding will flow smoothly as we transition out of the Coronavirus Pandemic and into a 'new' normal.