



A chance to thrive: The difference we make for young people

How charities and community groups support and protect young people's wellbeing

2021

Authors: Anne-Mari Hall,
Jo Woodall, Zoë Anderson

Contents

Introduction	3
At a glance: Our funding for young people	5
At a glance: Our large youth programmes	6
Preventing and acting early	8
Improving mental wellbeing	11
Safe from harm	15
Better quality of life.	19
Healthy habits, informed choices	21

The images used in this report are from our HeadStart programme, which funds six partnerships to support young people to build on their strengths and develop resilience. The images do not directly link to the specific examples in the text.

Acknowledgements

We'd like to thank the charities, community groups and individuals whose work is recognised in this report.

We'd also like to thank the colleagues who gave support, and patiently dealt with our ongoing requests for information: Jolanta Astle, Felicity Bennett, Rebecca Blanche, Helena Christie, Nigel Cummings, Jason Flynn, Temoor Iqbal, Alastair Jackson, Owen Jones, Lorraine Joyce, Aine Lovedale, Sue Neville, Jemma Nurse, Julia Parnaby, Saroj Purba, Matt Riddell, Laverne Sampson, Colleen Souness, Gavin Watters and Helen Whyman.

Introduction

These quotes illustrate the strength of feeling that young people up and down the country have for someone who's been there for them during the toughest of times. Not everyone gets this support from family or friends. Some have no one to talk to.

Others may not be able to talk to the people closest to them. And some problems can't be solved without outside, often specialist, support. This is where youth workers, mentors, key workers and other professionals come in.

What this support means for young people is hard to describe. For some it's about feeling safe or making sense of their experiences, while for others it's a chance for a better quality of life. The guidance and opportunities provided by the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), with and alongside local authorities and statutory services, help young people to make informed choices, to develop healthy routines, or find a positive pathway for the future. Through early intervention, they reduce risks and inequalities. But they're also there when things go wrong, helping young people to regain their strength and stabilise their lives during times of distress.

It's even harder to put into words the commitment, dedication and care of youth workers and others who run and deliver these services, both staff and volunteers. People who believe in young people and their potential; who know how to inspire, empower, and bring out the best in them. Our funding means they can deliver, expand and improve their work, so that more young people can benefit and have a chance to thrive as they move into adulthood.

“My life is only just beginning. I'm moving through every page of every chapter of my book. Without the project, I'd be doing nothing. Or I wouldn't be alive. I thank them all, all the time.”

Participant, Youth in Focus

“This is the happiest I have been in my entire life [...] this is the only place I have ever felt at home, ever felt safe, like physically safe. No one is coming into my room at night, I can lock my door,”

Resident, Amy's Place

“[My youth worker] believed in me... Sometimes you need to hear from other people that you're worth more than that and this isn't the right way for you to go about life. It's about somebody taking a chance on you, no one has ever done that for me except for her...”

Participant, Youth in Focus

“[My mentor] is the best, he helped me with my anger, knowledge of my feeling of anger, and with my relationship with my brother. He is friendly, very funny and is my friend.”

Participant, HeadStart Kent

The difference we make for young people

This is the first in a series of four reports that look at how charities and community groups up and down the country support young people, and the difference they make. Each report is just a snapshot, because it's hard to do justice to the 14,600 projects we've funded in the past five years, worth over £1.2 billion.¹

Here at The National Lottery Community Fund we distribute grants to youth projects from National Lottery proceeds, government and other sources, both national and European. From £300 to finance trips for young people who would otherwise miss out, to multi-million-pound partnerships tackling the big issues, like employment and mental health.

We've collected data from across our large youth programmes to get an idea of the scale of our work: at least 1.4 million young people across 15 programmes alone. But this data doesn't take account of thousands more small grants. It doesn't reflect the work we fund to build capacity in the youth sector, or to improve the way young people's services are designed and delivered. These systemic and strategic changes are captured throughout each of the four reports as we present case studies, stories and evidence from the wide range of projects we fund.

