

# Evaluation of the Salford Third Sector Fund Grant Programme 2019-21

## Final Report

March 2023



## **Voluntary Service North West (VSNW)**



Established in 1998, VSNW is the regional voluntary sector network for the North West. Our role is to ensure that the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, in all its diversity, takes its full part in shaping the future of the North West.

[www.vsnw.org.uk](http://www.vsnw.org.uk)

## **Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES)**



Established in 1986, CLES is the national organisation for local economies - developing progressive economics for people, planet and place. We work by thinking and doing, to achieve social justice and effective public services.

[www.cles.org.uk](http://www.cles.org.uk)

## **Salford Community and Voluntary Services**



Salford CVS is the city-wide infrastructure organisation for the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector; providing specialist information, advice, development support and opportunities for influence and collaboration.

[www.salfordcvs.co.uk](http://www.salfordcvs.co.uk)

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# 1. Forward

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Evaluating the impact of the Third Sector Fund has always been a challenging but rewarding process. The greatest challenge for Salford CVS and our independent evaluators has been conveying the level of community activity, and the range of health and wellbeing outcomes stimulated and enabled by the Third Sector Fund.

This report brings together evaluations of the years 2019/20 and 2020/21, two years that couldn't be more different in terms of addressing health and wellbeing of local people. The year 2019/20 is now seen as the 'before times', the pre-Covid-19 era, when a global pandemic was yet to impact Salford. Everything changed in 2020/21 when Covid-19 swept the UK. In addition to the direct fatalities and effects of long-Covid on individuals, the impacts on health care systems, residents' mental health, education, employment etc. created a perfect storm of need, leading to vastly increased demand on city's VCSE sector. The solid infrastructure of Salford CVS combined with the flexibility of Third Sector Fund, meant that targeted grant monies could flow to those communities without delay, and assist in mitigating the worst effects.

Ultimately, the combining of two very different evaluation periods into a single report, whilst odd, this is an example of expediency: ensuring organisational focus and resource is directed on supporting Salford's communities.

This report contains a wealth of information, statistics, and quotes collated and digested by our evaluation partners CLES and VSNW. These form a compelling 'big picture' of impact. Yet it is the rich [project case studies](#) that best illustrate the breadth and depth of what can be achieved with small grants, when backed up with development and volunteering support, training and advocacy.

**Simon Robinson**

Grants Manager, Salford CVS

March 2023

# 2. Executive Summary

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## 2.1 Findings

This executive summary details the headlines from the evaluation of the Salford Third Sector Fund grant programme (TSF) for **2019-20**. With 2020-21 being the final year the 2017-20 programme the report includes commentary on the return on investment of the fund over the full course of this cycle of the fund (2017-20) as well as the strategic impact of the fund. It also includes a process evaluation covering the period 2017-20.

The exceptional Covid year **2020-21** led to an atypical Third Sector Grants programme. Delivery plans drawn up in March 2020 were significantly changed to support the VCSE sector's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The waves of infection and lockdown necessitated a different approach to evaluation.

### **What is the TSF?**

- The TSF provides grant support to a range of voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations and schools in Salford to help them deliver a broad range of activities that are designed to improve health and wellbeing.
- The three-year programme covered in this report began in April 2017 and has a total fund of £1 million per year.
- The fund is managed by Salford CVS, funded and supported by NHS Salford CCG and is independently evaluated by CLES and VSNW. It is aligned with Salford's wellbeing, health and care objectives outlined in the Salford Locality Plan under Start Well, Live Well and Age Well.

### **What did the TSF do in 2019-20?**

During 2019-20, a total of 291 grants were awarded across sixteen different pots of funding representing a total cash investment of £840,777.24 in VCSE organisations and schools. The activities funded by the TSF reached and supported over 30,252 local people.

## **What impact did the TSF have?**

Each year that the TSF has operated we have calculated a social return on investment figure, drawing on qualitative data from grant funded activities. This figure incorporates both a monetised value of social benefit being created and savings to the state.

- In 2019-20 (the third year of the fund,) CLES calculated a social return on investment ratio of **£1: £18.29**

This compares to the following figures for the full course of this cycle of the fund:

- 2017-18: £1: £29.98
- 2018-19: £1: £17.74

## **Average social return on investment for 2017-20: £1: £22.00**

This represents an exceptionally strong return on investment for health-related outcomes and demonstrates the direct benefits of the grants awarded through the TSF.

These key outcomes are:

- Increased sense of belonging and feeling connected to the world around them
- Increased physical activity
- Increased confidence and self esteem
- Improved posture and stability in over 65s
- Reduced social isolation
- Improved mental health
- Improved school readiness
- Avoiding obesity
- Daily cost to the NHS of an emergency admission
- Emotional based learning programme

## **Did the process behind the TSF work well?**

1. Salford Third Sector Fund grants programme is achieving each of the 10 Good Grant Maker principles (Directory of Social Change) to an excellent or good standard.
2. Salford CVS has developed a highly innovative locality-based grants programme model that goes beyond the Good Grant Maker principles.
3. Through this locality-based grants programme model, TSF is building momentum and empowering a coherent and highly effective VCSE sector for the benefit of Salford's communities.

## **What was the strategic impact of the TSF 2017-20?**

In addition to the individual and population level impact of the TSF on health and wellbeing of people in Salford, TSF has had a range of wider strategic impacts. The design of the programme (being led rather than simply administered by Salford CVS, and with sustained investment from NHS Salford CCG both into the programme and the capacity of Salford CVS itself) has amplified these impacts, which include:

- Strengthened capacity of Salford CVS to operate as a highly effective infrastructure organisation for the Salford VCSE sector
- Strengthened capacity and voice of the VCSE sector in the wider health and wellbeing sector in Salford and beyond
- Social, economic and environmental benefits for Salford beyond the core health and wellbeing outcomes of the fund

## **What did the TSF do in 2020-21?**

The year 2020-21 marked the start of a new 5-year programme of investment through the Third Sector Fund (2020-25). The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was immediate both on in health and economic impacts. In agreement with commissioners a significant proportion of available monies was refocused on a number of 'response funds' to assist meet the additional demands placed on the VCSE sector.

During 2020-21, over 300 awards were made to VCSE organisations across the city. A different approach was adopted to the evaluation of the TSF tailored to the exceptional circumstances. This excluded the social return on investment due to the dataset being unavailable to the evaluators. This is further explained in section 4.1

*"Without the established networks, administrative capacity, funding and support from the CCG, Salford's VCSE sector could not have responded so swiftly to meet urgent need in a time of crisis. Through this lens I view Salford's VCSE sector PLUS the Third Sector Fund as part of our city's critical health infrastructure."*

Simon Robinson, Grants Manager, Salford CVS

Our review of the 15 case studies (2020-21) has shown that the sector has the ability to respond in a crisis, that it has a connection to local communities that is unmatched by statutory service providers, and that it should continue to play a key role in Salford's Covid recovery.

## 2.2 Recommendations

### Strategic & Process-Based Recommendations

1. Salford CVS should continue to act as a Good Grant Maker in managing the TSF.
2. Build on nuance of sector buy in to a Salford VCSE Strategy and Identity
  - a) Set context for applicants in terms of the commitment to evidencing the impact of the sector in Salford; that by applying to that fund you are committed to the spirit and goals of TSF beyond the fund applied for.
  - b) As part of reporting, ask groups if there are future investments that would build the capacity of their community

In the medium to long-term Salford CVS should:

3. Develop and promote the Locality-based grants programme management model across Greater Manchester and nationally:
  - a) This model should be developed as a means of driving a community-centred and community-led model of partnership working and placed at the heart of locality working. This model should be a core component of how Integrated Commissioning Partnerships operate.
  - b) Develop mechanisms to help test the translation of the model to different contexts, in particular an assessment of the key CVS attributes as a managing agent required to make this model transferable.
  - c) Develop a system of metrics and light touch assessment tools for this model and its quality assurance. The expertise and experience of VCSE Strategic leads should be combined with NHS E&I and CQC expertise in order to understand the characteristics of strong VCSE inclusion in a place-based model of operating that meets equalities, transformation and population health goals.
  - d) Develop model branding and promotion.



# 3. Introduction

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## 3.1 Scope of this report

This report combines an impact evaluation of year three of the current three-year cycle of the Salford Third Sector Fund grant programme (TSF) with an impact evaluation of the three-year Impact Fund Partnership Challenge fund and a strategic impact evaluation and a process evaluation covering the full three years of the programme. This introduction sets out the context for the research which informs this report, including an overview of the VCSE sector in Salford, the local health and wellbeing policy context and wider national public policy debates about the strategic contribution of VCSE organisations.

The Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) and Voluntary Sector North West (VSNW) have been the independent evaluators of the TSF since its inception in 2014.

## 3.2 Size and nature of the sector in Salford

The State of the Sector review of 2021 tells us that there are approx. 1,665 voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) groups and organisations in Salford. Collectively, their income for 2019/20 was £149.2 million. Together they supported 61,828 volunteers contributing 210,299 hours per week, valued at £104 million (based on the Real Living Wage rate of £9.50 per hour). However, Covid-19 had a significant effect on the sector with 53% using their reserves during 2020/21.

Within the local sector there are significant differences in income and organisational purpose. The majority of the sector has very little income; in fact, 68% of the VCSE organisations in Salford have an income below £10,000 pa. For a detailed breakdown of the income of the sector in Salford, see the table below.

	<b>Average income by size (A)</b>	<b>Estimated no. of organisations (B)</b>	<b>Total income (C)</b>
<b>Micro</b>	£1,199.96	1,444	£1,733,087.70
<b>Small</b>	£35,588.15	341	£12,123,819.46
<b>Medium</b>	£221,123.89	192	£42,391,192.08
<b>Large</b>	£2,269,172.54	45	£102,875,939.08
<b>Total</b>			<b>£159,124,038.31</b>

Figure 1: Make-up of the 1,665 groups based in Salford by income

Grants, and calls for grant fund proposals, offer the potential for large-scale VCSE engagement and sector mobilisation that engages a broader range of groups in a way that single contracts with partnerships and consortia simply cannot. The TSF, coupled with Salford CVS’s core wraparound support, provides a mechanism to firstly, engage more groups, secondly, engage a wider range of groups, and thirdly, to link VCSE activity to local strategic priorities.

In this programme, Salford CVS has further committed to developing its approach as a grant-making body, in particular, by developing a dedicated grants programme team to improve process and delivery, and support evaluation. As part of this, Salford CVS has sought to be a ‘Good Grant Maker’.

## 3.2 Salford Context

### Salford’s Locality Plan

The Locality Plan, launched in April 2016, is the blueprint for health and social care in Salford. It provides the agreed strategic context for the Third Sector Grants Fund Programme, linked to the needs of Salford. The Locality Plan sets out ambitions for how Salford people should be able to start, live and age well.

The development of the outcomes framework for the TSF was and is directly linked to the Locality Plan. For this, the Five Ways to Wellbeing, were identified as a strategic match and metrics developed. There are four areas of high-level connection between the Five Ways to Wellbeing and the Locality Plan:

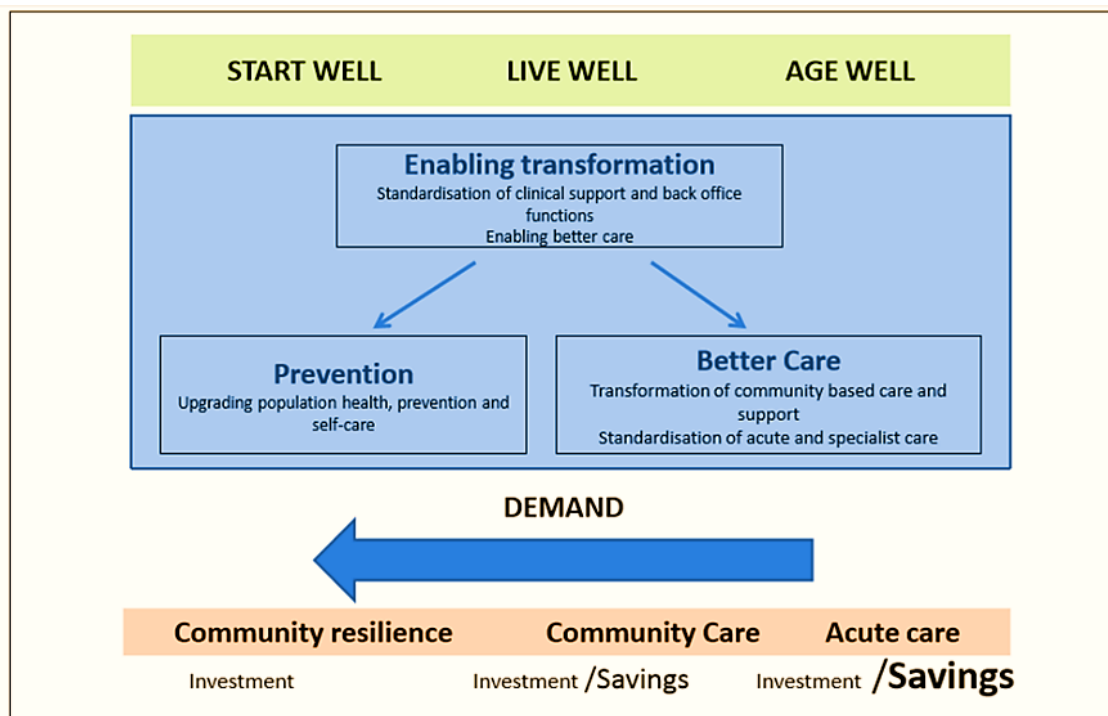
Firstly, the focus on shared responsibility for health and wellbeing with citizens, or 'personal care'. This is built across the implementation of the Locality Plan and is eloquently summarised by Principle 2: *"Our local citizens will help to shape and be fully engaged in this system, but they will also recognise the vital role they have in sustaining it by maintaining their own health, supporting neighbours and friends, and contributing to the local economy"*.

Secondly, developing the mechanisms for understanding the VCSE contribution to community-based care and support: In the plan, this is part of the Better Care domain of activity.

Thirdly, and building on the first area above, the prevention domain of delivery activity more generally: As well as self-care, this domain of activity is focused on prevention, population health and addressing the wider determinants of health inequality. The key question we wanted to begin to explore was: to what extent is VCSE activity, through the TSF, supporting 'community resilience'?

Fourthly, linked to the three delivery themes: start, live and age well: These themes frequently include addressing isolation, supporting active lifestyles, and connecting to people.

The relationship of the three delivery themes and the three domains (Prevention, Better Care and Enablers) to the aims of managing demand, and building community resilience, is illustrated in the following diagram taken from page 8 of the Locality Plan (2017).



Consequently, the Five Ways to Wellbeing were adopted as the overarching themes for the evaluation framework of Salford CVS's Third Sector Fund grants programme. This was driven by the four considerations outlined above.

The Five Ways to Wellbeing were originally developed by the New Economics Foundation and based on the findings of the 2008 Government Office for Science Foresight report on Mental Capital and Wellbeing that aimed to develop a long-term vision for maximising wellbeing in the UK.

### The Five Ways to Wellbeing:



These activities are the beginning of an understanding about what makes a resilient, or resourceful, community capable of absorbing health and social care demands.

# 4. Methodology

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This section sets out the methodology utilised by Salford CVS, CLES and VSNW to carry out the research which informs this report. Through the approaches described below we have sought to assess the impact of the TSF in a number of ways:

- In relation to grants awarded for 2019-20, we assessed the direct impact on beneficiaries as well as outcome data on savings to the state (where applicable)
- In addition, we analysed data on the impact of the multi-year Impact Fund Partnership Challenge grants, which ran for 3 years from 2017-20
- Finally, we carried out a strategic impact analysis and process evaluation covering the full period of this TSF programme, from 2017-20.

## Case studies and return on investment

The evaluation of the impact of grants awarded in 2019-20 used a case study approach. There had been plans to combine this with the distance travelled methodology piloted in 2018-19 but the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown on a large number of projects made this unfeasible. The methodology for the case studies also had to be adapted in light of Covid-19 as far fewer activities were physically taking place at the time fieldwork was conducted and visits were not possible.

### Sampling

Six of the 16 grant pots had been live for long enough for evaluation; the remainder had been live for less than 6 months and thus could not be accurately evaluated.

16 of the 2019/20 grant recipients were selected by CLES and Salford CVS for evaluation from The Impact Fund, the Wellbeing Fund, Youth Wellbeing Fund, Healthy Schools the Neighbourhood Micro Fund and Salford for Good (a composite funding pot combining monies raised by Salford CVS under the Salford4Good banner, TSF monies and wider CCG poverty and exclusion monies). The organisations were selected based primarily on how long their particular activity had been up and running and then to reflect the variety of different activities being funded by the TSF.

For the year 2020-21 an additional 15 TSF projects were selected for evaluation from across 9 grant pots. All projects evaluated can be found in Appendix II.

## Fieldwork

CLES worked with Salford CVS to design a proforma for interviews with each of the grant recipients. Staff from Salford CVS then carried out the interviews with the aim of gaining a broad understanding of the impacts of the grant funding in different parts of the beneficiaries' life.

Detailed in the proforma is a table for the outputs of the grant-funded project. The data gathered here was used in conjunction with the qualitative information from the interviews to carry out a basic Value for Money assessment using values from the Global Value Exchange and the New Economy Unit Cost database.

It should be noted that 15 case studies reviewed for 2020-21 a SROI figure could not be generated due to the dataset being unavailable.

## Developing return on investment assessments

A return on investment assessment was carried out for each of the grant recipients for 2019-20 using the output and outcomes data gathered during the case study interviews. The assessment focusses on the four E's;

- **Economy** – evidencing that the activities of the organisations have minimised public sector costs and were economical;
- **Efficiency** – evidencing that the services provided to achieve the outcomes were at a reasonable cost;
- **Effectiveness** – evidencing the extent to which the services have had the desired impact in terms of outcomes;
- **Equity** – evidencing the extent to which services reach out and are available to all people that they are intended to help.

## Impact Fund Partnership Challenge

The Impact Fund Partnership Challenge (IFPC) is the only multi-year funding pot within the TSF and provides grants of up to £50,000, the largest available under the programme. Under the terms of the funding, recipients were given the freedom to design impact measurement approaches which they felt best reflected the outcomes they would deliver.

The only impact measurement requirements were that grant recipients would produce an annual report detailing their impact over the previous period and would attend a final project review panel with representatives of Salford CVS, CCG and CLES in July 2020.