"[...] I went through some hard times with someone dying who was close to me and they helped me get through that and they helped me with moving up to school."²

HeadStart Kernow

The series

This first report looks at how our funding supports young people to thrive. It's about VCS groups, with or alongside local authorities and statutory services, looking out for young people who for one reason or another need a bit of extra support. Mental health is a strong theme. Keeping young people safe, and supporting preventive measures to stop problems from occurring in the first place, also form a substantial part of our investment. And our grantholders support all young people to live healthy, fulfilling lives, regardless of their circumstances or abilities.

The second will look at how charities and community groups give young people a chance to be part of something. They offer things to do and places to go, from football to film-making, from youth clubs to climbing walls. They support young people to make connections, to find their passion, and to develop and grow as they become more independent.

A chance to make a difference and be heard, the third report in the series, will look at how young people themselves get involved in their communities. From large-scale volunteering programmes, to small grants for young people to make their own ideas a reality. And the report will showcase how young people are making themselves heard and representing their peers on the issues that matter to them.

The final report looks at how VCS organisations support young people to learn and to work. They provide opportunities to learn skills to keep them active at home and in the community, as well as knowledge and skills for the world of work. And they fill gaps in essential life skills.

All four reports will be available from the [Insights](#) section of our website.

At a glance: Our funding for young people, April 2016 to March 2021³



National Lottery

- £919.8 million
- 11,613 grants



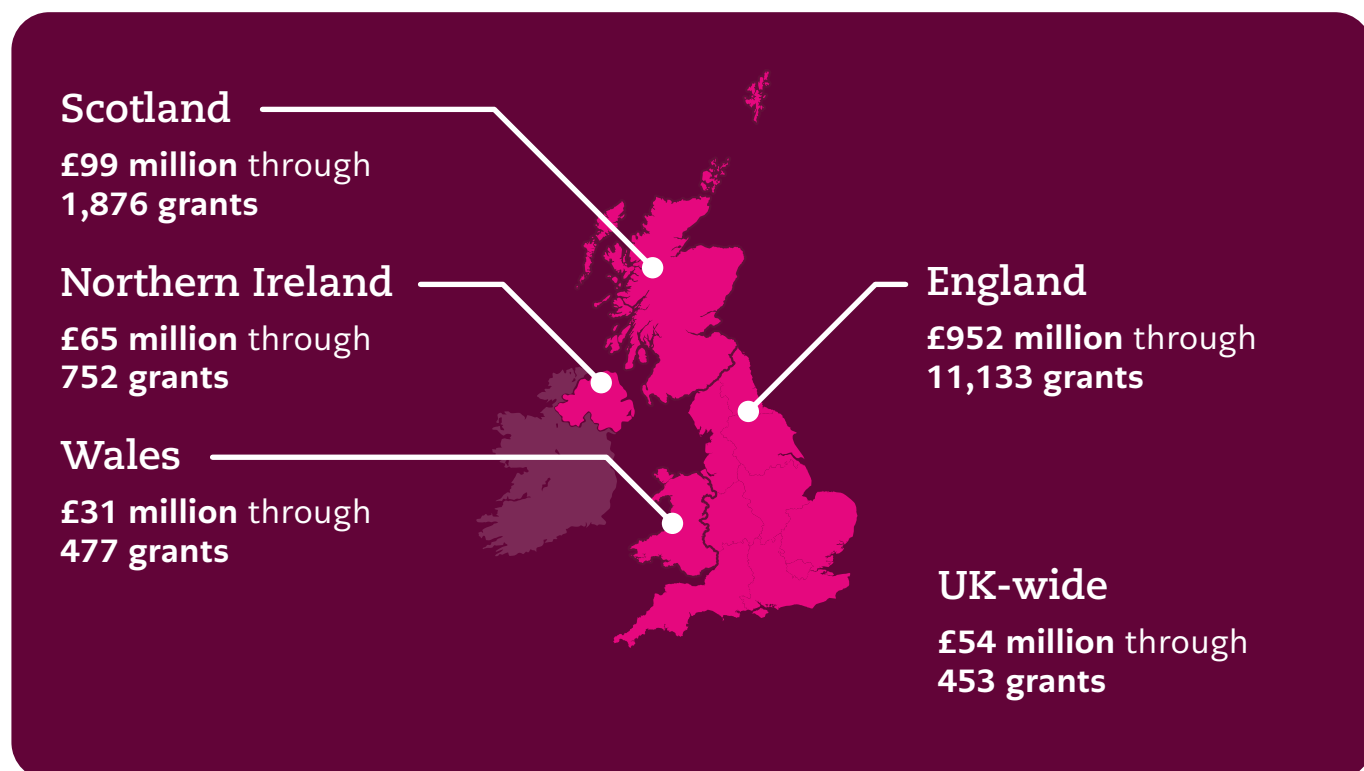
Government and other sources

- £139.7 million
- 2,879 grants



Joint

- £143.8 million
- 199 grants



At a glance: Our large youth programmes⁴

Over 1.4 million young people given:

- **a chance to thrive**

Helping to keep young people safe and well; mentally and physically healthy; supporting them through times of crisis, change and transition.



- **a chance to be part of something**

Things to do, places to go: Supporting young people to make connections, find their passion, and to develop and grow.



- **a chance to learn and to work**

Skills for home and in the community, as well as the world of work.



- **a chance to make a difference and be heard**

Supporting young people to get involved in their communities.



Through the following programmes:

#iwill Fund, England
489,300 young people



Bright New Futures, Wales
7,600 young people



Building Better Opportunities (BBO), England
29,690 young people



Empowering Young People, Northern Ireland
41,000 young people



Engage to Change, Wales
Approx 780 young people



HeadStart, England
201,880 young people



Life Changes Trust, Scotland
12,000 young people



The Listening Fund, England
22 youth organisations



The Listening Fund, Scotland
11 youth organisations



Our Bright Future, UK
120,000 young people



Realising Ambition, UK
163,000 children and young people



Talent Match, England
27,100 young people



Young Start Fund, Scotland
924 youth-led projects



Youth in Focus, England
2,000 young people



Youth investment Fund, England
Over 330,000 young people



Women and Girls, England
7,600 young women and girls





Preventing and acting early

Early experiences can have a lasting impact on a young person's life. If we don't act quickly when problems arise, they become more complex and difficult to resolve. This is why we fund services which are shifting culture and spending towards early action and prevention, while also ensuring that those who require extra support receive it at the earliest opportunity.

Over the past five years, we've funded 796 young people's projects, worth £209 million, which have a specific focus on prevention.⁵ Some of this funding helps to keep young people safe, for example by teaching them about boundaries in healthy relationships, or running youth and sport clubs for those at risk of joining a gang. Others ensure young people have a healthy, stable and supportive framework (i.e. a realistic understanding of a life of crime, a good understanding of risks associated with social media, a network of trusted adults and peers), which enables them to make positive choices.

A lot of charities focus on addressing specific risks. [Invisible Traffick](#) runs interactive workshops in care settings across Northern Ireland, exploring topics from modern slavery and county lines, to sexual exploitation and healthy relationships. These workshops arm young people with a greater understanding of risky situations and tools they can use to protect themselves.

£209 million through **796 grants** to support young people at the earliest opportunity, before problems can intensify, or to prevent them from happening in the first place.

Changing hearts and minds

[Angus Women's Aid](#) in Scotland has trained 20 young people as healthy relationship champions to raise awareness of domestic abuse among their peers. Together with experts, they run roadshows at schools, colleges and youth clubs, covering topics identified by young people themselves, from dating, consent and image sharing on social media, to sexual violence and domestic abuse.

The champions speak to an average of 1,000 young people per year, reaching a total of 5,972 participants by early 2021. They also raise awareness of the signs and impact of coercive control and other forms of abuse among health, education and youth professionals. They've helped to inform the work of organisations like Police Scotland, the Scottish Government's Covid-19 Children and Families Collective Leadership Group, and the First Minister's National Advisory Council.

The young volunteers can record their own achievements and new skills in their personal online journals, helping them with university or work applications. They also get certificates of 50, 100, 200 and 500 hours of volunteering.