Over the 3 years that the majority of the grants ran, the approaches set out in their applications were refined by all six funded organisations. This process was supported by CLES in year two through dedicated workshops with each organisation to clarify the theory of change for their projects and identify measures to reflect this.

A review of the Impact Fund Partnership Challenge projects can be found in Appendix III.

## Process evaluation

VSNW carried out a process evaluation covering the period 2017-20. The process evaluation involved annual reviews, an analysis of the documents and data connected to the TSF, annual workshops with members of Salford CVS Development Team and Senior Management and annual workshops with TSF grant recipients and panel members. Added to this, annual process evaluation survey data from 2018 and 2019, sent out to grantees by Salford CVS, has been drawn upon.

The TSF has been assessed against the 10 Good Grant Maker principles published by the Directory of Social Change (DSC). The principles have been developed by 'Grants for Good', a coalition and campaign of national and local charities.

The process evaluation can be found in section 6.

## Strategic impact assessment

This report has analysed data from a range of sources to assess the collective impact of activity funded and learning generated through the IFPC projects over the three years they have run, this includes:

- Annual impact reports
  - Presentations on impact and learning at the Challenge Panel
  - Interviews with Salford CVS' grants management team
1. The strategic impact assessment sought to investigate the impact of the TSF beyond individual grant beneficiaries, including on Salford CVS, the VCSE in Salford and wider social, economic and environmental context. CLES led on this element of the evaluation, utilising the following methodology:
  2. Three workshops with members of Salford CVS Grants Team and Senior Management Team to establish key lines of enquiry and identify sources of data

3. Interviews with five strategic partners from the wider health and care system in Salford, including:
  - Lance Gardner, Chief Executive, Salford Primary Care Together
  - Steve Dixon, Chief Accountable Officer, Salford CCG
  - Karen Proctor, Director of Commissioning, Salford CCG
  - Stephen Woods, Head of Service Improvement (Partnerships), Salford CCG
  - Judd Skelton, Assistant Director for Integrated Commissioning, Salford CCG
4. A workshop with grant recipients to investigate their experience of delivering activity funded through the TSF
5. A review of relevant programme documentation

The strategic impact assessment can be found in section 7.



# 5. Delivery & Impact 2019-21

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## 5.1 Before the Storm 2019/20

This section of the report details the analysis carried out by Salford CVS and verified by CLES to establish the impact of TSF grants awarded in 2019-20 on their beneficiaries. This section presents findings from the case study methodology.

### Case studies

The case study methodology analyses the impacts felt by beneficiaries that attend the activities or services of the grant recipients. These findings are presented as part of a qualitative case study. The outcomes experienced by beneficiaries are then analysed for their return on investment where suitable proxies are available.

### The approach

Each case study features a short introduction to the group, some basic statistics about how many people they support, detail about their activities and the outcomes they are achieving alongside a value for money assessment using the four E's (Economy, Efficiency, Effectiveness and Equity). These case studies can be accessed in Appendix 1, though due to the introduction of the distance travelled methodology, this year the case study data has not been used to calculate the overall return on investment figure.

### Who took part?

Groups in receipt of funding from either the Impact Fund, the Wellbeing Fund, Youth Wellbeing Fund, Healthy Schools or Salford for Good grant pots. Within these pots the sample was selected on the basis of how long their particular activity had been up and running and then to reflect the variety of different activities being funded by the TSF. These pots had all been live long enough to fairly assess the impact of the TSF through these groups.

### Summary of outcomes delivered

Across the 16 projects selected for case studies in 2019/20, health and wellbeing outcomes varied from:

Increased sense of belonging and feeling connected to the world around them  
*"The tutors from simply singing have a kindness, a warmth, an acceptance I don't think I have ever felt that in my life apart from in choir".*

Member of **Salford City Singers** Funded through the Wellbeing Fund

*"A lot of people came to the session each week and I was surprised to see how many young migrants like me there are in Salford, I learned how to make new friends who also spoke different languages and how word of mouth is great to bring new people into my project."*

Hasabel, who led a project in partnership with the **Rio Ferdinand Foundation** to bring together young asylum seekers from across Salford to play football Funded through the Youth Wellbeing Fund

Increased physical activity

*"The pitch is a godsend as we can still deliver P.E in socially distant way outside; other schools haven't been able to do this during this time".*

PE Lead, Heathy Schools Grant – MUGA

*"This is the first time I've been sweating in ages; this is better than doing Joe Wicks!"*

Pupil's feedback

Increased confidence and self esteem

*"Knowing she had somewhere to go to share all her feelings really helped and she is much happier now and getting on with things. She smiles and says hello to you which she didn't before".*

Art Therapist, St Charles Art Room project - Healthy Schools

*"Those students that weren't confident 'nominated themselves to take part' due to the forest school sessions. [other] pupils went up to those pupils to ask them advice on how to make things in forest schools – it was often those that maybe weren't as academic that were more successful".*

St Pauls Nurture Development project - Healthy Schools

Improved posture and stability in over 65s

*"When I first attended, I had no confidence and was in a wheelchair, now I can stand freely, on some days to the count of 100 and can walk a short distance."*

Participant of **BASIC's** Balance retraining programme funded through the Impact Fund

*"His achievement is unbelievable. Before visiting BASIC I really believed that he would never walk again. The confidence and belief that Caroline and Carol have given him as well as the treatment to use his legs again is just amazing. They have worked magic. Words cannot express our gratitude to them."*

Partner of a participant of **BASIC's** Balance retraining programme funded through the Impact Fund

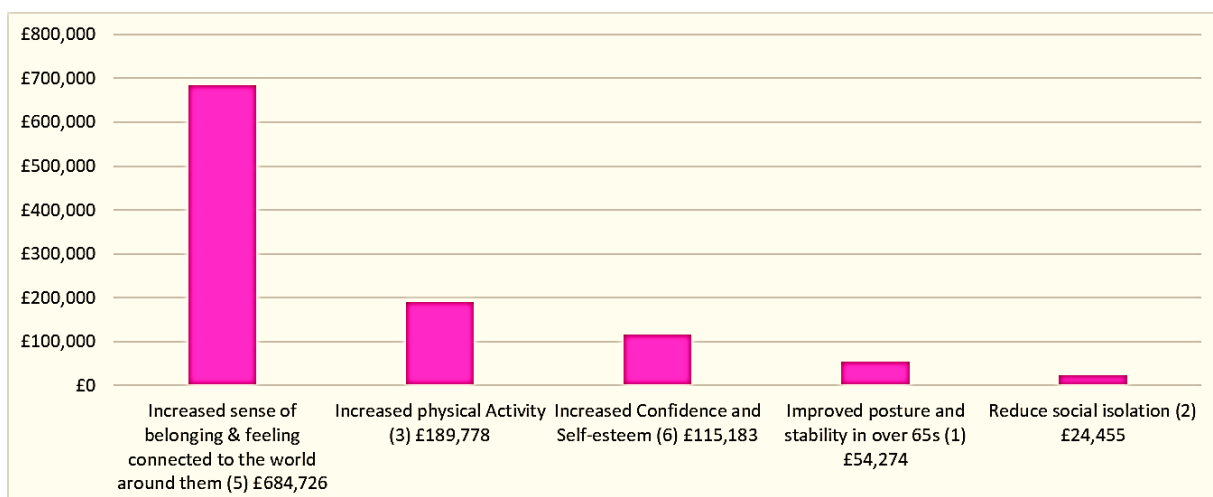
### Reduced social isolation

*"After my daughter went into remission , I felt suddenly quite traumatized and overwhelmed at all that had happened. ...I felt very isolated and alone and couldn't really share my story with anybody. But the wonderful atmosphere with all the women cooking together, and all of us doing it for a good cause, has triggered of a new feeling of comradery that is unique and tangible. I start sharing and talking about my fears etc and revived a warm understanding and empathy from all the other volunteers. I might be a hard working volunteer for Fresh and Tasty, but they have given me much more back".*

Volunteer at Fresh and Tasty project run by **Community Kitchen**, Manchester funded through the Impact Fund

The outcomes identified in these case studies are listed in figure 2 (below), along with the number of case study projects which delivered that outcome and total social return on investment figure generated by these projects.

Figure 2: Summary of effectiveness outcomes



The case studies also identified five outcomes relating to savings to statutory services. These were:

### Improved mental health

*"I received a referral late one night where a mother was upset and anxious as she had no food for the morning. I don't do this for work I put myself in their position –If a child wakes up and needs food for that morning, I make sure we deliver before they wake. This is important in breaking the cycles of anxiety and depression and that timely response is key to reducing the crisis that spirals into poor mental health."*

Jasmin who runs a food parcel project through Women with Wings Funded through Salford4Good and the Crisis fund

*"I have been very down, but I go there and feel much better being together singing the songs I can't say enough words of how it has impacted my wellbeing."  
"Sometimes I feel so down I think I don't think Choir will do it for me today, but it always does."*

Member of Salford City Singers Funded through the Wellbeing Fund

### Improved school readiness

*"Lots of pupils they are nervous to approach new people we really saw their ability to work with new people improve in forest school – we separated the year 6s up with people they don't normally hang around with ... they now are much happy to work with new people and ask each other who has different skills and see the benefit in working with people who aren't just your friends... I think this is really helpful for next year when they have to meet so many new people in Year 7'.*

Teacher feedback St Pauls - Nurture Development project funded through Healthy Schools

### Avoiding obesity

*'It just shows what an impact the schools physical activity programme has on those pupils that are at risk of obesity as many pupils have come back having put weight on since lockdown... this MUGA will only increase that as we can do our session in all weathers and we have been doing that especially over the last few weeks with the rain it's really shown how important this will be'*

PE Lead at Irlam Endowed Primary School MUGA project funded through Healthy Schools

*"I myself have lost weight, lowered my persistently high blood pressure and found a great support group in the people I run with, the amount of time and effort the run leader Tony puts into the group is amazing and without him and his support the group wouldn't be what it is a great success."*

Participant of Albert Park Running Group Couch to 5K project funded through the Wellbeing fund

### Daily cost to the NHS of an emergency admission

*"I loved working with S. He had a real fear of falling when he first came but once he started strengthening his muscles and we instilled in his mind that he could do it, he made the effort to believe he could get walking again and he did."*

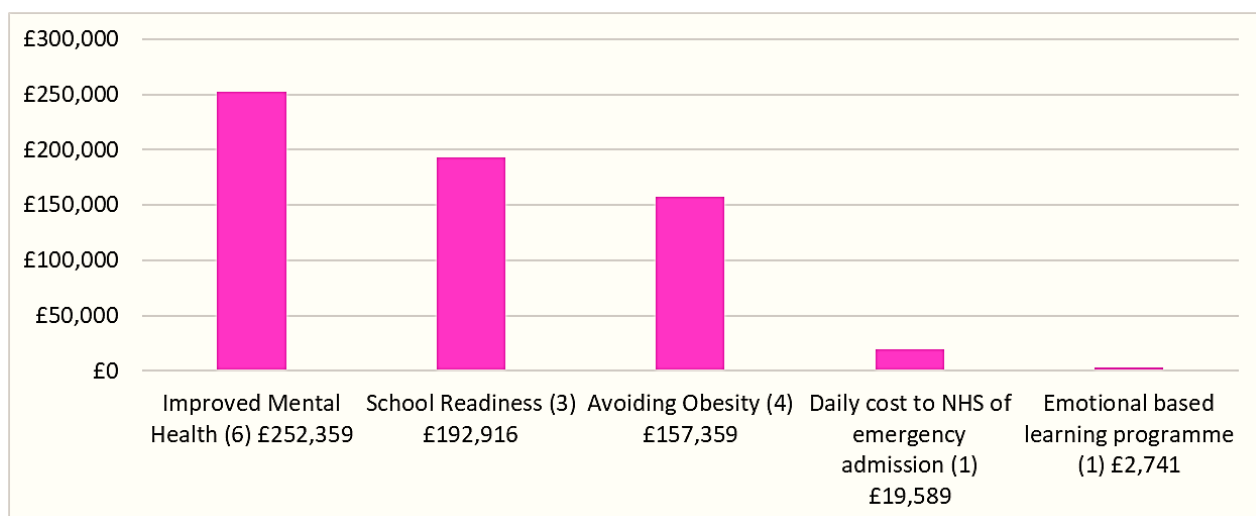
Carol Davison, Physical therapist, BASIC balance retraining project funded through the Impact Fund

### Emotional based learning programme

*"They could use art to explain to others how they felt, and this helped build relationships with teachers and other pupils'. 'They are no longer sat outside the classroom and can join in and he is able to make friends since the sessions'".*

Art Therapist, St Charles Art Room - Funded through Healthy Schools

Figure 3 (below) illustrates the number of projects delivering each of these outcomes and the total saving to the state for each outcome.



# Findings

## For every £1 spent, an estimated £18.29 of value was generated

This figure was calculated using case studies of 16 of the 291 grant recipients for 2019-21. As such, this figure should be treated only as an indicator of the value being generated through all of the investment in the Third Sector Fund as it is only representative of a small number of grants awarded.

## Every case study project has improved the lives of people in Salford

The outcomes identified above go some way to describing the impact of TSF funded activities on people in Salford. Additionally, the groups funded by the TSF have managed to reach people in a broad and diverse set of circumstances, for example through initiatives that tackle food poverty, address obesity and increase physical activity levels in young people, address the digital divide, social exclusion and community cohesion. This demonstrates the capacity of the TSF to reach a diverse set of people living across Salford.

## 5.2 A year like no other 2020/21

By March 2020, a 'business as usual plan' for delivery of the Third Sector Fund had been developed. However, as the looming Covid-19 pandemic was creating significant demand from the sector for resources to respond to community need.

In response to this, prior to the first lockdown, Salford CVS established the **Covid-19 Crisis Fund** offering fast-track awards of up to £500 to groups. At its height, applications were being assessed, awarded and paid 2-3 times per week. During the year 2020/21 Salford CVS awarded over £70,000 to groups, largely focused on providing food parcels, tackling isolation/low mood and home activity packs for children.

The economic impact of Covid-19 had immediate implications in terms of soaring demand for food support. This led to the establishment of a **Food Response Fund** to support Salford Foodshare Network's food banks and clubs. This utilised Salford CVS' swift investment process to provide financial resources to these organisations struggling to meet increased demand. Additional private-sector funding was secured via the Salford Foodshare Network together to monies raised by Salford CVS' Salford4Good JustGiving fundraiser.

By summer 2020 it was clear that significant refocus of the Third Sector Fund was required. This led to the establishment of a **BAME Response Fund** and **Disability Response Fund** (developed with support from sector experts) to target resources to communities most affected by Covid-19. In addition, a **Digital Response Fund** was established to help the sector address the increased demand on their IT resources. Finally a one-off investment was made from a **Domestic Violence / Abuse Response Fund** to support local services meet additional demand due to pressures of lockdown.

In the autumn of 2020, the flexible **Recovery Fund** was launched to assist the sector in meeting additional demand, supporting the financial stability of VCSE organisation and enabling them to make premises Covid secure.

All of the above 'response funds' were developed in full consultation with NHS Salford CCG's commissioner. Together they represent the **flexibility of the Third Sector Fund** and **excellent partnership working** established by Salford CVS and NHS Salford CCG. The grant assessment, awarding and payment systems of Salford CVS were able to be maintained throughout the pandemic period, often adapted to fast-track processes without losing any of the due-diligence safeguards of Salford CVS.

During this period Salford CVS, NHS Salford CCG and Salford City Council agreed to adopt a light-touch in terms of project monitoring and evaluation. This was seen as essential to reduce demands on a highly stressed sector at the front line of the pandemic response.

Inevitably, this reduced the level of impact measurement of projects during this period. Whilst a full suite of project case studies was produced for the year 2020/21 (see Appendix II) the lack of the Global Value Exchange dataset, meant that the return of investment calculations could not be undertaken.



## 5.3 Case Study Reflections 2019-21

The evaluation reports from 19/20 and 20/21 cover case studies of 31 groups who have received funding through the TSF. In this section of the report, we reflect on these case studies and seek to highlight some of the key findings and learning from them.

The case studies were researched by Salford CVS, through visiting the organisations, engaging with staff, volunteers and beneficiaries, and through reviewing monitoring documents. Please also note that there was a change to the methodology for the evaluation for 20/21, which meant that there were no ROI figures for case studies in this year.

Every case study organisation has worked closely with people in Salford to improve their lives. They have been able to support some of the most vulnerable residents of the city during a pandemic and have shown the sector to be a vital part of a strong Salford. The outcomes achieved for residents because of the inputs from the TSF funded groups are varied and profound, whether increased confidence; improved self-esteem; improved social relationships; or increased physical activity. These groups should not be seen as a 'nice to have' offer alongside statutory services, but as a key part of the system and of the support network.

The TSF has risen to the challenges posed by Covid-19, with a huge demand and a different type of demand being placed on the third sector almost overnight in spring 2020. Salford CVS have provided decisive leadership to reshape funding pots at short notice, to target need, and to form a key part of the Covid response in the city. This is made possible by their connections to and relationships with the third sector in Salford.

### Flexibility to respond to the pandemic

Salford CVS have created a system whereby the TSF is able to respond swiftly to local need. This was exemplified by the launch in April 2020 of the Food Response Fund, which aimed to provide support to those organisations that provide for the most vulnerable residents in the city. In addition, the fund has evolved to focus on how Salford will emerge and recover from the pandemic, with the launch of the Recovery Fund, the BAME Response Fund, the Disability Response Fund, and the Digital Response Fund.

This ability to recognise that a significant and swift change is required in the allocation of funding, and to action this at very short notice is a credit to the TSF and the leadership of Salford CVS.

An example here, is the award of £20,000 to Salford Credit Union during the first lockdown period. The Union was experiencing several issues that affected its sustainability into the future, including reduced lending and lower investment returns, fewer new memberships, and more bad debts. The TSF recognised the importance of the financial stability of Salford

Credit Union to help Salford residents to manage their finances as the pandemic persisted, and households came under severe financial pressure, through the provision of loans and advice.

*“In this time of Covid-19 I have needed to buy extra food and use more utilities and these loans and money is helping with the kids”.*

Member of Salford Credit Union

## Identifying and meeting local need

The development of the TSF has been defined by an understanding of local need from Salford CVS, NHS Salford CCG and the third sector. There has also been an awareness that need has shifted throughout the pandemic, as have priorities during our current phase of Covid recovery.