We're seeing an increase in applications from cross-community partnerships to train school communities, youth workers and the wider community (e.g. police and sport coaches) to recognise risk factors, and understand and work more constructively with young people. [Community Futures](#) in Walsall educates young people, teachers and health workers about the signs and risks of grooming and sexual exploitation, and recruits and trains volunteer champions to do this across the community. In 2019, the organisation educated 21,800 young people in schools, youth groups and sports clubs, provided one-to-one support to over 400 young people, and trained over 1,000 professionals to spot early signs of grooming.⁶

As well as being the right thing to do, we've seen that acting early can help save money. Blackpool's [HeadStart](#) partnership, led by the local authority, introduced Back on Track panels and resilience coaches to support looked-after young people to remain in mainstream school. A total of 30 young people have now taken part, and for the 13 participants where data is available, changes reported include reductions in emotional symptoms, conduct problems, and hyperactivity.⁷ Estimates for the first trial suggest that Back on Track saved the school up to £8,000 in charges for permanent exclusion, and avoided the council paying £15,000 a year for a place at a Pupil Referral Unit.⁸ The cost savings show that careful use of funding on prevention measures can generate savings in the medium to long-term, by avoiding the need for more expensive alternative provision.

Opportunities to practice skills like how to manage anger, avoid and resolve conflicts, and communicate more effectively can help to keep young people safe.⁹ [Leap Confronting Conflict](#), a charity in London, runs interactive, drama-based conflict management training for friendship groups of young people who are at risk of gang exploitation and group offending, recognising that young people are best placed to influence and hold each other to account. Overall, the organisation trained over 1,400 young people and professionals last year, with four-fifths improving their understanding of conflict.¹⁰

Eliminating discrimination and prejudice is key to ensuring all young people have access to opportunities. Some charities do this at an individual level, teaching and training young people about equality, diversity and inclusion. [Bristol Refugee Festival](#), a community interest company, teaches children and young people facts about asylum and immigration, and helps them celebrate the contribution of refugees to our society. Others work at a strategic level to break down barriers and inequalities in our society and services. [Black Thrive Lambeth](#) works with authorities and services to improve outcomes for members of the Black community. They raise awareness of inequalities in outcomes for example in relation to school exclusions and mental health, identify solutions to shortcomings and gaps in services, and train and educate decision-makers and practitioners.

Our funding helps young people to do the same. [Integrate UK](#) equips young people with the skills and tools they need to create and run their own campaigns to tackle issues like racism, homophobia and transphobia. Their productions have won awards and reached hundreds of thousands of [YouTube](#) views. And when young people participating in [Talent Match London](#) faced racism in the workplace, often from supervisors or line managers, they got together with project staff to train employers, using their own lived experiences.

Measuring the impact of early intervention¹¹

Funded through HeadStart Newham and run by the local council, **BounceBack** is a 10-week, school-based group intervention for 9–11-year olds with emergent mental health difficulties, such as low mood or mild/moderate anxiety. It offers a fun way for children and young people to make small positive behaviour changes, like learning to deal with tricky situations and asking for help. It was designed to improve their understanding of resilience and wellbeing, and build their confidence and friendships.

Using a type of a randomised control trial (RCT), researchers measured the impact of BounceBack by randomly allocating 326 children from 24 schools around Newham to take part (160) or continue as usual in a control group (166) while they waited to start. The 160 BounceBack participants worked in groups of up to 15, supported by a trained youth practitioner, over 10 weekly sessions that were delivered during the school day for up to an hour. The team recorded measures of emotional symptoms, behavioural difficulties, problem-solving, and self-esteem. Session attendance data was used as a proxy for compliance.

The results show that:

- BounceBack produced statistically significant reductions in emotional symptoms, compared to changes in the control group: a reduction of eight percentage points.
- There is a positive link between attendance and results: those who participated in eight or more sessions achieved a 23 percentage point reduction in emotional symptoms.

The RCT found no statistically significant impact on behavioural difficulties, problem-solving or self-esteem, though findings suggest a larger sample may determine an effect on self-esteem. It concluded that “participation in a brief, school-based group intervention led by a youth practitioner can produce significant reductions in emotional symptoms among children with emergent mental health difficulties.”

“I enjoy and look forward to Walk and Talk. I feel like I can talk about anything, going out and getting fresh air and also being able to talk to someone.”¹²

HeadStart Blackpool

Improving mental wellbeing

Our mental health affects how we think, feel and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and the choices we make.¹³

During adolescence and early adulthood, we experience multiple changes and transitions which can have an impact on our mental health. It's a time of physical, biological, emotional and practical transitions, as well as pressures from exams, peers and social media.