During the early stages of the pandemic there was a big drive to support food banks, clubs and pantries. The Food Response Fund was launched swiftly, with £30,000 of TSF monies allocated to this. This approach allowed those organisations providing food to meet the basic needs of hundreds of families and individuals in Salford, in the face of increased demand, and with the aim of protecting vulnerable people from having to shop in busy locations in a time before vaccinations were available.

The grants from Salford CVS allowed organisations involved in the provision of emergency food to bolster their resilience at a difficult time and provide crisis support to people who were struggling, some of whom would have lost their job or been furloughed by their employer in response to the lockdown. Funding also allowed providers to respond to restrictions at the time which meant clients couldn't collect their food parcels in-person as normal, and to fund the transition to a delivery-based system.

Initial funding rounds also recognised the need to target priority groups for additional support. The BAME Response Fund and the disability Response Fund in particular, saw £50,998.02 of investment focussed on groups that work with these communities. The funds were shaped with expert input and insight of the specific needs of these groups, who are disproportionately impacted by Covid. Groups that were awarded funding carried out many activities, including:

- The provision of translators for recent arrivals to the UK to convey key Covid messages.
- The delivery of sessions for women of African background over 40 with chronic health conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity, to ensure they were aware of how to minimise the risk of Covid-19.

- The provision of ethnic and culturally appropriate foods through a home delivery service offered via a food bank.

## Addressing the wider challenges exacerbated by Covid

As the pandemic progressed, the TSF has ensured that the wider challenges, many of which were already prevalent in society, but have been exacerbated by Covid, were targeted. These challenges, although distinct from the risks and effects of catching the virus, have adversely affected many people across the country, often disproportionately the most vulnerable.

A clear example of this, is the Digital Inclusion Fund, which was launched to ensure that social isolation and tackling loneliness became a priority. The periods of lockdown left many people isolated, lonely, and living in uncertainty, and in many cases, they lacked support because services were facing unprecedented demand and staffing issues. The Fund provided 25 organisations with £50,000 of investment.

Organisations that have received funding have invested heavily in building their digital infrastructure, through the purchase of IT equipment, product licences, and training for staff and volunteers. There has also been a big focus on upskilling beneficiaries (especially older people) in using technology and providing them with devices. This has allowed many groups to deliver sessions and provide support for their service users remotely, both during lockdown and on an ongoing basis. The feedback from service users reflects the profound impact that being able to maintain connections with friends, family and support services has had on them.

*“The group has helped me catch up with my friends on zoom.  
We have had lots of fun time together which wouldn’t have  
been possible without this group”.*

Attendee at the Connect Youth and Community Centre activities

In addition, many organisations utilised the Wellbeing Fund to deliver activities virtually. There was a range of activity here, including music-based creative and cognitive stimulation sessions, and support for mental health.

The impact of Covid-19 has also seen a surge in demand for mental health services and support networks, with the stress and anxiety brought about by the pandemic affecting people across the city. Many of the projects funded in the last two years have been running activities seeking to address mental health in the community. Each organisation has a different programme; however it is clear to see that the offer of these groups, with their

approach to identifying issues and putting strategies in place early, will complement the service provision of the local health service.

Examples here include the Flowhesion Foundation, who have helped participants build resilience and develop strategies for managing the low-level anxiety caused the pandemic, through facilitated sessions and culturally sensitive resources. And a programme from Summerville Primary School which aimed to improve the mental health and emotional wellbeing of pupils through a structured approach to discussing issues.

## Building a resilient VCSE sector

A key feature of the funding provided by TSF and the support from Salford CVS has been the development of resilient organisations within the third sector in Salford. The CVS recognises the importance of developing the capacity and building the skills of these groups, to provide long-term benefits that will outlast the funding provided.

As previously discussed, the Digital Response Fund allowed organisations to transition to an almost entirely remote way of engaging beneficiaries. This was through providing capital to purchase equipment, but also through the provision of training and support. In total, awards of up to £2,500 were made to 25 organisations to support this swift transition. Other rounds of funding have also seen organisations able to invest in their capital assets, which has secured their future, or allowed them to improve their service offering. This adaptability is important, to get a balance between securing the future of organisations in the sector and investing in the delivery of services.

Another key feature of the CVS' work is the wider provision, beyond the award of grant monies. There is a great deal of investment in here in providing free to access resources for member groups, with the aim of building a resilient VCSE sector. Case study organisations reported having accessed a wide range of this support, including proofreading of applications (which supported groups where English is a second language in particular); accessing information about further funding opportunities (including opportunities in the wider regional and national system, some of which led to successful bids); introduction to tech sessions (which supported staff and volunteers who were not confident in their IT skills); and guidance on recruiting and training volunteers (which has resulted in a significant boost in volunteer capacity for some groups).

## The organisations are rooted in communities

The third sector organisations that work in Salford have a deep rooted connected to their communities and to their city. Through their work over the years of evaluation they have

shown an ability to work with groups that would be very challenging for mainstream service providers to reach out to. In the last two years, they have also shown that these connections and relationships are vital in a crisis response situation, and that they can be utilised to convey key information and reach the most vulnerable.

Salford CVS is a trusted body within the city and has worked with many VCSE groups since they were formed. They have a connection to the sector and an ability to channel resource to address local need and are able to support groups to grow.

## A focus on health and wellbeing

There has been an understandable focus on support communities to respond and recover from Covid, however the TSF is still supporting groups who are looking at the preventative aspects of health and wellbeing. This agenda is a crucial part of NHS Salford CCG's approach to ensuring residents can live healthy lives.

Examples include:

- St Paul's Primary School has delivered a healthy eating programme. The project helped to increase the staff and parents' knowledge around nurture and healthy eating.
- In October 2019 Albert Park Running Group secured a £1,000 Wellbeing Grant from Salford CVS to embark on 'Couch to 5k' running programme. The grant paid for 'run leader training' to enable others to confidently share the role of leading the sessions, high-vis equipment and running kit as well as medals and certificates for those completing the Couch to 5k course. By attending and making exercise a habit, the attendees have the potential to change their lifestyles:

*"I myself have lost weight, lowered my persistently high blood pressure and found a great support group in the people I run with"*

Albert Park Running Group attendee

- Young women in the Orthodox Jewish community worked on a project to develop their own self-care plan, which suits their personal needs and circumstances and includes positive coping strategies for when they are struggling to maintain good wellbeing.

## Value for money

The third sector organisations in Salford are able to do a lot of good work with the resources they have; the return-on-investment approach to evaluation over the years, and the qualitative information gathered has demonstrated this clearly. The organisations in the sector are able to channel much of their resource into delivery and are often more agile than statutory services providers and the private sector. We must also recognise the crucial role that volunteers play in the functioning of these organisations and say thank you to those that are able to give their time and expertise. However, it is important that the sector is not seen as a cheap option. The third sector must be supported to become more sustainable, with investment in its infrastructure and its people.

## Covid-19 has had an impact on organisations

The case studies have shown that Covid has impacted upon the third sector in Salford and continues to do so. In the initial stages of the pandemic there were significant operational challenges around how to support beneficiaries during lockdown, a challenging transition to digital working, financial implications as income streams collapsed, and illness among staff and volunteers.

What we now see in addition is an increase in demand and a shift in the type of demand. There are many examples of this including, an increase in domestic violence and reports to safeguarding services during lockdown; more pupils at schools who need 1:1 intervention and support because of time missed in the classroom; an increase in young people displaying signs of worry, anxiety, and loneliness; and a continued demand from those people who are now isolated even though covid restrictions lifted, due to their vulnerability. The TSF is well placed to be able to engage the sector, understand these shifts, and to respond to these challenges through future funding rounds.

## A flexible and supportive funder

The case study organisations were very complementary of Salford CVS and the approach they have taken to delivering the TSF. In terms of the application process, it stood out that the support available, including time spent with groups to discuss their applications before they are submitted, was well received. This approach to working with groups, rather than a closed-door style, where proposals are rejected outright for a minor mistake or divergence from the criteria, is what organisations value. For those groups who leverage funding from elsewhere, it was notable that Salford CVS was one of the few grants the group applied for and has the option of direct communication and answering questions.

It was also reported that the application form was simple and easy to navigate, whilst also being flexed to make the information requirements proportional to the size of the fund

being applied for. The system of having points allocations for particular questions also reassured groups that they were putting sufficient detail in their proposals. Linked to this, there was a feeling that the approach to monitoring and evaluation was proportionate, and praise for the decision to introduce a break in reporting during the Covid year, to allow groups to focus on delivery.

Finally, groups also felt that the TSF allows for a flexible approach to delivering services and provides freedom to experiment with alternative techniques. This openness meant organisations were able to respond to beneficiaries needs once funding was awarded, and as a result, delivery the best possible service.

## Conclusion

Our review of the case studies has shown that the sector has the ability to respond in a crisis, that it has a connection to local communities that is unmatched by statutory service providers, and that it should continue to play a key role in Salford's Covid recovery.

The sector has benefitted from funding from the TSF since 2014, but also the wider support and development offer of Salford CVS. We believe grant funding remains crucial to the sector, particularly when there is an effective partnership and mechanism in place to distribute these monies, as there is in Salford.

To finish, we include a quote from DIY Theatre, which encapsulates the importance of the TSF to organisations who are awarded funding:

*“Never underestimate the value of a grant that in global terms might not seem than large but for an organisation like us is really, really valuable”*

DIY Theatre interviewee

# 6. Review of Process 2019-21

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## Context

The process for administering the TSF has evolved over the last six years, since an initial grants programme investment in 2014/15. Salford CVS has continually sought to develop, learn and enhance its grant fund model. Evaluation and assessment has been at the heart of the CVS' approach from the very beginning and this has driven a constant cycle of improvement.

Core to this has been the CVS' relationship with Salford's 1,665 VCSE groups. This has shaped the model and has led to Salford CVS being increasingly recognised as one of England's leading practitioners in locality-based grant programme management.

In terms of process, the size and duration of investment has been fundamental to the design of the TSF 2017/20. The simple but important **'Recommendation 1' of the 2016 evaluation** was: *"Roll out Programme for three years"*. The impact of implementing this recommendation cannot be overstated, in terms of both strategic impact and process development.

Implementing this recommendation has also given time and capacity for the internal development of TSF processes, of which there have been three particularly significant points. The first two are: investment in a Grant Fund Team and the decision to adopt the Good Grant Funder Model. These two have played a critical role in embedding and enhancing the natural strengths of Salford CVS' approach, while allowing for the third development: concurrent sector-appropriate improvements in assessing and evidencing third sector impact through a grant fund programme.

Robustly describing, and holding to account, the everyday impact of a grassroots group, or of the wider third sector in a place from which it is inextricable, is a fine balance. This has been a key part of Salford's success formula and at the heart of process developments in the 2017/20 programme.

### Building on success

Salford CVS has built on the strengths of the TSF and addressed the process issues previously identified to ensure a more smoothly run and effective process. As noted in the 2019 interim evaluation report, the process evaluation from 2016 found that the TSF helped to develop the capacity and skills of the VCSE sector, together with increasing the membership of Salford CVS through having a robust application process. The criteria for bidding for funding had changed as the CVS has become more experienced in developing the Programme. Given the focus on



applications coming from CVS members, this has organically increased the CVS membership base and the ability to promote the programme. Our research shows that Salford CVS has built on these strengths in new ways that have added value to the programme and supported the sector.

Added to this, the programme continues to draw in new and emerging groups formed from emerging communities driven demographic changes. Over a fifth of groups applying (21.6%, n=74) are newly established in the previous 3 years. Referrals from local partners (20%; Council, CCG, City West) and word of mouth promotion (23%) add to the formal engagement of Salford sector via the CVS' significant communications and mailing capabilities.

The process evaluation from 2016 found that the diversity of the available funding through the TSF meant that some groups found it challenging distinguishing between them. Through engagement with micro organisations and smaller VCSE organisations before application stage, there is more clarity about the types of funding that they should be applying for. In addition, there have been improvements in the clarity of criteria (the criteria and guidance were rated as clear and accessible by over 89% and 90% of applicants respectively [n=74] by 2019) , and there is better communication between Salford CVS and VCSE organisations thinking of applying. As previously documented, this has led to an improvement in the standard of applications, and reduces the time wasted both by VCSE organisations and by Salford CVS.

Monitoring was the one aspect of the process of the TSF which was viewed as particularly challenging in 2016, notably around finding a suitable balance. Given the relatively small size of the organisations in receipt of grants; Salford CVS and NHS Salford CCG have sought to keep monitoring to a relative minimum, however, they have also recognised the need to demonstrate health and well-being outcomes. An evaluation framework has been developed to evidence the impact of the TSF although there is still scope to ensure the right balance for evaluation for smaller organisations.

## Good Grant Maker and "locality-based grants programme model".

In the 2019 evaluation report we documented how Salford CVS met the principles established by the Directory of Social Change (DSC) for being a [Good Grant Maker](#). These principles and assessment tools provide a highly effective and appropriate framework for evaluating TSF's processes.

Having stated, when interviewing grantees, it became clear that TSF has achieved more than these principles and that they do not fully cover the model that has been developed in Salford. In this evaluation we attempt to describe what TSF, in terms of process, has achieved during 2017/20 as part of a wider "*locality-based grants programme model*". For a full summary of the key features of these two Grant Maker models see Table on page 42-43.

## Principle 1: Consultation

DSC's principle 1 for a Good Grant Maker is Consultation. The assessment is: *"Speaking to charities, funders and other relevant stakeholders leads to better understanding of the market, need and gaps."*

In the Year 2 evaluation, we outlined how the CVS is embedded in a network of stakeholders which inform and shape each and every grant call. Furthermore, TSF links to Salford's strategic goals, and has a clear understanding of the local 'market' and of local need and of local gaps, as well as assets. We cited the example of investment in a local Social Prescribing Hub:

*"Salford CVS has effective working relationships with Salford CCG and Salford City Council. These relationships translate into a grants programme that works for the VCSE sector, but which is also aligned to city policy priorities. The TSF is delivered strategically to enable local VCSE organisations to make positive wellbeing and health interventions, in line with the priorities articulated in the Salford Locality Plan, within the communities in which they operate (by geography, identity and condition). The alignment with city policy priorities can be seen through the activity to support social prescribing, where Salford CVS delivered a two-year pilot to establish the infrastructure required to include the sector. Through capacity building support in addition to the neighbourhood impact fund and micro-grants, £295,000 has been invested to ensure that the VCSE sector is involved in the delivery of social prescribing in Salford."* Year 2 Evaluation report, p.112.

These are investments designed to build VCSE capacity to improve lives in Salford; they are buying the sector its rightful place in a cross-sector model of working in a place. Yes, groups may obtain funds to do this from other funders, even contracts, but invariably the group has made the strategic leap in understanding local context/opportunity, often in spite of the funder, not with the funder's understanding of that place.



All of this is important, but crucially follows on from a wider conversation with all of Salford's stakeholders (across sectors). The fundamental framework for investment is that of Salford's plans and strategies, not just the strategies of the "Good Grant Maker". Salford's VCSE groups have shaped this framework. This is their framework too and that their say in shaping that framework is not tokenistic. VCSE groups can see that they are genuinely recognised as a partner and accordingly invested in; this is meaningful. This is investment in the Salford

VCSE sector; investment that is both financial and ideological, and seen as such. It represents collective belief in Salford's sector.

## **Principle 2: Objectives**

DSC's principle 2 for a Good Grant Maker is 'Objectives'. The assessment is: *"Setting clear objectives enables audiences to be targeted and relevant outcomes to be decided."*

Grant applicants, interviewed individually and in workshops, have a clear understanding of the needs, goals and strategic objectives of Salford. For some participants this is a matter of understanding the funder's rules and wanting to have a clear idea of what is a good Salford bid. This can happen with a number of funders. The difference here is that this is about a distinctively Salford funder and about a distinctive set of Salford goals and objectives. Participants understood the objectives not simply as the funder's objectives but as Salford's objectives.

It should be noted that this is a deliberately pragmatic interpretation of workshop participants' views about the process, and of applicant's understanding of funds' objectives, that is very probably unfair. Following on from principle 1 ('Beyond Consultation', above), these are not just another funder's objectives; interviewed applicants saw them as a collective 'call to action'.

## **Principle 3: Criteria**

DSC's principle 3 for a Good Grant Maker is 'Criteria'. The assessment is: "Clear criteria should produce a better pool of applicants and avoid wasted time with ineligible applications." As flagged in the Y2 Evaluation Report (p. 113):

*"The clear criteria established has resulted in less queries and questions to the TSF team, which means that more resource can be targeted towards other elements of the support. It also means that VCSE organisations are much less likely to waste time applying for a grant for which they are not eligible. Where organisations will be eligible with some changes, Salford CVS provides the support needed".*

89% of applicants (successful and unsuccessful) describe the criteria as clear (n=74, 2019 Survey).

Included in the criteria is *"Develop effective policies, where all successful applicant organisations are expected to work with Salford CVS' Development Team to develop effective policies and practices"*. Because the CVS is the grant funder, it can make this ask and offer; the criteria becomes a carrot rather than a stick: the criteria are not a tool for filtering out groups that would otherwise be eligible but have not yet developed effective quality and safeguarding assurance mechanisms. The process helps grow *"a better pool of applicants"*. This makes sense for a place-based grant maker using a model of investment that draws on the strengths and relationships of the local sector; one of the goals is to improve sector action (as a whole) not just deliver individual fund outcomes.

This also builds the capacity of groups to draw down investment from other, non-Salford funding sources.

#### **Principle 4: Communication**

DSC's principle 4 for a Good Grant Maker is 'Communication'. The assessment is: *"All communications need to be clear and targeted effectively so as to reach relevant audiences and support understanding."*

One of the process concerns expressed by interviewees in the 2016 Evaluation report was, given demographic changes, the inclusion of emerging groups and communities. Salford CVS' communications and mailing lists are comprehensive. Added to the late 2019 Survey, identified a multitude of referral points across Salford and indicates a place-based communications model that goes beyond the 'already connected'. Just over 40% of referrals (2017/19) were linked in via non-CVS sources: council, CCG, City West, Health Improvement Team (these total 17%) and non-digital/word of mouth (23%). In terms of applicant organisations, 22% had been formed in the last three years indicating a high rate of engagement with emerging groups.

#### **Principle 5: Proportionality**

DSC's principle 5 for a Good Grant Maker is 'Proportionality'. The assessment is: *"All applications and reporting should be proportionate to the grant requested/awarded."*

Applicant Interviewees again described the application and acceptance processes as *"straightforward"* and *"proportional"* to the size of investment.

Corrections to the year 1 process (2017/18) of one grant pot was picked up by the Grants Team as part of a review cycle. A large face-to-face panel for a relatively small investment was reasonably seen to be disproportionate for one applicant.

It should be noted that there is a tension between wishing to connect panel members (very often local leads) and VCSE groups, as part of a place-based model that seeks to help create local relationships and keeping the process light touch. For some applicants, that do not find form filling an accessible model, face to face processes can be seen as beneficial and proportionate and there are different perspectives.

One panellist said of their experience:

*"The Panel process was really useful in order to get a sense of what groups are doing. [I got...] to meet groups, have that personal connection, see the enthusiasm, [and] develop future working relationships".*

And one applicant said of their experience:

*"Panel process was positive, [we were] pushed to work with more people but held our ground [...and explained our approach and thinking]. A grilling, but a grilling amongst peers and friends."*

In terms of 'proportionality', there is a further tension around monitoring and evaluation: between being proportional and being evidential and accountable for the size of public sector investment. The way of 'being proportionate' for a place-based grant programme simply cannot be the same as for a non-place based Good Grant Maker. This has been an ongoing process stress that the Grants team has carefully and responsibly navigated on behalf of groups and the commissioner.

There are two main contextual issues from a VCSE perspective:

1. Nationwide, proportionality in reporting to commissioners has long been one of, if not the, bugbear for VCSE organisations; this is certainly not anything specific to Salford and is a UK-wide issue.
2. In terms of Salford CVS' ambitions to excel as a Good Grant Maker, proportionality and desire to evidence impact will inevitably be at odds. However, that does not prevent the grants programme cycle of review, modification and search for improvement. Nevertheless, there has to be a trade-off between 'Proportionality' and demonstrating impact.

It must be understood that there are two fundamental differences and expectations for a place-based grants programme and for a Good Grant Maker. Firstly, this is public money and a large investment for which the Grant Maker is responsible and accountable not simply to its own internal governance arrangements but to commissioners AND a partnership of which it is a leading representative. The funds are accountable, in effect, to Salford. We have seen the complications in lines of accountability for funds that the National Lottery holds on behalf of other agencies or in partnership; most recently DCMS's emergency funds and prior to that the Building Better Opportunities funding that used matched European Structural Funds.

Secondly, the CVS is not simply playing an intermediary role. Salford's partners describe this work as a flagship programme in which partners are deeply interested; this is not marginal investment or marginal commitment to the sector, but about the aggregate of what the sector can achieve for Salford's communities. This is important for all partners, possibly none more than the VCSE Sector in Salford itself.

Broadly, from interviews with grantees, there is a sense that this is understood: *"I understand that these questions are necessary"*. However, this could be made more explicit in monitoring and reporting arrangements.

As two footnotes: Firstly, the introduction of lighter touch approaches for investments under £1,000 are appropriate and have been welcomed by groups; secondly, in the 2019 survey of groups, 86.5% (n = 74) stated that they felt the information requested was proportionate. For the most part, the Grants Team smoothly supports groups to develop efficient and effective mechanisms to build the evidence of their impact.

### **Principle 6: Resources**

DSC's principle 6 for a Good Grant Maker is 'Resources'. The assessment is: *"An effective grant management process."*

The summary of the effectiveness of the Grants Team and Salford CVS in last year's Year 2 report remains accurate. Salford CVS deliver the TSF in a highly effective and efficient way. The CVS have invested in the infrastructure necessary to deliver such an ambitious grants programme in a smooth and effective way. The investment that the CVS have made in this infrastructure offers significant value for money, with only a grant manager, 1.4 FTE grant officers, and an impact evaluation worker. In light of the vast amounts of work and support that is delivered to VCSE organisations, this is nothing short of remarkable. The consistently positive feedback from organisations about the grants programme suggests that these resources are being delivered in such a way that provides significant value for money.

This was further endorsed through the survey data and interviews this year. As noted previously, the communications, guidance and criteria information, application process, selection process, turn around and grant offer procedures, and payment process are repeatedly and highly commended.

*"Straightforward and supportive"*

*"[Grants] Team are really supportive. Simon is really brilliant, Hannah is extremely supportive."*

Added to this, the CVS has developed mechanisms for ensuring the right wrap-around support is in place by getting groups into the CVS's flow of support for members. This is simple and highly effective.

While the application and grant management process as a whole is unerringly professional, formal and by the book, there is a relational approach to the grants programme model. In response to questions about the quality of transactions in the grant process, there were many, many answers from interviewees about personal stories, favours, acts of graciousness, personal calls, and check-ins, that defined the relationship between applicant and CVS staff and a sense (meant in an extremely generous way), as one interviewee put it, that "Salford is quite a small place". This is a substantial sector with 1,665 groups operating in Salford. People in Salford's sector are close, well networked, keen to network more, realistic and yet extremely positive and have a strong sense of mission and identity as a sector. The TSF is seen, felt and operates as part of that. It may be that Salford's grants programme could be no other way; either way,

this is a challenged and empowered sector and there is a clear relationship or complementarity between the sector and the way the grants programme works.

### **Principle 7: Timescales**

DSC's principle 7 for a Good Grant Maker is 'Timescales'. The assessment is: *"All timescales need to be realistic both for the grant maker and the applicant. Appropriate time for planning, lead-in, application, and spending the grant, will all impact on the success of the grant programme."*

The timescales for the TSF and lead in times to enable organisations sufficient time to make their applications are realistic. In a survey completed by grantees, 83% of respondents reported that the timing of funding rounds suited their organisation.

Salford CVS have a publicly accessible schedule for all the grants, which supports VCSE organisations to plan their application process, as well as ensure that they know which grants are available and when to enable the smooth running of their organisations. Both the potential applicants and the development workers know about the schedules, which ensures a well-structured support programme for organisations that might need additional capacity building.

Because of this, groups know what's coming up, what's most relevant for their beneficiaries and their mission. One respondent said that:

*"We tend to plan for projects in advance because we know about the yearly fundings, and when they happen. This gives us time to do good research and prepare ourselves for the projects".*

With most other funders there are a few limited grant calls. But TSF's small and frequent funding calls help to generate a rhythm to local VCSE action that helps to keep sector momentum ticking along.

Added to this, successful applicants can deliver in parallel, share experiences, and build collective momentum across Salford for the pieces of work being delivered. The CVS can provide wrap-around voice and strategic support. The scale of investment is generally relatively small, frequent and timed – not sufficient of itself to create lots of momentum – but together... they aid the sector's ability to deliver health and wellbeing improvements effectively.

Clearly, this year, that rhythm has been greatly affected by the impact of COVID, which links to the next principle.

### **Principle 8: Flexibility**

DSC's principle 8 for a Good Grant Maker is 'Flexibility'. The assessment is: *"Effective grant processes respond to need and circumstances."*

Prior to March 2020, TSF's flexibility was demonstrated through its cycle of review and improvement of processes. The Year 2 evaluation outlined the flexibility of approach and speed of correction:

An innovative illustration of flexibility is the Pitch to Panel process that Salford CVS developed in response to organisations who were struggling with the application process. Additional analysis of applications identified that for some for whom English is clearly not their first language and those who struggle with reading and writing, bids often fail. Through reflecting on the needs of these applicants, Salford CVS re-shaped the application process for the final round of Wellbeing funding. An alternative application process was employed to ensure greater access for organisations who might not have been able to apply to the best of their ability through the traditional application routes. A longer form was replaced with a simple 2-side form requesting basic information, together with an invitation to a short meeting with a grants panel. Various equalities groups as well as new groups were actively prioritised. This yielded 45 eligible applications being received. Feedback on the process has been very positive:

*"The questions and guidance notes were clear. CVS staff were very helpful with any query. Also, I liked a simple form to fill in and then meeting the panel. Face to face conversation about the project and questions that can be answered straight away made the whole process more friendly and personal, giving the panel a chance to find out what the project really is about"*

As lockdown began in March 2020, it became clear that groups would not be able to deliver in the ways outlined in their applications. The Grants Team opened up a flexible dialogue with currently delivering and just successful applicants about potential for continuing, delaying or delivering in alternative ways (e.g. Zoom, telephone, WhatsApp delivery models). This demonstrated a commissioner approach from the TSF in line with "A Statement to the VCSE Sector on behalf of public sector commissioners in Greater Manchester .

Following this, the CVS staff team began contacting all members (including all past grant applicants) to talk to people and find out how they were coping, what support needs there might be and gain an understanding of what was and wasn't happening for VCSE groups.

## **Principle 9: Monitoring and Evaluation**

DSC's principle 9 for a Good Grant Maker is 'Monitoring and Evaluation'. The assessment is: *"Monitoring and evaluation need to be built in from the start. It needs to be recognised that failure can happen but that doesn't mean a grant has been wasted. Where monitoring goes beyond a financial audit, there should be opportunities to use the information and share learning."*



In effect, this is a key recommendation from the 2016 Evaluation Report: *“Develop more effective monitoring and evaluation”* (Recommendation 4, page 71). This has been a major focus of the 2017/20 programme.

In developing the infrastructure to support the TSF, Salford CVS have employed an Impact Evaluation Worker. The employment of the Impact Evaluation Worker illustrates a recognition by Salford CVS of the importance of building in evaluation as an integral aspect of the Grants Programme.

The Impact Evaluation Worker supports VCSE organisations through the evaluation process. This is skilfully achieved with dedication through a range of different evaluation reporting mechanisms, with sensitivity to the demands on groups. It can be difficult to ensure that organisations complete evaluation forms. The Impact Evaluation Worker reported that approximately 20% of organisations complete the forms without any prompting. Through engagement by the Impact Evaluation Worker, this number rises to 50% of organisations completing evaluation forms for this process. Of course, all successful applicants still have to complete and submit their End of Grant Monitoring Return.

There is a monitoring and evaluation guide, which explains the aim of the evaluation to “tell the best possible story of how your project is helping to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Salford. Through this documentation, Salford CVS *“offer support and guidance every step of the way”*. The Impact Evaluation Worker tailors the evaluation forms for each organisation after they have identified which key outcomes the group will be delivering. Salford CVS sends a form to the organisations to document outcomes achieved through this project against the impact indicators that they have selected on the acceptance of grant letter. The evaluation also asks for additional evidence including project photos; case study; quotes from participants; link to any videos of project activity; and any social media activity related to the project.

The Impact Evaluation Worker with support from the wider grants team aims to conduct a site visit to 30% of organisations applying for small grants, and all the groups that access higher levels of funding, which represents a significant level of engagement. Salford CVS ensure undertakes engagement with the VCSE organisations through these site visits, which has helped to ensure evaluations are completed. Learning gained from this engagement means a depth of understanding that cannot be learnt through completion of evaluations forms and can inform improvements of the service.

The main purpose of evaluation for the TSF is to evidence the impact of the activities to provide the data for the social return on investment through the programme. This enables tracking of mandatory metrics and others applicable to the project in question, to produce a full assessment of return on investment through the newly developed distance travelled methodology. While the evidence supports the case for the CCG to continue supporting the TSF, there is scope to enhance the potential to learn from the programme - both for the

organisations themselves to be able to reflect on their own activity, and through collective learning to shape future activity. There are potentially exciting plans to complement existing evaluation activity through a more creative and open approach - for example, through the 'Salford Stories' event where organisations come to share their more creative evaluations. Building on such innovation can expand the knowledge, evidence and learning enabled through the evaluation.

As we enter Year 3 of this programme, groups are feeding back that they have been using the metrics and evidence base developed (2017/19) as part of the TSF process, in order to apply for other funding sources. There have been early recorded successes through the Lottery and Forever Manchester. Clearly, groups may well have accessed these funds without the evidence developed through TSF's evaluation and monitoring. Clearly, however, TSF is helping to develop basic tools for the sector that will support inward investment and create a competitive, place-based and ambitious network of VCSE organisations.

Through the application and reporting processes, applicants are also feeding back a strong sense of what social value is. In interviews, social value is commonly understood, and the learning is being used in applications to other funders. What is of particular note, however, is that the articulation of social value in the interviews held is often seen as place-based and economic. In this bid, what jobs and supply chains will benefit Salford. This vision is beginning to be incorporated into bids to other funders.

### **Principle 10: Payments**

DSC's principle 10 for a Good Grant Maker is 'Payments'. The assessment is: *"Payments should be made up-front (not in arrears). This helps the organisation's viability and ability to deliver (especially smaller ones). Ensure payment systems will not prevent some charities from applying."*

Salford CVS ensure payment systems do not prevent charities, social enterprises and especially community groups from applying. Payments are made up-front (not in arrears) for smaller all organisations, which helps the group's viability and ability to deliver. Groups describe this, in contrast to payment by results, as a critical positive for them. This is an essential part of being a Good Grant Maker.

Alongside this, the CVS offer up front support to enable groups to apply and to achieve the organisational competence necessary to deliver effectively. This has already been described above as part of the wrap-around support on offer from the CVS.

**Table 3: Good Grant Maker Models**

	<b>Principle of good grant making</b>	<b>Good Grant Maker (DSC): Assessment</b>	<b>Good locality-based grant programme management: Assessment</b>	<b>Salford TSF</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>CONSULTATION</b>	Speaking to stakeholders leads to better understanding of the market, need and gaps.	1.1 Consultation 1.2 Link investment to driving delivery of Place-based strategies 1.3 Link investment to a vision for VCSE action for that place 1.4 Engage local stakeholders in shaping objectives: partnership.	✓✓✓
<b>2</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	Setting clear objectives enables audiences to be targeted and relevant outcomes to be decided.	2.1 Objectives 2.2 Through grants programme, engage groups in understanding place based objectives (e.g. local strategies, needs, assets)	✓✓✓
<b>3</b>	<b>CRITERIA</b>	Clear criteria should produce a better pool of applicants and avoid wasted time with ineligible applications	3.1 Criteria 3.2 Support applicants to become eligible 3.3 Build capacity of groups to draw down investment from beyond place/Salford	✓✓✓
<b>4</b>	<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	All communications need to be clear and targeted effectively so as to reach relevant audiences and support understanding.	4.1 Communication 4.2 Place-based communications model that incorporates word of mouth and systematic cross-referral/signposting 4.3 Maintaining (with permission) links with past and present successful and unsuccessful VCSE applicants.	✓✓✓
<b>5</b>	<b>PROPORTIONALITY</b>	All applications and reporting should be proportionate to the grant requested/awarded	5.1 Proportionality 5.2 Grant programme investment is complementary investment not project funding	✓✓

<b>6</b>	<b>RESOURCES</b>	An effective grant management process.	6.1 Resources 6.2 Relational model of working: talking with applicants as people you know. 6.3 An effective development and wrap-around support offer for applicants e.g. help develop organisational policies (Volunteering, safeguarding, etc)	✓✓✓
<b>7</b>	<b>TIMESCALES</b>	All timescales need to be realistic	7.1 Timescales, tailored to local circumstances e.g. festivals, events, Covid 7.2 Generates a rhythm of local action	✓✓✓
<b>8</b>	<b>FLEXIBILITY</b>	Effective grant processes respond to need and circumstances	8.1 Flexibility 8.2 Offering flexible support to grantees e.g. face to face processes; digital delivery during COVID 8.3 Flexing delivery model during Covid to support past and present grantees and applicants	✓✓✓
<b>9</b>	<b>MONITORING AND EVALUATION</b>	Built in from the start	9.1 Monitoring and Evaluation 9.2 Help build evidence-base of groups 9.2 Groups adopt Salford's metrics e.g. a Salford sense of social value and social return on investment.	✓✓
<b>10</b>	<b>PAYMENTS</b>	Up front	10.1 Up front payments 10.2 Up front support	✓✓✓

# 6. Strategic Impact Assessment

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This section looks at the strategic impact of the Third Sector Fund across the three years of the current programme, 2017-20. It summarises the findings of research into the impact of the fund beyond individual grant beneficiaries, including on Salford CVS, the VCSE in Salford and wider social, economic and environmental context.

## Context and background

This evaluation of the strategic impact of the TSF focuses on the most recent three-year programme (2017-20) but it is important to recognise that this sits within a broader context of grant funding by Salford CCG.

This evaluation focuses on the TSF as a dimension of the wider strategic relationships between the public and VCSE sectors in Salford and has sought to explore how the fund specifically has contributed to these relationships and wider landscape. As one strategic partner expressed it:

*“the [TSF] fund has been an enabler of these relationships, not a prompt”.*

Lance Gardner, Chief Executive, Salford Primary Care Together

## Austerity and public sector grant making

It is important to understand this investment in the context of austerity and overall reductions in funding for both the public and VCSE sectors. While this investment in a grants programme has been significant, overall, the picture has been of huge reductions in public sector funding for VCSE sector infrastructure bodies in Salford and beyond. Salford, like many other CVS', experienced a reduction of 44 per cent in income between 2008-2013, mirroring similar loss of income for the local authority.

Financially, the TSF has in no way plugged this gap. However, what is significant about this funding is that it represents an ongoing and growing commitment to grants making at a time when nationally grant programmes were being abandoned in favour of commissioning of much larger contracts across large geographical and population footprints. While some VCSE sector organisations have been able to access these opportunities, smaller groups and organisations have struggled to meet the scale required; and larger organisations have lost some of the autonomy they had to shape their work to local need rather than responding to public sector specifications. It was in response to this context that Salford CVS worked with local VCSE organisations to set up Salford Third Sector Consortium.

## The scope of the strategic impact evaluation

This section of the evaluation sought to understand the strategic impact of the TSF not simply as a financial investment in third sector led activity in Salford but as a grant-making programme. There are two key features of the TSF that we explored specifically, and which shaped the types and scale of strategic impacts identified in the findings below:

- Salford CVS has had a high degree of autonomy to shape the design of funding streams and allocation of the grant monies to different grants.
- The TSF funding is made up of funding for grants (75%) and funding for: Strategic VCSE sector development and representation support, grant management capacity, in-house evaluation and monitoring capacity; independent evaluation and; learning and celebration activities (25%).
- In both respects, these features of the TSF contrast with other / the majority of grant programmes where third sector intermediaries are asked to administer funds on behalf of and to the priorities set by local public sector agencies, with some marginal contribution to operational costs.

### **Institutional impacts:**

#### Amplified the relationships of Salford CVS with smaller VCSE organisations in Salford:

While the TSF has provided grants to VCSE organisations of many sizes, it has been particularly well suited to the smaller organisations, which make up the majority of the sector in Salford. For example, proportionality has been a key design principle in the application and grant monitoring process, enabling groups with limited capacity to access smaller amounts of funding. 49% of grants have been awarded to groups that are entirely run by volunteers with no paid employees. This clearly demonstrates the value of the fund to these groups, many of whom might struggle to access other funding streams.