The Covid-19 pandemic has added to this. A Young Minds survey of nearly 2,500 young people with a history of mental health needs in early 2021 found that 67% believed the pandemic would have a long-term negative effect on their mental health.¹⁴

Poor mental health can affect young people's friendships, school performance, physical health, employment prospects and more. There's also evidence of an association between mental ill-health in childhood/adolescence and adulthood,¹⁵ with many mental health conditions beginning before the age of 14.¹⁶

Young people have told us that mental wellbeing is one of their key concerns and something we should be supporting.¹⁷ We know that charities and community groups can play an important role here, from building young people's resilience, to supporting those who are already struggling.

£568 million through **4,231 grants**, to support young people's mental wellbeing and build their resilience.

This is why a substantial share of our funding for young people supports their mental wellbeing. We've given out 4,231 grants in this space over the past five years, worth over £568 million.¹⁸ This funding recognises that young people's mental health is everybody's business. Schools, the community and families all need to be aware of the early signs that something's not right, and be there to listen, offer support and help young people to access professional help when needed. We mainly fund school and community-based support, although some of our grantholders use clinical interventions like talking therapies as part of their work.

HeadStart is our largest investment in this area. It's all about helping young people to learn about mental health: how to talk about it, how to look after yourself and others, and when to seek help. The programme includes the largest ever survey of young people's mental wellbeing in England.¹⁹ Initial results suggest that the scale of mental wellbeing difficulties among young people may be higher than previously thought: just under a fifth (18.4%) of 30,000 young respondents were experiencing emotional problems, such as anxiety, low mood, low confidence, or being easily scared. A similar proportion (18.8%) were exhibiting behavioural problems, for example feeling very angry, being aggressive, or "acting out".²⁰ A quarter (25.3%) were struggling with hyperactivity or inattention, and one in thirteen (7.3%) faced peer relationship problems.²¹

Resilience for life's ups and downs

HeadStart funds six partnerships in England (Blackpool, Cornwall, Hull, Kent, Newham and Wolverhampton) to improve the mental and emotional wellbeing of young people aged 10 to 16. Led by the local authorities, working in more than 400 schools, with over 300 community groups and 40 statutory service providers, the partnerships help to build young people's support networks of trusted adults and peers; provide creative ways for young people to express themselves; and offer open-access drop-in services, training in wellbeing management techniques like mindfulness, and counselling and support to overcome emerging mental health issues.

This £67.4 million National Lottery programme started in 2016 and will continue into 2022. By March 2021:

- Over 201,880 young people had access to HeadStart's universal support, including safe spaces in schools and the community, and resilience-building.
- Over 37,400 young people had attended at least one session of additional support, such as peer mentoring or talking therapies like counselling, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), restorative practice or conflict resolution.
- And over 246,540 professionals and volunteers who work with young people had been trained in mental health, resilience and/or trauma-informed practice. They also use the resources and techniques developed by the programme, like HeadStart Kernow's **Online Resilience Tool** which enables professionals to assess young people's online behaviour and decide whether that behaviour represents risk of harm.

Young people tell us that they like taking part in HeadStart and believe that their involvement has led, or will lead, to positive change. They say that HeadStart gives them someone to talk to, as well as knowledge and strategies to cope better with their emotions, schoolwork and conflicts with friends.²² "It has helped to talk about my problems and manage them so I can let it go",²³ says a participant from Kent.

We also hear that both school staff and pupils have become more conscious of the way they behave around one another. "I am more conscious of language used and understanding the bigger picture of each child," explained one teacher.²⁴

Quantitative evidence of the programme's impact will be available in 2023 but individual partnerships are already sharing early findings of the impact of their services. **Blackpool HeadStart** introduced walk and talk counselling, which means counsellors work with young people at the same time as doing an activity of their choice. Between July 2017 and December 2019, 475 young people were supported by Walk and Talk. Appointments were held in school (30%), in a public place (42%), at Blackpool Teaching Hospital (12%), at home (3%) or elsewhere (32%). Survey responses from before and after the counselling show that just over three-quarters of the young people (78%) had a decrease in negative emotions, with an average 34% decrease.²⁵ The local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) workers and other practitioners have recognised the value of this approach and are now beginning to adopt HeadStart's 'walk and talk' approach as part of their offer.