Moreover, the Fund has acted as a vehicle for increasing engagement of these smaller organisations with Salford CVS. Membership of Salford CVS is a requirement of applying for TSF funds and this has ensured that these groups are able to access to full range of CVS support as well as expanding the reach of the CVS.

*“The Impact Evaluation Worker role (funded through TSF) has strengthened substance of the projects not just the bids”*

Stephen Woods, Head of Service Improvement, (Partnerships) Salford CCG

## Reputation as grant giver gained through TSF has enabled the Salford CVS to attract other grant programmes

The TSF has enabled Salford CVS to build its grant management and administration capacity. This has in turn enhanced Salford CVS' reputation as an effective grant management body, both in Salford and in Greater Manchester, and in turn has helped them attract and manage additional grants programmes. In 2018-19: Salford CVS managed 7 other grants programmes in addition to the TSF. These came from a range of organisations including Greater Manchester Police, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Greater Manchester Mental Health Health Foundation Trust, and Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership. These have totalled over £450,600 of funding specifically for Salford and £320,000 for Greater Manchester organisations (including Salford), in addition to £1m managed through the TSF.

Importantly, the scale and profile of these grants programmes has helped to position grant making as an important part of the Salford public sector landscape. One strategic partner described how this emphasis on grant making was recognised as an important complement to commissioning of VCSE organisations:

*“There are three large VCSE providers commissioned by CCG which have always been key providers – but we’re conscious of more nuanced eco-system of organisations around mental health and have therefore built grant making, managed through Salford CVS, into key programmes”.*

Judd Skelton, Assistant Director for Integrated Commissioning, Salford CCG

## Incorporation of grants and dedicated grant management capacity has built CVS capacity to support the VCSE sector

The existence of TSF, as a significant and well-established grants programme, has further strengthened the bespoke capacity building support that Salford CVS provides to the VCSE sector. Salford CVS' comprehensive support to the local VCSE sector is comprised of a vital operational and strategic offer. This ranges from supporting VCSE groups with grant design, management and administration, to providing support, advice and expertise on demonstrating the value and impact of delivery through monitoring and evaluation, to promoting Salford's VCSE organisations by being the strategic voice of the sector.

The (Salford Council-supported) **Development Team** assists groups in developing constitutions, provides training in safeguarding, financial management, trustee development and accessing grants from wider local, regional and national funds. Salford CVS' **Volunteer Centre** provides an invaluable brokering service for organisations offering volunteering

opportunities and those Salford residents wanting to offer their time to support local initiatives. The **Finance and Administrative Teams** offer a range of services from holding accounts (in lieu of group bank accounts), Payroll and Accounting services and DBS checks. The thematic **VOCAL Forums** (strategic voice and influence) delivered by Salford CVS provides the sector with a route-way to influence city partners, inform new plans and share ideas and resources. For organisations, whose first engagement with Salford CVS is through a TSF grant, this means that they are able to access wider development support, and for wider Salford CVS members it means they get access to grants as well as all the other stuff.

An example of the value of the integration of the TSF grant management into the wider activities and offer of Salford CVS is the piloting of social prescribing in Salford, which is led by Salford CVS working in partnership with Salford Third Sector Consortium and statutory agencies (including the CCG, the council, GP practices and Primary Care Networks). The TSF has been used to complement Wellbeing Matters (the social prescribing programme) with dedicated funds to support VCSE organisations in developing their capacity to accept social prescribing referrals.

### **Strengthened the strategic impact of the VCSE sector on public services:**

Investment in the VCSE sector through grants has enabled greater influence for the sector on design and delivery of strategic initiatives:

It was clear from interviews with strategic partners that Salford CVS and the wider VCSE sector are highly valued partners in the leadership of Salford and that both the insight and contribution of VCSE organisations is seen as key to the design and delivery of many strategic initiatives:

*“[The VCSE sector] is embedded from strategic commissioning to operational response”*

Steve Dixon, Chief Accountable Officer, Salford CCG

Building on this recognition, Salford CVS has successfully made the case for grant investment as critical to resourcing the sector to fulfil its potential and the added value of investing in Salford CVS as a vehicle for directing these funds. This investment has created a virtuous cycle whereby the reach of Salford CVS has been increased which means that they are able to draw on the insight of a wider range and number of organisations to inform the design of strategic initiatives and in turn increase resourcing of the needs identified:



*"[The VCSE sector] enables us to respond to locality needs - by not over designing [the TSF] it allows for things that we aren't noticing to come up – these can come bottom up, it is a way for them to raise their profile"*

Karen Proctor, Director of Commissioning, Salford CCG

*"If you go through the Locality Plan [and look at the priorities it identifies] it is a no brainer that [investment in third sector grant funding] is what you would do!"*

Stephen Woods, Head of Service Improvement, (Partnerships), Salford CCG

## Reinforced recognition of Salford CVS as part of evolving Salford system leadership

It was clear from interviews with strategic partners that what they value about the contribution of Salford CVS goes beyond their input to specific strategic initiatives. In our interviews, partners described the value of the distinct perspective of the sector and their role in acting as the *"social conscience for the system"*. Karen Proctor, Director of Commissioning, Salford CCG.

*"We have boards across all health and care themes – [Salford] CVS is represented on these and adds real value – a different perspective, sees the millions spent and helps challenge, actually sharper on benefit realisation!"*

Steve Dixon, Chief Accountable Officer, Salford CCG

*"In a recent Health and Wellbeing Board development session the Salford CVS] raised questions on climate change, sustainability and social value [compared to some people whose focus is on] 'how do we recover waiting list backlog?'"*

Steve Dixon, Chief Accountable Officer, Salford CCG

*"Easy for people in important jobs to get stuck in that – [Salford CVS] acts on a check on the culture, a conscience"*

Karen Proctor, Director of Commissioning, Salford CCG

*“Without this insight from [the insight of VCSE organisations, [channelled through the Salford CVS] where would the authority or credibility come from for someone like me to challenge [the hospital]? Hospitals can really dominate in other areas”*

Senior NHS stakeholder – Anonymous

*“Salford CVS have to get balance of being a partner but also being independent voice- get it about right, it’s a healthy tension – our relationships mean we can see the world through each other’s eyes and understand the accountabilities we all have”*

Judd Skelton, Assistant Director for Integrated Commissioning, Salford CCG

In practice, this means that crucial to the on-going commitment to investment in the TSF and the Fund’s design which, although aligned to strategic priorities of wider public sector partners, is not viewed as a way to commission the sector in support of these but as a way to support the sector to exist:

*“Grants are not commissioning, they are about supporting the sector and tackling inequality”*

Stephen Woods, Head of Service Improvement, (Partnerships), Salford CC

The strength and consistency of support for the sector as part of Salford system leadership was very striking from all strategic partners and it was clear that this is institutionalised, not limited to a limited of key sponsors. Importantly this led the CCG to make the initial “leap of faith” to invest £1m of non-recurrent funding into a first iteration of the TSF in 2016 and have strengthened commitment since then to the point where it was “an easy conversation to get the next five year recurrent funding” for 2020 - 2025:

*“[The TSF has] very senior sponsorship in the CCG – the Chief Executive and his predecessor were very bought in, for example the TSF is always showcased when the annual NHS assurance visit happens – it really is the jewel in the crown”.*

Stephen Woods, Head of Service Improvement, (Partnerships), Salford CCG

## Made the case for grant making, locally, regionally and nationally

The sustained investment in TSF grants by the CCG (and the associated Salford CVS infrastructure and evaluation capacity) has enabled Salford CVS to make a powerful case for this model of grant making in Salford, Greater Manchester and at a national level. This is in strong contrast to national trends over the period since austerity began which have seen grant making largely disappear as a tool of funding the local VCSE:

*“When financial pressures really hit in a lot of places, grants was easiest to cut, in contrast we increased investment”*

Karen Proctor, Director of Commissioning, Salford CCG

In our interviews we heard examples of how the existence and independently assessed value of the TSF had acted as an encouragement to other places to develop grant programmes:

- **National impact:** It was striking to hear examples of the TSF being used as a successful example to support arguments for investment in grant programmes in other parts of the country.

*“Using the example of the investment that Salford CVS administers on behalf of local partners, we have been able to talk to colleagues in St Helens about how this approach can galvanise social and voluntary action and enable the VCSE sector to play a key role in tackling health outcomes. Salford CVS work also helped us make the case for the role a local infrastructure organisation can play in facilitating this more successfully”*

Sally Yeoman, Chief Officer, Halton and St Helens VCA.

- **Regional impact.** The TSF has significant profile in Greater Manchester, for example the Fund was included in the GM VCSE Leadership Group’s 10 Year Policy Paper as example of good practice and grant programmes drawing on it have been instated instigated in other districts of the city region (including Bolton) though few places have channelled through a Salford CVS.
- **Local impact:** We repeatedly heard from Salford strategic partners that the TSF provided an exemplar of the unique contribution of grant making to improving health

and wellbeing, particularly when paired with investment in the wider sector capacity-building support of Salford CVS. These included an ability to extend resources to organisations with far greater reach into communities, the development of this capacity over a period of time and the ability to identify groups and organisations in response to new and urgent priorities:

*“In the move to greater emphasis on delivering at a neighbourhood level [the organisations funded through the TSF] are able to get into places that water can’t!”*

Judd Skelton, Assistant Director for Integrated Commissioning, Salford CC

*“Salford CVS have not just administrated something; they’ve grown something”*

Stephen Woods, Head of Service Improvement, (Partnerships,) Salford CCG

## Case study: The Covid-19 Crisis Fund

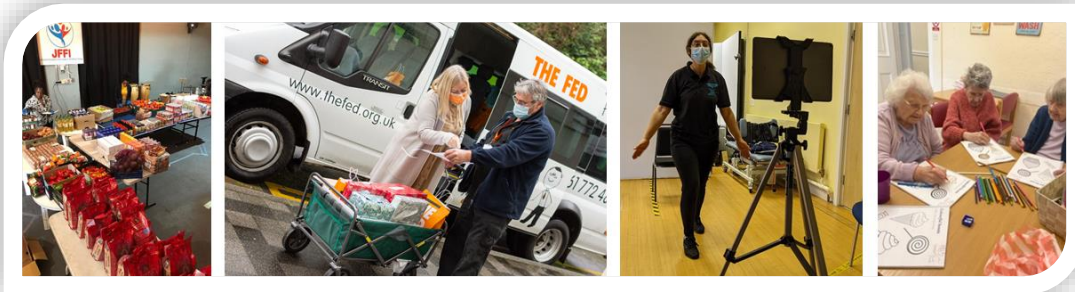
The Third Sector Fund grants programme has helped build mature grant management and wider functions at Salford CVS, which provides Salford with an efficient mechanism for trusted 2-way communication with a large number of local VCSE groups and organisations.

The flexibility of the funding arrangement with NHS Salford CCG, combined with this reach, enabled Salford CVS to swiftly respond to emerging city-wide priorities. This is exemplified by the pre-lockdown launch of the Covid-19 Crisis Fund in the final weeks of the financial year (pre-first lockdown).

A fast-track decision-making process enabled grants of up to £500, and in some cases £1,000, to be issued within a 72-hour period. This helped meet the urgent need for community food responses, wellbeing checks and activity packs for children at home. Ninety-one awards were made totalling £71,728 to support the community's pandemic response.

*“Without the established networks, administrative capacity, funding and support from the CCG, Salford’s VCSE sector could not have responded so swiftly to meet urgent need in a time of crisis. Through this lens I view Salford’s VCSE sector PLUS the Third Sector Fund as part of our city’s critical health infrastructure.”*

Simon Robinson, Grants Manager, Salford CVS



Photos: some of the support and activities enabled by the Covid-19 Crisis Fund (food response, activity packs for children and the elderly & online physio sessions)

## Increased investment in VCSE activity in Salford

It was clear from interviews with strategic partners that the successful management of the TSF has bolstered the reputation of Salford CVS as a highly effective route for distributing resources to organisations with powerful reach and traction in communities. This has in turn led to additional resources being channelled to the VCSE sector via Salford CVS.

For example, in 2017 Salford received an allocation of approx. £1m mental health transformation funding from Greater Manchester Health and Care Partnership (over a three-year period). In all other districts, this funding went to statutory sector organisations but in Salford the decision was taken to channel this to the VCSE sector via Salford CVS, recognising that statutory services had already received significant investment whereas funding tailored to the VCSE was limited to a sub-section of the TSF.

The funding was used partly to grant aid three large VCSE providers in the borough, but a grant fund was also created with the aim of improving reach into at risk groups and generate innovation. The insight and models tested through the grant programme have fed directly into the development of a future model for mental health services in the borough.

## Case study: RHS Garden Bridgewater



In early 2018, the Royal Horticultural Society commenced work on 'Europe's largest gardening project' at their newly acquired site in Worsley.

As part of a wider community outreach and engagement programme Salford CVS' CEO approached RHS Bridgewater to see if they were interested in establishing a new Grow Well Fund to support community-led green and growing activity throughout the city.

Over two rounds of funding the RHS has contributed £30k (which has been matched with monies from the TSF) to support 31 small VCSE projects ranging from food growing, moss land enhancement to floral displays.



Photos: Valley Community Gardens' Project - supported by a Grow Well grant

## Sector impacts

Strengthened VCSE sector

**TSF grants have benefited organisations across the breadth of the VCSE sector in Salford**

The breadth of grants made available through the TSF and the wraparound support available to groups has meant that the grants programme has benefited a wide range of VCSE organisations in Salford. These impacts have varied depending on the size of the group and the funded project:

- **For smaller groups and organisations,** TSF grants have proved very accessible and the wider support offer has helped build both sustainability of activities and impact:

## Case study: Health Action Team

The Health Action Team (HAT) was set up as an unincorporated group in 2008 as a residents' forum for Salford Foyer, a temporary accommodation unit for young people aged 16-25 years old at risk of homelessness.



Since they established the Health Action Team, they have secured grants from the Lottery and other grant funders and this year young people were awarded a Youth Wellbeing Fund grant through the TSF to run a FareShare food project for residents. The HAT coordinator emphasised the value of the wrap-round support from the Salford CVS in supporting their development over more than a decade:

*"I'm so grateful to the CVS who helped us set up the Health Action Team in 2008. They offered so much support I really wouldn't have known where to start. This has brought in so many resources over the years for these young people we really couldn't have done it without your help."*

Photo: Hannah from Salford CVS, delivers wellbeing packs to young people at Salford Foyer, Christmas 2020

- **For medium sized groups,** the TSF has provided critical funds at a time when they were particularly exposed to loss of income as a result of wider austerity. While it is clear that TSF grants have been no substitute for core funding which these groups require, the funds plus wider support have provided many organisations with space to develop sustainability plans: The quote below comes from Mustard Tree, a charity that provides support to homeless people rough sleepers and those living in poverty in Manchester and Salford:



*“The support of Salford CVS over the last three years has been hugely beneficial for Mustard Tree and the people we support. We are grateful for the funding we have received, most recently for our COVID-19 food response (including through the Salford Food Share Network) and previously for our Volunteers Week celebrations.”*

*“Of course, it’s about more than just money, the in-kind support from Salford CVS has been hugely beneficial. Your ongoing development support has enabled us to secure and improve our Salford operation to best support local residents in line with local needs”.*

*“The opportunity to learn from Salford CVS and your other partners, on both an operational and strategic level, has been invaluable. We look forward to developing our partnership moving forward”*

Mustard Tree

- There have been fewer grant pots suitable for **larger organisations** (those with turnover of over £1m) but the opportunities available through grant pots such as the Impact Fund Partnership Challenge have been important in providing opportunities for innovation and responding to local need which is often less possible when work is being commissioned to a specification. The learning around the IFPC is explored further in Appendix III.

## Rebalanced the relationship between commissioners and VCSE sector:

The TSF has provided space for VCSE organisations to have the initiative in proposing activities to meet needs they are aware of in their communities but that may not have been apparent to commissioners. In this sense the TSF rebalances the power relationship that exists between VCSE organisations and commissioners when activity is commissioned through contracts, with organisations rooted in communities identifying needs and shaping the response to them. It is clear that with its track record of delivery through the TSF, Salford CVS has the leverage to raise the option of grant funding into strategic conversations across many areas, though it is important to note that grants still make up a small percentage of total CCG spending.

Strategic partners highlighted the unique value of grants in enabling needs they were less aware of to be raised by VCSE organisations:

*“The in-year responsiveness fund has a double benefit – it’s a way for us to hear issues and a way for us to react to them, fast”*

Stephen Woods, Head of Service Improvement, (Partnerships), Salford CCG

*“[The TSF is] not overly designed – we have priorities, but things come up and raise their profile”*

Karen Proctor, Director of Commissioning, Salford CCG

However, while it was clear that the TSF enabled the knowledge and insight of VCSE groups to be elevated and grant funding to flow from this, some stakeholders described frustrations with affecting a similar change in relation to commissioning. So, while it was clear that the grant programme provided a space for commissioner / VCSE power relationships to be rebalanced, it was much less clear that this was transferring into wider system relationships. An example emerged from the Impact Fund Partnership Challenge where grant recipients have received funds to test out new models of working, a number of which have been highly successful. However, they have struggled to find routes for this learning to affect mainstream commissioning models despite robust evidence of significant improvements in impact and cost saving.

### Built links between VCSE organisations:

In contrast to mainstream tendering approaches which are highly competitive, the TSF has provided space for collaboration to be built between VCSE organisations. Some of this is intrinsic to the grants model whereby multiple applicants can be awarded funding and “everyone can win!”. But it is also clear that Salford CVS have worked proactively to catalyse greater collaboration between groups from the sector who are themselves very diverse, with varying sizes and purposes. This has been achieved in three ways:

- Through the design of grant pots (for example requiring IFPC applicants to apply as partnerships)
- In utilising the TSF as a vehicle for embedding shared principles around concepts such as social value among diverse VCSE groups
- In the work on the ground to support grantees to learn from each other. For example, Salford CVS brought together the newly forming Albert Park Running Group with the more established GMCR Runners to shape their group and planned activity. This type of peer to peer learning enables groups to explore new ideas and learn from hard-won experience.