Many charities and community groups support young people's mental wellbeing at specific risk points or times of distress. For example, over 300 grantholders have supported the mental wellbeing of bereaved young people. Each year [Simon Says](#), a children's charity in Hampshire, supports 300 children who've lost someone who was important to them. The organisation runs peer group sessions, residentials, a helpline and a boxing club, giving bereaved families an opportunity to meet others in a similar situation, helping them come to terms with what has happened and start to rebuild their lives. With help from 92 active volunteers who gave around 1,500 hours of their time in 2019 alone, Simon Says also trains teachers working with bereaved young people, showing how communities go the extra mile to support young people when they need it.²⁶

Our funding is also there to build a better understanding of new mental health risks and triggers. [Gaming from the Heart](#) is a pilot in Hartlepool responding to parents' concerns about the impact of gaming on young people's wellbeing (violent mood swings, and deteriorating communication and social skills). The charity is delivering awareness-raising sessions in 15 schools and over 60 youth and sports clubs. The project is also trialling new group and one-on-one sessions for those who are already affected, offering outdoor therapeutic activities, arts, talking therapies, and mindfulness exercises to restore balance.

Bringing people who face common issues together can help them to talk about how they are feeling, to feel supported and part of a community. We fund a lot in this space, from [Falkirk and Clackmannan Carers Centre](#) providing a safe haven in central Scotland for young carers to meet, to [UCAN Productions](#) using music, drama, cooking and sport workshops to reduce lockdown-induced anxiety among blind and partially sighted young people in Wales.

Our mental health funding is most needed by young people who've experienced significant trauma or exploitation. In Northern Ireland, 85 projects funded through the £38.9 million [Empowering Young People](#) programme have supported 41,013 young people aged 8-25 to develop their ability to overcome difficult times and life transitions since 2015. The majority of those grantholders, 70%, have supported young people struggling with issues around mental health, substance misuse or alcohol. Like [MACS](#), which supported 425 young people to cope with mental health issues including suicidal thoughts, self-harm, and drug and alcohol misuse.



HeadStart Blackpool

From surviving to thriving²⁷

Key workers from **Project 1325**, run by WomenCentre in Kirklees and Calderdale, supported 169 young women whose lives were dominated by complex mental health issues resulting from sexual exploitation, childhood or domestic abuse, bullying, and other causes. Over 70% of the participants (aged 13-25) suffered from mental health issues such as anxiety, panic attacks, self-harm, suicidal ideation and post-traumatic stress.

“Over the last four years the young carers have been a fantastic addition to my life. They’ve provided the support I was desperately looking for and given me lots of opportunities that have boosted my confidence and strengthened my CV.”²⁸

Young Start

The team provided trauma-informed case work to support them for up to two years. They liaised with statutory bodies like schools, psychologists and the police to get them appropriate support, helped them through daily challenges by providing ongoing practical, emotional and mental health support, and built their confidence, self-esteem and relationships through workshops and peer support circles. They also organised social activities such as picnics to balance heavier conversations with something lighter. Over three-quarters of participants (77%) successfully completed the programme, resulting in a 45% improvement in scores related to their ability to cope with challenges. Also:

- Over half, 55%, found themselves in healthier relationships.
- Half, 50%, felt more stable emotionally, for example with fewer cases of panic attacks, self-harm or suicidal ideation.
- Nearly four out of ten, 38%, improved their engagement in education by starting or re-joining colleges and universities.

“The worker has helped me more than any other service with my mental health,” said one 22-year-old participant. “I now know other ways to manage my mental health and no longer self-harm.”

The project team has received further funding to continue its work until 2023, expanding the offer to 11-year-olds.



HeadStart Hull

Safe from harm

Unfortunately, many young people who are supported by charities have experienced trauma during their childhood or youth, or have grown up in chaotic households. Charities help to stabilise their lives, give them opportunities to heal, make sense of their experiences, and support their aspirations.