## Validation of the value of the activity:

Investment in impact measurement has been a core feature of the TSF from the outset and been key to enabling VCSE groups to articulate their contribution to improving health and wellbeing in Salford in a way that the wider system can understand. Dedicated funding from the CCG has supported both an annual independent evaluation and, since 2017, the embedding of a monitoring and evaluation officer in Salford CVS. The methodology for evaluation has evolved over the period of the fund, but has two core elements:

- A Return on Investment (ROI) calculation which uses industry standards metrics to ascribe a cashable value to the outcomes achieved through grant funded activity
- A variety of approaches to capturing the qualitative impact of funded activity on the lives of people in Salford. These include written case studies and testimonies of participants at annual celebration events.

For commissioners, the development of an impact measurement method in the first year the fund meant that the leap of faith in setting up the fund was quickly met with a demonstration of impact:

*“At the CCG we’d have really struggled to get our heads round the question of ‘you put this amount in and you get what out?’... “[The] first evaluation report was a lights on moment – previously [we] struggled to see how these small amounts [of money] could make an impact, for example £25 for a DBS check for a volunteer and how that enabled someone to go on to get a job with all the benefits for the individual and their family that that unlocked – it was astounding”*

Steve Dixon, Chief Accountable Officer, Salford CCG

In our interviews with strategic partners, these thoughts were widely echoed, with strong support for the combination of ROI and qualitative impact assessment to enable commissioners to understand the value of activity funded through the TSF:

*“When we started it was new and no pre-existing way to demonstrate impact [of this type of fund] – the approach to evaluation has meant we can vividly see the return on investment”*

Steve Dixon, Chief Accountable Officer, Salford CCG

*“[In relation to the celebration events] it is very humbling to see where £500 went – a world away from the multi-million pound contracts we deal in”*

Karen Proctor, Director of Commissioning, Salford CCG

In addition to the value of impact evaluation in demonstrating the value of activities to commissioners, the evaluation approach for the TSG (especially the case study interviews, celebration events and contact with the monitoring and evaluation officer) has proved a direct benefit to groups themselves:

*“Sometimes we can forget how far we have come and how much we get out of the choir until we begin to tell someone about our journey”.*

Melanie, Salford City Singers

Furthermore, some groups used monitoring data produced by CLES and Salford CVS to support funding bids. The TSF funded Salford CVS monitoring and development functions has enabled this to happen and demonstrates how TSF investment in additional Salford CVS capacity has added significant value for grantees and the sector more broadly. DIY Theatre Company, who have received a number of grants through the TSF report that:

*“DIY Theatre Company is very grateful for the financial support and advice we have received from Salford CVS / Salford CCG over the past few years. Funding through Salford CVS / CCG has provided valuable match funding to enable DIY to apply to other funders to support our work with adults and young people with learning disabilities from throughout Salford.*

*It has encouraged us to innovate and to pilot new ideas and approaches. Evaluation has enabled us to develop and build on these pilot projects, embed the learning and make a much stronger case to other funders to support our work.”*

## Increased investment into the VCSE sector from non-CCG sources

The TSF has enabled Salford CVS to lever additional, non-CCG funding for VCSE groups and organisations to expand the funding and also enabled groups and organisations themselves to draw down match funding.

*“We always tailor the support we give to groups to where they are, so if they are unconfident about applying for funding, we will work with them to identify possible sources of funding and support them as they fill in application forms, discuss what is needed for each question, proof read what they have drafted, help them to draft a budget, etc.*

*So that we are supporting them every step of the way by doing this they get to understand where they can apply for money and what they need to do for future applications.”*

Jeremy Engineer, Development worker Salford CVS

*“Often groups don’t realise the impact that their activity has. I’ve lost count of the times I have met with groups that have vastly underestimated what they are doing recording outputs rather than impact. Through supporting them to think about their outcomes and impact more broadly, they start to feel more confident in articulating the value of what they do and celebrating what has been achieved.*

*Having a clear monitoring and evaluation plan (impact map) is integral to developing the groups confidence in applying for funding. This provides a natural strategy for them to identify the right funding opportunities for them, a clear framework to outline their impact and a strong evidence base to back this up.”*

Hannah, Impact evaluation Worker Salford CVS

## **In 2018-19 alone significant amounts of match funding were secured:**

- £538,911 from organisations who have committed funding at the application stage. This includes funding from RHS Bridgewater, additional CCG funds and funds raised by Salford CVS under their 'Salford4Good' fundraising banner
- £912,644 of match funding which Salford CVS' Development Team (part funded through the TSF) supported groups to secure against individual grant funded projects (including some funded through TSF grants)

## **Social impacts for Salford**

### **Investment in volunteering**

Support to enable volunteering is at the heart of the TSF. The majority of VCSE organisations in Salford are volunteer run and have no paid employees and many of the small grants have supported these smaller groups. In addition, specific grant pots have been created to enable more people to volunteer. Research by Salford CVS has demonstrated that while overall numbers of people volunteering in Salford have increased over the period the TSF has run, the average amount of time people have given has reduced from an estimated 137,000 hours per week in 2012/13 to 115,400 hours per week in 2016/17. The research identified potential reasons for this as being due to:

- The impact of austerity affecting people's ability to volunteer, including benefit reforms, which can limit the time available for claimants to volunteer.
- The growth of employability focused placements as well as an increase in people having to accommodate "flexible" contracts or unpredictable working patterns within the gig economy having an impact on time and availability.
- The loss of funding for volunteer coordination posts. This has limited VCSE organisations' ability to provide ongoing support and training for those that might volunteer the most hours but who also need the most 1-2-1 support.
- An increase in the number of unpaid carers, where their caring responsibilities reduce their ability to volunteer.

In response, Salford CVS established a volunteers' expenses fund and a Volunteers' Week activities fund to recognise and recruit volunteers. The impact of volunteering on individuals and communities has been a key theme of annual TSF evaluation reports and was highlighted as evidence of the "deep and profound impact" of the TSF by strategic partners.

## Case study: Sovereign House

Sovereign House is a community organisation that works with children, young people and their families in Salford.



They received a grant from the TSF Volunteer Expenses fund in 2018 and in their end of project evaluation described the benefits of this funding, both to the volunteers themselves to the organisations which has been able to expand its reach as a result of being able to support volunteers to attend regularly and therefore enable more people to attend classes. To illustrate this, they provided the following summary of the impact on one volunteer:

*“One of the success stories from these is from one of our long term volunteers, who had a passion for volunteering, but coming from quite a distance affected his attendance. Once we were able to pay his travel expenses and provide refreshments for him, his attendance was regular. Due to these, he was able to apply for a job, and we gave him a reference.*

*He has started his full-time job since May 2019 and has come off benefits. His confidence has grown, and he has learnt how to use a computer by himself through regularly attending the classes. He was so proud to be able to go to a library and put in the job application by himself, and at other times, he came to the office and we helped him with the difficult parts.*

*The experience he has gained through regular attendance has helped to change his life, and though he is working full time now, he is still committed to coming on days he is free. He is so grateful for the help and change to his life-style.”*

Photo: Irene from Sovereign House explains their work to Paul Dennett, City Mayor, and Tom Stannard, Salford Council Chief Executive – March 2021

## Increased voice and influence for people whose voices are seldom heard

As described above, the TSF grants have provided a vehicle for the insight and needs of Salford communities to be better understood and given greater profile in the health and social care system.

The example from Sebene (below) demonstrates the efficacy of the TSF as a route to increase the voice and representation of people who have not traditionally had their voices heard. It highlights how the securing of a grant to enable people to enact an idea is itself an important means of building recognition of the capacity and potential within communities, but also how Salford CVS has sought to work with grant recipients to embed and promote their expertise beyond their individual projects:

### Case study: Sebene

Sebene is a project which uses a Congolese music style called 'Sebene' to empower young black males.

*"[The Grant] also made a difference in the lives of the boys in the project because they didn't even know that grants could be given for anything before, they thought no one cared about their ideas or what they wanted, having people believe in them and investing in them was a very big deal. Now if they have an idea or a project, they know that their dreams can become a reality and people actually care about them."*



Following this grant, one of the young men who participates in Sebene sat on the awarding panel for the next Youth Wellbeing grant and participated in Seldom Heard (an event bringing together young people and the city leaders to address issues affecting the mental health of Salford's Young People).

*"Taking part in the Seldom Heard was amazing because it gave us exposure. We met people that were interested in us and really wanted to hear our opinion, that was something we'd never experienced before. It gave us confidence to speak up about issues that are important to us knowing that our voice mattered. Sometimes, we have discussions about just being seen and heard. The Seldom Heard activity was one of the most important ones, we finally get to be heard and seen."*

Photo: The Sebene youth group at the Seldom Heard event, with Stephen Woods of NHS Salford CCG and Alison Page of Salford CVS



## Improved health and wellbeing

The contribution of the VCSE sector to improved health and wellbeing in Salford is widely acknowledged among strategic partners. This role is articulated clearly in the central reference document for the health and care system in the city, the Locality Plan, which also expresses a shared commitment to on-going investment in the sector through grant funding:

*“Salford has a well-established, active and diverse VCSE sector which is well placed to deliver the proactive agenda that takes an asset-based and person-centred approach to improving health outcomes with a focus on prevention and early intervention, whilst addressing gaps in existing provision and meeting new and emerging need. Investment in local communities and the local VCSE organisations that support them will enable considerable savings from a reduction in demand on expensive clinical / public sector services.*

*In 2015 NHS Salford CCG’s Performance Management Group made the following recommendation for a further investment in the VCSE sector via the Third Sector Fund. “PMG acknowledges the investment made in the voluntary sector represented real value for money and has a significant impact on many lives in the community. PMG also notes further funding allocations would support greater partnership working in targeting health inequalities or health issues across the city.”*

Independent evaluation activity (funded through the TSF) has provided on-going evidence of positive impact on the health and wellbeing of grant beneficiaries. Research on the ‘network effect’ suggests that these benefits are likely to have spread beyond individuals involved directly in grant-funded activities. With a proliferation of community-based activities occurring within the area, there is an increased uptake in activities by residents and a growing expectation that there are interesting and beneficial groups and events to participate in within the community, which in turn fuels further activity.

While Salford remains one of the areas with the highest levels of poor health outcomes in the country, there is evidence that outcomes have improved in recent years. In the four years to 2019, Salford’s ranking in the health domain of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation improved, with the borough moving from 7th most deprived local authority area in the country to 12th. While no research has been done to interrogate the link between VCSE activity funded through the TSF and this improvement, the fund is able to demonstrate health outcome improvements as part of a wider local approach.

## Helped inform a more widespread and common understanding of social value in the sector

At the heart of the Salford CVS' approach to the TSF has been a commitment to utilising the fund as a vehicle for "mobilising social change" rather than simply administering funding to VCSE groups:

*"[The CVS present a] challenge back to the sector: Being a charity is... about mobilising social change, for example it's okay to pay people properly"*

Lance Gardner, Chief Executive, Salford Primary Care Together

A key aspect of this has been to use the TSF as a means to advance a shared understanding of social value in the VCSE sector and to prompt and support VCSE organisations to strengthen their social contribution. This approach has been firmly rooted in wider work in Salford (of which Salford CVS has been a leading player – Salford CVS' CEO chairs the Salford Social Value Alliance) to develop locally-rooted social value priorities and approaches. For example, all applicants are asked to think about how they might maximise positive impacts and minimise negative impacts on a sub-set of the social value outcomes which form the current '10% Better: 11 goals for 2021' campaign – a widely supported Salford initiative to encourage all organisations in the borough to "do their bit for our community" through pledging to contribute to driving a 10 percent improvement across eleven outcomes.

Across grant recipient focus groups and interviews with strategic partners we heard a shared understanding of the social value agenda being advanced through the TSF. However, there was also a widespread feeling that embedding this into grant processes was far from straightforward:

*"The concept of social value presents a dilemma of how to convey understanding whilst maintaining proportionate application requirements"*

Simon Robinson, Grants Manager, Salford CVS

The approach has been refined multiple times over the last three years, with groups initially asked to provide information on social, economic and environmental outcomes that create added value. It was found that for groups with a good understanding of the concept, comprehensive answers were produced while for those with a more limited understanding little was provided. It was felt that this did little to reflect the true social value of proposed activities so in 2018/19 groups were instead asked simple, direct questions on five areas (whether they will pay the living wage, where the project will buy goods and services from, how it will support new and existing volunteers, promoting green alternatives and the disposal of waste). This has however provided limited opportunity for groups to convey the

wider social value outcomes they have achieved and the application form for 2020/21 has been further refined to focus on the Real Living Wage and purchasing of goods and services from local independent suppliers and then include a 'wider social value' section. This is coupled with encouragement within the guidance to spend 'with Salford in mind'. However, there was a strong consensus that being overly prescriptive about the way groups report their social value contributions risked "missing the point" and that it is important to build in opportunities for groups to express their social contribution in their own words:

*"Groups are directed to materials online, but it's hard for them to articulate [social value] – it's in pitch to panel that this shines through"*

Stephen Woods, Head of Service Improvement, (Partnerships), Salford CCG

In line with this, social value commitments made at the application stage are not subject to Salford CVS monitoring, but groups are encouraged to use their end of project evaluation forms *"to educate us about the difference you are making"*. Simon Robinson, Grants Manager, Salford CVS.

## Economic impacts for Salford

### Local spending and multipliers

Within its approach to embedding social value considerations in the TSF, Salford CVS has placed a strong emphasis on maximising the local economic benefit of grant funding. There are two key elements of this, both of which feature prominently in the TSF application requirements and guidance:

- **Local spending:** Organisations applying for the Fund are strongly encouraged to maximise their spending with local, independent suppliers. Guidance is provided around local options for venue hire, refreshments, marketing and publicity, merchandise, entertainment and activity costs, and awards and certificates.
- **Real Living Wage:** Salford CVS are a Living Wage Funder, accredited through the Living Wage Foundation. In line with this Salford CVS requires that all posts funded through their grants programmes are paid at or above Real Living Wage rates and grant recipients are encouraged to accredit themselves with the Foundation. While it is important to note that the majority of smaller TSF grants (under £5,000) go to smaller volunteer-led VCSE organisations with no paid employees, in 2019/20 45 organisations received grants over this amount. Of these, 35 had paid staff and supported the equivalent of 9.1 full-time posts over 12 months.

## Return on investment for Salford CCG

*“The £1m invested in TSF is the best £1m that NHS Salford CCG spends”*

Dr Tom Tasker, Chair, NHS Salford CCG

It was clear from interviews with strategic partners that there is a strong consensus that the TSF generates a very significant return on investment for the CCG. In part this relates to independently assessed social return on investment calculations which are produced each year, drawing on data from projects themselves as well as understanding of the multiplier effect of volunteer time. However, it also reflects the success with which Salford CVS has been able to leverage the TSF grant to attract additional funding to Salford and to the VCSE specifically.

In 2019/20 Salford CVS calculated that over £1m has been secured as match funding to the £1m invested by the CCG in the TSF. This includes both funding secured at the application stage and match secured by individual groups with the support of the Salford CVS staff team. An example of this approach is the match funding secured from RHS Bridgewater (see page 49).

## Generation of environmental benefits for Salford

A significant number of TSF funded projects have generated environmental benefits, over and above their core health and wellbeing outcomes. Whilst these feature throughout all grant streams, they are most prevalent in the Grow Well Fund, the Healthy Schools Fund and Healthy Schools Partnership Challenge and Wellbeing Funds.

Example: Grow Well Fund, 2018/19. This grant stream supported 14 projects which actively engaged over 680 local people in planting and growing of vegetables for food, flowers for floral displays and trees and mosses for habitat improvement and biodiversity. Match funding of £15k was supplied by RHS Garden Bridgewater as part of its outreach programme to ensure city-wide engagement in what constitutes Europe’s largest gardening project. One young person involved in St George’s All Sorts Grow Well project is quoted as saying:

*“I have started healing my Grandmother with her garden”*

## Case study: Healthy Schools programme

The Healthy Schools programme has funded numerous raised beds for food growing, forest school projects and improved outdoor play and relaxation zones. During 2019/20 schools have worked with VCSE partners to deliver these environment-themed health and wellbeing projects including Sow the City, Incredible Education CIC and The Lancashire Wildlife Trust.

Beyond these direct benefits, in the application process groups are encouraged to consider and explain how they intend to maximise positive environmental benefits (e.g.: through increasing recycling of waste and increasing use of green modes of transport by participants and staff / volunteers) and minimise negative impacts (e.g.: reducing waste)

*"Since we started, the children have been eager to explore different vegetables, and have been more mindful of the natural world around them."* Key Stage 1 Teacher.



*"Gardening helps me to be calm."*

*"I liked being outside."*

*"I liked growing our own plants."*

Primary school children working with Sow the City CIC

Beyond these direct benefits, in the application process groups are encouraged to consider and explain how they intend to maximise positive environmental benefits (e.g.: through increasing recycling of waste and increasing use of green modes of transport by participants and staff / volunteers) and minimise negative impacts (e.g.: reducing waste).

## **Using community assets**

The use of community assets (including public green spaces and community owned buildings) for TSF funded activities has a number of environmental and social benefits. This includes maximising investment into existing assets, reduced energy wasted by buildings being under-utilised and promoting the usage of the considerable green and blue space in Salford to a wider public. During 2019/20 the TSF supported projects to make use of community assets in a number of ways:

- Making use of local parks for running (Albert Park Running Group, GMCR Runners and Parkrun Buile Hill). Parks were also utilised as venues for events and activities by groups including Friends of Green Grosvenor Park and the Spirit of Little Hulton.
- Numerous bowling and curling clubs supported by the TSF have utilised community owned venues and greens.
- Facilities owned or managed by VCSE organisations, Salford City Council or Housing Associations make up the vast majority of venues hired by TSF-supported groups. Examples include Sovereign House using Langworthy Cornerstone, Society Inc in Little Hulton Big Local, and Ability Co-operative based at Princes Park Garden Centre.

## **Increased adoption of active travel**

The funding of hyper-local community activities through the TSF in itself reduces the need for car-use and encourages active travel to attend activities. Beyond this, some groups have sought proactively to promote active travel through the design of their activities. An example of this is Barton Athletic Club's partnership with local schools in Eccles, which requires all classes to walk to their centre before undertaking mixed-sports and gym exercises. Other projects have directly focused on active travel for leisure and utility such as Cycling Projects' Pedal Away programme which supported over 65's to returning to cycling to improve physical and mental health and reduce isolation. A Wellbeing Fund grant enabled the Marina Milers Cycling Club to train cycle leaders to support the 40 members in undertaking regular leisure rides for mixed abilities.

# 8. Recommendations 2019-21

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## 8.1 Evaluation of 2019-20

This section summarises our key findings and recommendations from the evaluation activity covered in this report. A further five years of funding for the TSF have been confirmed (2020-25) and these recommendations are therefore intended to inform the design of the Fund.

### Sustain and grow investment in the TSF grants programme

This evaluation has shown that the TSF grants programme has delivered consistently high rates of return on investment for the CCG. This year's strategic impact and process evaluation have enabled us to get behind these impressive headlines and understand why the fund has been so successful. A significant factor to have emerged from these studies is that the value of fund has been magnified as investment has become more secure. From a one year 'experiment', the Fund is now widely considered a long-term feature of the VCSE funding landscape in Salford. The move to three-year funding has enabled investment by the CVS in its grant management and support capacity and sustained relationships with funded organisations, which has in turn translated into what is widely recognised to be an on-going improvement in the quality of bids and funded activity. The commitment by the CCG to invest a further five years funding into the programme will enable this legacy to be sustained and further built on.

### Recommendations

1. To amplify further the benefits described above we recommended that the CCG move away entirely from a time limited approach to funding and mainstream investment in the TSF.
2. Given the consistent and exceptionally high return on investment from the Fund, we recommend that the CCG give consideration to continued growth of the amount invested in the Fund.
3. Given the breadth of priorities addressed and outcomes delivered through the Fund, we recommend that increased investment in the Fund by the CCG is coupled with a widening of the scope of the fund.

## Grant making via Salford CVS is widely considered by city partners

Evaluation of funded activity over the three years of this cycle has also shown the wide breadth of priorities which groups have delivered against. From increasing physical activity to preventing falls, providing culturally appropriate support for specific communities during the Covid-19 pandemic to pioneering new models of on-line support for carers, the Fund has proved to be a highly flexible means of reaching the diverse communities of Salford. The strategic evaluation highlights the unique contribution these activities make to tackling widespread, deep rooted and persistent inequality. While the scale of investment in the Fund is significant, when considered in the context of the scale of this challenge, it is clear that it is a drop in the ocean.

The Fund has provided proof of concept for how a grants programme managed and led by Salford CVS can mobilise the reach, relational capital and creativity of the local VCSE sector to address challenges that the public sector has struggled to address acting alone. The Fund has been framed by the concept of the wider determinants of health, with grants funding activity related both to direct health-related outcomes (such as tackling obesity) but also to indirect outcomes (such as increased volunteering and confidence). These wider determinants of health have a significant overlap with other key strategic priorities for Salford such as the building of an inclusive economy and environmental sustainability. It would therefore be a powerful next step to consider how grants programmes modelled on the TSF could be developed by other city partners to address a wide range of strategic priorities.

4. City partners including the City Council, draw on the proof of concept provided by the TSF to consider how grants programmes, managed and led by the CVS, could support wider strategic priorities, specifically the growth of the social and solidarity economy and sustainable transition away from fossil fuels.

## Relevance and proportionality

The strategic and process evaluations in this report demonstrate that proportionality and relevance has been crucial guiding principles for the design of the TSF. Application processes and monitoring requirements have been tailored to the needs of the wide spectrum of VCSE organisations in Salford.

Importantly the Fund has not simply been seen a route to funding smaller VCSE groups.



Throughout the programme there has been a blend of funding available, from funds limited to £750 in the volunteers' expenses fund to £50,000 multi-year investments for larger organisations through the Impact Partnership Fund Challenge (IPFC). While the impact of smaller grants for smaller organisations is widely recognised, this year's analysis of the IPFC demonstrates that these larger organisations also benefit from grants which enable them to innovate and learn.

5. Build on the learning from the IPCF to design further multi-year, high value grant pots targeted at larger VCSE organisations.

## Leveraging the learning from longer term investment

### Key finding

While it was clear that the TSF enabled the knowledge and insight of VCSE groups to be elevated and grant funding to flow from this, some stakeholders described frustrations with affecting a similar change in relation to commissioning. So, while it was clear that the grant programme provided a space for commissioner / VCSE power relationships to be rebalanced, it was much less clear that this was transferring into wider system relationships.

An example emerged from the Impact Fund Partnership Challenge where grant recipients have received funds to test out new models of working, a number of which have been highly successful. However, they have struggled to find routes for this learning to affect mainstream commissioning models despite robust evidence of significant improvements in impact and cost saving.

### Recommendations:

6. Continue to invest in multi-year, larger funds as part of the next cycle of the TSF. As part of the design of these larger grant pots, work with the CCG to prepare the ground so that funded groups have routeways for engaging with commissioners in relation to how evidence of successful activities could inform future commissioning priorities. In doing this build on the learning from the Wellbeing Matters programme.

## Social value

### Key finding

Prompting and supporting the Salford VCSE sector to maximise its contribution to improving social, economic and environmental outcome in Salford has been a key objective of the TSF since its inception. The approach to capturing the added benefits created by TSF funded projects has been refined over the three years of the current TSF cycle. However, there remains a disconnect between what key audiences identify as the considerable added value being created by groups when they hear from them directly, and what formal monitoring and reporting captures.

### Recommendations

7. Salford CVS Development Team to work with grant funded groups, Salford Social Value Alliance and Greater Manchester Social Value Network to further refine the approach to assessing social value in applications and consider the potential for social value to be incorporated into grant evaluations.

## Evaluation and monitoring

### Key findings

The combination of evaluation approaches developed over the six years that the Fund has been operating has provided a robust and compelling evidence based for continued investment. Commissioners value the return on investment calculation as a means of capturing the overall impact of a very diverse set of activities as well as the opportunities to 'get behind' these figures to directly witness the direct impact on the lives of individuals at annual celebration events. In recent years attempts to strengthen impact data through development of 'distance travelled' monitoring frameworks have provided a rich source of evidence on specific outcomes, but have proved burdensome to some groups and others have reported that it is hard to get a realistic baseline at the outset of a project before trust is built up with participants. This means that for some projects distance travelled data has indicated a decline against key outcomes as participants feel more able to share their challenges.

### Recommendations

8. Retain the case study approach to capturing the impact of TSF funded projects. Utilise this along with a revised approach to distance travelled methodology which focuses on retrospective review of progress to calculate the return on investment.

9. Retain annual celebration events and consider other ways in which the voice of participants can be better reflected in grant monitoring methods (for example through video recordings) to support the communication of the human impact of TSF funded activity to key audiences.
10. Continue to invest in dedicated TSF evaluation and monitoring capacity within the Salford CVS to ensure that impact measurement is incorporated within the wider support offer to TSF funded groups.

## Advocacy for voluntary sector-led grant making

The strategic impact evaluation in this report has demonstrated how the TSF fund has acted as a powerful example of the impact a sector-led grant making programme can have. Locally and regionally it has provided proof of concept for a model of funding which has been abandoned in many parts of the country during the period of public sector austerity. Crucial to the successful mobilisation of this evidence more widely will be an emphasis on the guiding principles of the TSF which distinguish it from many other grant making processes, namely:

- That the grants process is led and managed by Salford CVS, in close consultation with the CCG but with high levels of autonomy to identify and adapt priorities on the basis of sector intelligence about need
- That grants are not 'over designed' to commission tightly specified outcomes but are instead understood as a means of building the capacity of the VCSE as a social good. This means maximising freedom in both small and larger grants pots for organisations to innovate and experiment.

## Recommendations

11. Salford CVS and strategic partners in the CCG and wider health and care sector in Salford work proactively to advocate for the TSF as a model of effective grant making.

## 8.2 Evaluation of 2020-21

### A wider offer from the CVS

The management of the TSF is not just seen by Salford CVS as the award of funding. Rather, it is seen as an opportunity to develop relationships with the VCSE sector and increase the capacity and sustainability of the sector. The CVS has supported groups to leverage additional funding, provided access to training, guidance, and support. This has been key to the sustainability of the sector and in supporting the organisations to deliver the outcomes they have achieved.

### Preventative Activity

- The funded groups can connect with communities to do preventative work in a way public sector couldn't.
- It is notable that NHS can see value of TSF and have faith in CVS to reach the places they can't

### Need persists

Some of the Response Funds have been 6 times oversubscribed demonstrating the need in the VCSE sector.

### Brilliant work in the sector

The case studies over the years of evaluation have reinforced that the sector has the ability to deliver a lot with a little, to connect with communities in ways that others struggle with, and to support the priorities of NHS Salford CCG.

### Widen the partnership?

Now that the Salford TSF has established its credentials and has developed processes and procedures, there should be exploration of the potential to leverage additional funding from other partners. Both the CCG and Salford CVS work with many partner organisations from the public, private and third sectors, and will have links that can be utilised.

The challenge here would be to ensure the aims and outcomes sought by other funders tie into the strategic objectives of partners across Salford, there may also be ethical judgements to be made on the type of private sector partners that are involved. It would be beneficial to the sector as a whole to keep the funding under the banner of the Salford TSF, in terms of accessibility, and in terms of simplifying the funding landscape.

## Multi-year funding

A major pressure that third sector organisations in Salford (and nationally) face, is the annual process of securing grant funding. Particularly in very small organisations, this can take up a significant portion of time for staff and volunteers, and often detracts from being able to focus on the delivery of core operations.

The award of multi-year funding, potentially a three-year tapered grant could really benefit organisations accessing the TSF. Building in opportunities for harvesting information and acting on learning will ensure the grant money is being spent in line with the original aims of the fund and will;

- Build capacity in the organisation
- Give organisations a sense of security in uncertain times
- Contribute towards employee/volunteer retention
- Show an investment in the sustainability of the sector
- Allow organisations to spend less time bidding and more time delivering

## Shift the focus of future evaluation

For many years, CLES has calculated a return on investment figure on a grantee by grantee basis for the evaluation of the TSF, and for each and every year the return on investment has been truly outstanding. CLES also invested a significant amount of time visiting grant recipients to witness the impact they were having in their communities so we could share these human stories in the evaluation reports.

The evaluations of the TSF have shown that organisations have managed to achieve great things with the funding they have received. The stories of beneficiaries and the views of those running organisations and activities are vital to represent in future evaluation reports. They have shown a rich tapestry of impact and outcomes and illustrate vividly how the TSF has evolved and improved to maximise what can be achieved with the funding.

Future evaluations should be less burdensome for grant recipients who have proved time and again that they are making a positive difference in their communities and instead focus on programme level evaluation and sustainability. This would mean taking a closer look at how the fund is structured, assessing whether the grant pots offered have met demand in the community, and understanding if grant recipients feel supported to transition away from grant funding and towards an earned income model if that was something they wanted to do.

## Demand is changing, so is the fund

The case studies, particularly from the Covid year have shown us that demand can shift quickly. Salford CVS and the TSF proved to be agile in the face of urgent need and rapidly reallocated funds to organisations working to deliver support for those suffering domestic abuse and to increase the capacity of organisations providing translation services for people in crisis.

CLES recommends that Salford CVS and the TSF firm up their community engagement practice to maintain an unrivalled level of understanding about what the local community needs from the TSF and to modify the funds available through the fund accordingly.

## 8.3 Strategic & Process-Based Recommendations

- 1. Salford CVS should continue to act as a Good Grant Maker in managing the TSF.**
- 2. Build on nuance of sector buy in to a Salford VCSE Strategy and Identity**
  - a. Set context for applicants in terms of the commitment to evidencing the impact of the sector in Salford; that by applying to that fund you are committed to the spirit and goals of TSF beyond the fund applied for.
  - b. As part of reporting, ask groups if there are future investments that would build the capacity of their community

In the medium to long term, Salford CVS should:

- 3. Develop and promote the Locality-based grants programme management model across Greater Manchester and nationally:**
  - a. This model should be developed as a means of driving a community-centred and community-led model of partnership working and placed at the heart of locality working. This model should be a core component of how Integrated Commissioning Partnerships operate.
  - b. Develop mechanisms to help test the translation of the model to different contexts, in particular an assessment of the key CVS attributes as a managing agent required to make this model transferable.
  - c. Develop a system of metrics and light touch assessment tools for this model and its quality assurance. The expertise and experience of VCSE Strategic leads should be combined with NHS E&I and CQC expertise in order to understand the characteristics of strong VCSE inclusion in a place-based model of operating that meets equalities, transformation and population health goals.
  - d. Develop model branding and promotion.

## Appendix I

# Investment in the Third Sector Fund, 2014-25

The table below gives an overview of investment from NHS Salford CCG/ICP in the city's VCSE sector through the Third Sector Fund:

Financial Year	Investment	Funding Arrangement	Evaluation
2014/15	£1,000,000	1-year	2-yr report <u>Oct 2016</u>
2015/16	£1,000,000	1-year	
2016/17	£0		
2017/18	£1,000,000	3-year	Twelve-month report - Aug 2018
2018/19	£1,000,000		Twelve-month report - Sep 2019
2019/20	£1,000,000		Twenty-Four-month report – Mar 2023
2020/21	£1,000,000	5-year	Reporting frequency and format subject to review
2021/22	£1,000,000		
2022/23	£1,000,000		
2023/24	£1,000,000		
2024/25	£1,000,000		



## Appendix II

# Project Case Studies

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Summaries of all the case studies for 2019/20 and 2020/21 can be found in an accompanying document [at this link](#).

### Year 2019/20

Grant Pot	Case Study Organisation
Impact Fund	Community Kitchen
	Ability Cooperative
	Salford Lads Club
	Basic
Wellbeing Fund	Salford City Singers
	Albert Park Running Club
Youth Wellbeing Fund	Health Action Team
	Rio Ferdinand Foundation
Healthy Schools Fund	Irlam Endowed Primary
	St Charles
	Lightoaks Junior School
	St Pauls CE
	Moorside Primary
Salford for Good	Women with Wings
	Sovereign House
Neighbourhood Micro Fund Grant	Friends of Green Grosvenor Park

## Year 2020/21

Grant Pot	Case Study Organisation
Recovery Fund	Mustard Tree
	Salford Credit Union
	Salford Foundation
Food Response Fund	Salford Food Bank
	Daughters of Salford
BAME Response Fund	The Paperweight Trust
Disability Response Fund	DIY Theatre
Digital Response Fund	Proud and Loud Arts
Live Well this Winter	Connect Youth and Community Centre
	Everything Human Rights
Wellbeing Fund	The Rock Action
	Sound Up Arts
Youth Wellbeing Fund	42 <sup>nd</sup> Street
	Flowhesion Foundation
Healthy Schools Fund	Summerville Primary School

## Appendix III

# Review of Impact Fund Partnership Challenge

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## The approach

The Impact Fund Partnership Challenge (IFPC) is comprised of several key elements, including:

- The freedom given to recipients to determine how they documented and reported their impact.
- The award of multi-year funding, providing opportunities for an iterative process of harvesting information and acting on learning.
- Each project should lead to community resilience through the delivery of key outcomes from Salford's Locality Plan ('Live Well', 'Start Well', 'Age Well').

In year 2 of the IFPC (2019), all grant recipients were offered support from CLES to review and refine their impact assessment approaches, including identifying key outcomes, to support the learning process. In 2019-20, all recipients were required to produce reports capturing their impact and learning from the work undertaken through IFPC funding. In addition, Salford CVS organised end of grant review panels where each recipient was invited to come and present their impact reports. These panels involved CLES, commissioners from Salford CCG and senior managers from Salford CVS.

## Who took part?

Four partnerships received IFPC awards:

Recipient Partnership	Award amount	Project duration	Summary of project
Greater Manchester Youth Network	£147,772	3 Years	<b>Start Well</b> GMYN worked alongside Looked After Children (LAC) aged 13-16 and Care Leavers to support them to engage in social action and volunteering activities that improve their physical and emotional health, enabling them to reach their future potential. Their aim was to reduce social isolation and increase participation in positive community activities.

<p><b>START and Salford Red Devils Foundation</b></p>	<p>£149,990.10</p>	<p>3 Years</p>	<p><b>Start Well</b>          'The Adventures of Captain Confidence' introduced children to the newest superhero in Salford and aimed to unravel the mystery around their powers of resilience. Co-created with children in 2018, this book accompanied workshops to aid further exploration of physical and mental resilience through games and group activities.</p>
<p><b>ICT &amp; SALT - Inspiring Communities Together and Seedley and Langworthy Trust</b></p>	<p>£78,300</p>	<p>3 Years</p>	<p><b>Live Well</b>          Learning and Engagement programme working with assets based within Central Salford.  <b>Project aims:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning opportunities alongside practical experience of work based settings</li> <li>• Community engagement activity increasing the involvement in local activity and volunteer time</li> </ul>
<p><b>Six Degrees and Age UK Salford</b></p>	<p>£82,390</p>	<p>2 Years</p>	<p><b>Age Well</b>          The 'Empowered Carers' project aimed to pilot a support package for carers (and families) of those with dementia. This utilised learning from a New York programme which evidenced delayed admission to nursing care of up to 16 months and accompanying health cost savings of c. £1,000 per week.           Over 2 years Empowered Carers aimed to deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counselling and support session for families</li> <li>• Set up and operation of 1:1 remote video support for carers who have limited option for leaving their partner with dementia to obtain advice and support</li> </ul>

## Summary of impact data reported for 2019-20

As each recipient chose to report differently, the data gathered varied based on the chosen format in which it was reported. The data summarised below is from 2019-20 (the fund's third year) and reflects the collective impact of the four funded projects.

### Start Well

#### **Children will grow up and achieve their potential in life, education and employment**

The Start Well projects funded by the IFPC had a significant impact on the children, young people and families they engaged with. The creation of safe spaces to explore emotions and connect with others was viewed as highly valuable and **resulted in 30% of children feeling more able to discuss their feelings** (Captain Confidence), with children reporting that they felt more positive, developed self-belief and confidence dealing with problems, and felt more in control and able to make informed choices. Similarly, **68.4% of young people** who participated in GMYN's project **reported an increase in their ability to express their opinions, and 71.8% reported increased feelings of self-confidence and feeling good about themselves.**

The delivery of focussed sessions across Captain Confidence and GMYN resulted in **improved skills and knowledge among children and young people.** Of the young people who participated in the GMYN programme, 70.6% reported an increase in the extent to which they think they have the skills that will support them with their future. Team working was highlighted as a particularly significant point of improvement among the children who participated in Captain Confidence:

*"They hugely improved at working as part of a team, the start of the sessions they were struggling to complete tasks as they were not listening to full instructions, or working well together- they were out for themselves, however by the end of the sessions they were brilliant at this."*

Teacher

In addition, 76.9% of the young people who took part in the GMYN programme reported an **improvement in their ability to work as part of a team.** The strengths-based approach taken by Captain Confidence led to children feeling better about themselves, and enabled children to learn how to balance their confidence and enthusiasm, creating space for others to become more assertive.