We've made 564 grants in the last five years to help address youth homelessness.²⁹ This funding has helped to resolve family conflicts, sustain tenancies, and provided accommodation, work and other positive opportunities for young people who are fleeing unsafe homes. [Llamau's](#) award-winning family mediation supports over 500 Welsh families each year. Working with both the young person and their family, they help both sides to see things from each other's point of view.

This work has an annual success rate of 71% of young people returning home. When it isn't safe for them to stay, mediators support a safe exit to supported accommodation and help to maintain family relationships where possible. Llamau's own calculations suggest that this mediation has saved the public purse £8 million: 648 out of 901 young people supported were able to return home rather than requiring supported accommodation.³⁰

£138 million through **657 grants** to prevent abuse and support survivors.

£104 million through **564 grants** to address youth homelessness.

£53 million through **234 grants** to help young people leave a life of gangs or crime.

£208 million through **897 grants** to support young people affected by addiction.

We've also made 657 grants to help survivors of abuse, or to help prevent it happening to others.³¹ These include the [Women and Girls Initiative](#), which has supported over 7,600 young women (around a quarter of the total beneficiaries) who've experienced violence, abuse or exploitation.

In addition to practical support for survivors, National Lottery funding improves the systems that help to keep young people safe from abuse. We've helped to expand the [Contextual Safeguarding Network](#), a group of 8,500 practitioners from social care, social work, education, health, and voluntary and community services. Traditional approaches to child protection have focused on the risk of violence and abuse from inside the home, i.e. from parents, siblings and wider family.

Contextual Safeguarding helps children’s social care practitioners, child protection systems, and wider safeguarding partnerships to identify and respond to a risk of abuse from adults or other young people outside the home, i.e. in schools, public spaces, peer groups and online. Starting as a pilot in London, the project is now implemented in 20 areas across England and Wales, with 24 more in the early stages of taking part.³²

Young people who’ve been involved in crime or gangs need support to find positive new pathways. We’ve given out 234 grants in this space,³³ with charities taking very different approaches. Some take their clinical or key worker support out to young people on the streets, in youth centres, skate parks and hospitals, while others use sport and arts to engage and promote positive values.

“I used to think, ‘why is that child so challenging?’ Now I think, ‘what’s happening in that child’s life to make them act that way and how can I help?’”³⁶

HeadStart Hull

St Giles do preventative work in schools. Trained professionals with lived experience of the criminal justice system speak about their own experiences, to de-glamorise gang involvement and expose the realities of crime and violence. Their first-hand knowledge generates high levels of engagement from the young people: “The feedback from students and staff was the best we’ve ever had... Your workshops were relevant to our students, engaging and thought provoking,” said one headteacher.³⁴

Others take a targeted approach. Every year **YouthAction NI** works with 75 young men who are at risk of becoming involved in violent lifestyles in Northern Ireland. They explore the causes and consequences of violence through group conversations, offer help in managing anger and conflict, and find positive role models who help in finding volunteering and employment opportunities.

Many take a two-pronged approach, supporting individuals and training practitioners. In addition to their extensive outreach and mentoring work with families in and around Birmingham, **KIKIT** delivers safeguarding training related to radicalisation, substance misuse and gangs. In 2020/2021 they trained 116 frontline staff from social services, schools, hospitals and drug and alcohol services, and 168 staff and volunteers from 15 mosques. They’ve also reached over 400 residents through sessions they’ve delivered in different community languages online and through pop-up stands in faith-based venues. Their training improves people’s skills and confidence to identify individuals at risk of radicalisation, addiction and gangs, and increases awareness of available support services.³⁵

[The Serious Organised Crime Early Intervention service](#) takes a whole system approach to preventing 11-18 year olds who are on the cusp of, or already involved in, serious organised crime through criminal exploitation. Led by Action for Children, they take a multi-agency approach to find alternative pathways for young people and their families. The project provides targeted support through intensive one to one, risk reduction, group work, peer mentoring, diversionary activities and positive opportunities including education, training and employment. The service also supports the families and siblings of these young people. Peer mentors – many of whom have relevant lived experience, knowledge of the local area and are now living a crime-free life - have been shown to be effective in offering accessible role models for teenagers who have previously resisted other types of mainstream support. One participant who had committed almost 600 offences hasn't reoffended since taking part.