### **Children have parents/guardians who look after them**

ICT and SALT delivered a significant number of engagement activities with the community, heavily aimed at families with children. Much of the activity was focussed on **getting families to be more active together**, and they had a strong focus on tackling holiday hunger and utilising community spaces. Families went on to do things differently as a result of their activities:

- 67% said they had cooked more at home with children
- 17% said they had done more gardening with children
- 33% said they had used the park more
- 16% said they had done more 'messy play' at home

Alongside the impact ICT and SALT had on local families, the **young people GMYN worked with also benefitted from feeling more supported by the people in their life**, with 56.4% of young people reporting an increase following the programme. The same increase was also reported with regards to feeling that they had positive relationships around them.

### **Children are healthy and active**

Captain Confidence and GMYN both focussed on delivering activities that **increased activity among children and young people, both through the use of physical exercise and activity in their communities** (with 63.6% of young people who participated in the GMYN programme reporting an increase in the amount of activity they did which improved the community). In addition, ICT&SALT's provision of family-friendly activities focussed on getting children active, creative, and thinking about food, with 78 families involved in cooking activities taking home a second dish for their evening meal, and 156 recipe cards given out so that families could repeat dishes.

GMYN had a significant impact on the mental health of the young people who participated in the programme, with 70% saying that they felt better about themselves (with an increase of 20% over the course of the programme), and a similar 20% increase in young people feeling empowered to speak up and express their opinions. Regular attendance at the programme's activities led to a clear improvement in young peoples' wellbeing, with one social worker observing that their young person gains the same benefit from attending the sessions that they would by attending counselling.

## Live Well

### **People can take care of their own health and wellbeing and can manage the challenges life throws at them.**

Overall, there was an **increase in feelings of wellbeing and confidence across the projects**, with carers who took part in the Empowered Carers programme reporting a feeling of greater wellbeing and self-understanding. This was combined with increased confidence and the retention of self-identity which was independent of their caring responsibilities:

*"This has given me the confidence to change my career. I am pleased to report that I have nearly finished my qualification in teaching support and will be applying for jobs when the schools start back."*

(Carer - Empowered Carers)

### **People are happy in life and feel supported by family, friends and local community**

Across the projects there were many examples of **increasing connectivity and support between peers and within communities**. Empowered Carers developed peer support groups and facilitated the provocation of conversations between siblings, which enabled carers to feel more comfortable talking about difficult issues. Weekly carers group sessions also created opportunities for carers to come together, learn and discuss topics such as self-compassion, confidence, stress and fun. In addition, 30% of the children who participated in the Captain Confidence project said that they felt more connected to people and places around them.

ICT & SALT's work was heavily informed by the neighbourhood forums in Seedley and Langworthy, Charlestown and Kersal. Subsequent actions were based around the Love Your Neighbourhood Plan which was developed based on the issues raised by residents at the forums. The Plan aimed to create opportunities for people to take action to improve the local community by supporting people to work together to improve the local environment and make lasting improvements to the neighbourhoods where they live. Community connection was also utilised by Empowered Carers, who took action to build greater awareness of dementia through the promotion of the service to professionals and community groups. Building connections within the local community and links between people and place were also evident through the **increase in volunteering** demonstrated as part of the ICT&SALT project and GMYN.

Support within the local community was also apparent through ICT&SALT's provision of advice and guidance around key welfare and employment issues, and Empowered Carers' role in making their beneficiaries aware of, and supporting access to, other services.

**Peoples' lifestyles help to stop any long-term conditions or disabilities getting worse and affecting their lives.**

While there wasn't any direct evidence of supporting people to manage their own long-term conditions, the work of Empowered Carers demonstrated a positive impact through **equipping carers with the tools they need to manage their mental health and wellbeing, and also improving the wellbeing of their loved ones.**

*"You have literally increased my wellbeing by 1,000 percent, can't thank you enough"*

Carer, Empowered Carers

## **Age Well**

**If people need it, they will be able to access high quality care and support; Older people are looking after their health and delaying the need for care.**

Empowered Carers' model enabled carers to better look after their loved ones whilst also taking care of themselves. Empowered Carers provided support for carers whose loved ones had to move into a care home (4/50), had to access A&E and had a hospital admission (4/50), and sadly the family of one carer who died of Covid-19, where they went on to support the daughter who is now taking care of her father.

As a preventative service, Empowered Carers' 1-2-1 coaching improved carers' ability to manage stress and built resilience, fostered healthier relationships, and connected carers to other local and national organisations. Providing support for carers could be seen as having a knock-on positive effect, with carers more able to manage their own wellbeing, and develop knowledge of how to care for those with dementia, therefore improving the care they can provide and the length of time they are able to care for their loved ones. This was reflected in the increased wellbeing scores of the people who were being cared for.

There was little evidence for **When someone dies it will happen in the best possible circumstances.**



## **Partnerships**

The forms that delivery partnerships took were different across the projects, with varying degrees of involvement from different partners. This ranged from service delivery/service user partnerships in the form of Six Degrees and Age UK Salford's relationship through Empowered Carers, or Captain Confidence's relationship to schools, to the merging of the partners as a result of the project, such as ICT & SALT.

Predominantly, value was found in partnerships through the sharing of skills, knowledge and resource, with START highlighting the development of their understanding of the enrichment physical activity can bring and its role in mental wellbeing through their partnership with Salford Red Devils Foundation. This was also reflected through GMYN's partnership with the Lowry, which resulted in the delivery of deeply creative programmes which were designed to develop different skills among the young people who participated and led to an ongoing positive relationship. The use of a more diverse range of skills, methods and resources allowed projects to be delivered in more innovative ways, resulting in programmes which were both exciting and effective for those who participated.

There were a hugely diverse and wide-ranging number of additional partnerships which were highlighted as a result of the projects, with many being key to their delivery. This demonstrates that the IFPC has supported the maintenance and development of a collaborative network within Salford's VCSE sector beyond the original scope of partnership working in each recipients' applications. The recipients also extended the reach and understanding of their projects to other services and statutory bodies. This happened in the case of Empowered Carers, where concerted effort was made to spread awareness of the service and deliver information and training around dementia, and GMYN which facilitated six multi-agency meetings with professionals from GM sharing best practice, creating links and building understanding of care experiences young peoples' needs, services and support.

## **Beyond outcome data – summary of wider impacts**

### **Benefits for beneficiaries**

Beneficiaries significantly benefitted from the holistic approach taken by the projects. This approach, present across all projects, demonstrated a person-centred way of working which understood the people each project was working with as a whole, rather than pigeonholing them based on their "needs". This approach also meant that all projects delivered impact by understanding their beneficiaries' relationship to Salford and their peers, friends, and families.

This approach resulted in a clear all-round improvement with regards to wellbeing and connection across all projects. The projects have achieved this by tackling interconnected factors which contribute towards wellbeing and resilience both within communities and individuals.

The diversity of activities delivered through IFPC projects, and the partnerships which enabled their delivery, had a significant impact. It enabled the recipients to test and learn from their experiences, as well as giving beneficiaries varied opportunities to participate in ways that worked for them. These opportunities had a significant impact for those care experienced young people involved in GMYN's project, through the delivery of multiple different activities; ICT&SALT through their varied delivery of engagement activities and tailoring their activity based on community input; Empowered Carers through their delivery of different activities and groups depending on the needs of their beneficiaries; and Captain Confidence through the adaptation of their approach based on the group they were working with.

While Covid-19 impacted the ability of all organisation to deliver, there were examples of projects which thrived and adapted well during lockdown, further developing their approach. For examples, by utilising technology and building the skills base of their beneficiaries Empowered Carers were able to provide support to many carers who struggled during the pandemic, with a significant increase in referrals through the period.

### Benefits for grant recipients

There were examples of grant recipients being **able to secure further funding as a result of demonstrating the success of their approaches**. For example, GMYN secured funding to deliver an intergenerational meal and intergenerational gardening, both of which were informed by input from the current beneficiaries who participate in the IFPC-funded programme.

The **benefits of partnerships were also highlighted as an additional impact for grant-recipients**, with significant learning and knowledge-exchange between those who co-delivered the projects, and benefits which emerged as a result of delivery in partnership. For example, Empowered Carers was highly influenced by the secondment of a key member of staff to Age UK Salford, which had a significant impact on the delivery of the programme.

The ability of recipients to experiment and learn iteratively due to the duration of the funding was also felt to have a significant impact. **Being able to test and learn from approaches allowed recipients to adapt their programmes to best suit the impacts they sought and the emerging needs of those they worked with**. The duration of projects and evidence of successful adaptation and delivery also enabled groups to access additional funding, both to continue their work and to try new approaches based on learning throughout the projects.

The impact measurement knowledge developed over the duration of the projects was shown to influence host organisations' broader approach to evidencing their impact. This was particularly apparent within GMYN, who outlined how their experience on the project developing indicators and measuring impact was going to shape the approach across the network.

*"We are also in the process of further refining what key indicators to use that inform our outcome measurement to better understand the impact of our work. This is being aligned against all areas of our work which will better inform the tools we use to quantify our impact measurement across the organisation."*

GMYN

It was clear that IFPC funding was seen in the context of the organisations' broader ability to increase resilience and connectivity among their beneficiaries. Because it was viewed in the broader context, the groups were able to demonstrate how the **IFPC impacted not only their beneficiaries, but also created the capacity for the development of thought and practice in relation to their projects and resulting from it.**

**All organisations have demonstrated a way forward with their projects**, and ambitions as to how they can further develop their ideas. This impact, the ability to learn, shape, and adapt practice based on understanding and learning, is something frequently missed by grant funds, but as demonstrated above, it is incredibly important to grant recipients.

## Benefits for Salford

Beyond the benefits for beneficiaries and recipients, all projects demonstrated a strong connection between the work of the projects and a desire to impact the communities in which they worked. Working with local groups and resources was interwoven into every project, with clear benefits for Salford in the immediate form of volunteering and funding. All recipients demonstrated significant social value added through connection and focussing on how their projects could be linked to the local.

Shaping the community more broadly was demonstrated through the work of ICT&SALT, and the significance placed on community voice in informing the development of the Love Your Neighbourhood Plan. This will have an impact moving forward through the identification of key areas for development in Seedley and Langworthy, Charlestown and Kersal.

While demonstrating the development of resilience within communities is challenging, it is clear that all projects have significantly increased connection with and to the community, built networks, and fostered personal resilience.

## Learning points

A key feature of the IFPC was the focus on multi-year funding as an opportunity to adapt and learn during the course of the projects. The Fund has produced a rich body of learning, both for recipient organisations and for Salford CVS. These points are summarised below.

Key learning points highlighted by grant recipients were:

- **Duration of funding:** The duration of funding enabled the recipients to make changes as they learned and test and learn from approaches, which enabled them to secure additional resources to continue and evolve the projects.
- **Evidencing impact:** Each project mentioned that it had learned from the work done with CLES around evidencing impact and demonstrated the use of indicators and impact measurement tools in their reporting. One organisation felt that they had expected more intensive support of this kind and felt that Salford CVS had under-delivered on the promise of focused support on evaluation and monitoring.
- **Operational learning:** Learning was mentioned across the project around their experience adapting their delivery to different groups, and the potential for the development of their model in different fields (for example, Captain Confidence's potential development into the fields of speech and language therapy, and family support).
- **Holistic understanding of beneficiaries:** Projects had resulted in a greater understanding of the barriers to both the project's delivery, and the challenges faced by their beneficiaries. For example, Empowered Carers highlighted their learning around the impact of dementia on the whole life of the carer, and the subsequent recognition of the need to diversify to meet peoples' needs.
- **Value of partnership working:** Learning around partnership working and the impact it can have was flagged by multiple recipients, who saw it as a key learning point in their experience of delivering projects as part of the IFPC.

## Key learning points for Salford CVS

- **The need to invest in preparing the ground for larger grants:** Salford CVS received a limited number of applications to the IFPC when it was launched. The panel was not able to make an award under the 'Age Well' theme, necessitating a further bespoke round some 6 months later. The requirements to demonstrate match funding of £50,000 in place for year 1 (and an expectation of match for years 2 and 3) was a clear barrier to some applications. There was also feedback that applicants would have benefited a longer lead-in time than 6-weeks from fund launch to submission date. Match funding requirements also meant that applications tended to align closely to work that was already underway or in advanced planning stage rather than enabling groups to maximise the potential of the funds to innovate.
- **The value of sustained capacity support from Salford CVS.** The IFPC projects received significant capacity support from Salford CVS, from quarterly visits to regular, informal contact with the Impact Evaluation Worker. This sustained contact and support has enabled a level of "in-flight adjustments" which enabled groups to maximise the opportunity of the multi-year funding to embed learning and innovation.
- **Challenges of sustainability for larger grants.** Several of the IFPC projects have been able to evidence significant impact and, in some cases, potential for significant savings to statutory services. While this has been a key success of the Fund, there has been a significant challenge in securing traction with commissioners to utilise this evidence to affect change in service delivery approaches. This is not an uncommon challenge for larger grant funds whereby groups are encouraged and enabled to innovate but then face a 'cliff edge' in relation to securing sustained funding as a commissioned service. Salford CVS have sought to proactively engage commissioners throughout these projects, through dedicated space at celebration events and face-to-face contact at learning and review panels. However, when the Fund was established there was limited pre-work with the CCG to prepare the ground for the possibility of these projects to influence future commissioning models. In this the Fund stands in contrast the Wellbeing Matters Fund which was established with the explicit intention of utilising grants to build a social prescribing ecosystem to address the emerging neighbourhood priorities and thus create capacity to receive referrals from primary care via community connectors.

## Appendix IV

# Return on investment methodology

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## ROI Methodology 2019/20

The final section of the report outlines the methodology utilised by CLES to calculate the Return on Investment (ROI) element of the case studies in the 2019-20 evaluation report. This methodology has been developed and adapted across the evaluations, which began in 2014.

The necessary outcome and output data for the case studies was collected through a combination of interviews with each case study organisation (the ability to visit the groups and directly engage beneficiaries was impacted by Covid), and through reviewing application and monitoring forms.

The two primary sources of information for the ROI calculations were the Global Value Exchange<sup>1</sup> and the New Economy Unit Cost Database<sup>2</sup>.

The assessment focusses on 'the four e's. This means for each case study, three data points (economy, efficiency and effectiveness) are utilised to calculate the ROI:

- **Economy** – evidencing that the activities of the organisations have minimised public sector costs and were economical.
- **Efficiency** – evidencing that the services provided to achieve the outcomes were at a reasonable cost. This measure takes into account the cost of delivering the service.
- **Effectiveness** – evidencing the extent to which the services delivered have had the desired impact in terms of the outcomes achieved.
- **Equity** – evidencing the extent to which services reach out and are available to all people that they are intended to help.

### Example

Here we will provide a worked example from the 19-20 evaluation report from the case study of the Irlam Primary School.

Based on the interviews for the case study, speaking with beneficiaries and reviewing key documents, the outcomes utilised for the ROI for this case study were:

### Step 1 – select outcomes

- Economy – Avoiding obesity.
- Effectiveness - Increased physical activity.

### Step 2 – add values to the outcomes

For the ROI calculations we need to attach a value to the selected outcomes. For this case study the following were utilised:

- Economy – Avoiding obesity<sup>3</sup>
- Effectiveness - Increased physical activity<sup>4</sup>

### Step 3 – calculate the values of the economy and effectiveness outcomes

We now need to use the unit values we identified in Step 2 to calculate an overall economy and effectiveness value for the case study. Before we run the calculation, we must decide on an attribution percentage for each case study. This is the proportion of the outcomes that we attribute to the case study organisation based on factors such as our understanding of their work, other actors providing similar services, and the nature of the beneficiaries involved.

For this case study, an **attribution of 80%** was selected. This was due to the isolated and hard to reach nature of the beneficiaries, and also because many of them were not engaging with other services, other than their place of education.

For each case study<sup>5</sup>, we also have to determine the number of beneficiaries who have achieved the outcome that we are valuing for the ROI. In this case, it was determined that one third of the 40 beneficiaries should be included in the calculation.

<b>Economy Outcome</b>	<b>Avoiding Obesity</b>
Economy measure value	£4,361
(Gross) economy <sup>5</sup>	£58,150
Economy value <sup>6</sup>	£46,519

<b>Effectiveness Outcome</b>	<b>Increased Physical Activity</b>
Effectiveness measure value	£3,954
(Gross) Effectiveness value	£158,140
Effectiveness value	£126,519

#### Step 4 – Calculate the efficiency figure

This step uses data collected from the group to calculate the net cost of the groups and the cost per unique attendee per year. For Irlam Primary, we recorded 40 unique beneficiaries.

Efficiency	
Gross cost	£35,000
Less money charged	£0
Net cost of groups	£35,000
Cost per unique attendee per year <sup>7</sup>	£875

#### Step 5 – Calculate the final ROI figure for the case study

We can now utilise the figures from Step 3 and Step 4 to generate the overall figure for the case study.

Net Costs (£5k award from TSF + £30k match funding)	£35,000
Total value added <sup>8</sup>	£173,038
Effective value generated <sup>9</sup>	£138,038

The ROI ratio for this grant award =  $\text{£}138,038 / \text{£}5,000 = 1:28$

i.e. for every £1 invested an effective value generated is £28

#### Step 6 – Aggregate the case study figures to produce an overall ROI calculation

Once steps 1-5 have been completed for each case study, this data can then be aggregated to produce an overall ROI for the evaluation report. To do this, the effective value generated by each case study is added together and divided by the total grant awarded to all of the case study organisations. **We then produce the overall ROI figure, which in the 2019/20 evaluation report was £1: £18.35.**



- 1 <http://www.globalvaluexchange.org>
- 2 <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/research/research-cost-benefit-analysis>
- 3 <http://www.globalvaluexchange.org/valuations/8279e41d9e5e0bd8499f2a5d>
- 4 <http://www.globalvaluexchange.org/valuations/5773dc6615fbb00d6091107d>
- 5 The raw figure, calculated by multiplying the economy measure value by the number of beneficiaries achieving the outcome.
- 6 The gross economy figure with the attribution taken into account. In this example (with attribution of 80%) the calculation would be gross economy \*0.8
- 7 Gross cost / number of unique beneficiaries
- 8 This is the sum of the effectiveness and economy values
- 9 total value added – net costs