The most recent statistics, covering the period of Covid-19, show that nearly four-fifths (77%) of participants demonstrate a reduction in risk taking behaviour, and 83% have reduced the frequency and/or severity of their offending behaviour. Early analysis showed that the Glasgow city council had saved over £500,000 in costs by diverting just four high risk young people from secure care over a six month period. And they've supported 32% into positive destinations, like college or a job.³⁷ Action for Children have now received funding to expand this work in Edinburgh, Newcastle, Dundee and Cardiff.

This work can have many other benefits too. [Youth in Focus](#), a programme that helped 2,000 young custody leavers to build a new life, didn't just have a positive effect on re-offending rates, but resulted in reductions in substance use, sofa surfing and other forms of homelessness too. One grantholder compared their work with another group in a similar location. Where 92% of the comparison group reoffended within a one-year period, significantly fewer (28%) of their own participants did so during the same period with the project.³⁸



HeadStart Hull

Rehab is just the beginning³⁹

“The majority of people with addiction problems relapse after rehab. This is partly because, when they leave treatment, they must return to the living situations and unhealthy relationships that contributed to the drug abuse that landed them there in the first place. Young women particularly are taken advantage of while at this precarious stage in their recovery, due to stigma, abusive relationships and returning to jobs such as escorting.” Former resident, Amy’s Place.⁴⁰

Studies confirm this and show that women are less likely to seek help for addiction than men. They also encounter different barriers when they seek help, from judgemental staff attitudes, to lack of childcare and fear of losing custody. At the same time, only around 1% of recovery house beds are for women only.⁴¹

Across the UK, we’ve given out 897 young people’s grants to directly or indirectly support young people affected by addictions.⁴² One such initiative is **Amy’s Place**, a unique recovery housing project created by the Amy Winehouse Foundation. It’s one of a small number of recovery housing projects in the country bridging the gap between women leaving addiction treatment services and finding independent accommodation.

It provides a safe, supportive space for up to 16 young women at a time who need somewhere to restart their lives, overcome drug and alcohol addiction, and sustain their recovery.

The first year results are positive:

- From the first 25 residents, all but one have sustained recovery and are still engaged or successfully discharged. Five have had momentary relapses but have re-engaged with support.
- All participants have become involved in a community activity, like volunteering for a local charity, and all have taken part in peer support activities and house meetings, exceeding all targets.
- 42% are pursuing formal, qualification focussed studies and another 38% are undertaking other forms of learning. Around half are working.

Behind these statistics are many stories. “[...] My whole life was a mess, homeless, drug and alcohol dependent [...] Amy’s Place gave me the space to regain my independence and confidence [...] and slowly return to ‘normal’ in such a supported and safe environment. [...] I am now a fully qualified personal trainer [...] over four years drink and drug free and have my children back living with me full time! I will forever be grateful to Amy’s place. It’s because of the support and care I received there I am where I am today,” explained one resident.

Better quality of life

We've invested £110 million over the past five years to support young people and their families who are affected by ill health, from long-term health conditions to life-limiting and terminal illnesses.⁴³ Our grantholders help to make their lives easier, more comfortable and more enjoyable.

This ranges from information, advice and peer support, specialist equipment and accessible facilities, to supporting seriously ill young patients in homes, hospitals and hospices.

[Full Circle Fund Therapies](#) provided reflexology, clinical massage and relaxation training to improve the quality of life of over 3,000 very sick people in 2019/20,⁴⁴ while playfulness and kindness are at the heart of the approach of [Hearts and Minds](#). The organisation sends Clowndoctors and other characters to bring joy to young patients undergoing treatment in Scottish hospitals and homes, with nine out of ten staff believing that the experience also improves patients' communication skills.⁴⁵

£110 million through **831 grants** to support young people with specific health conditions, from cancer to obesity.

[Whizz-Kidz](#) ran wheelchair training sessions for young people, covering skills such as tackling kerbs, reversing and learning to carry items safely. The 86 young people who took part not only improved their mobility in a wheelchair, but also increased their ability in day-to-day tasks and gained greater independence.⁴⁶ And at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, our funding enabled [Sensory Kids NI](#) in Ballymena, Northern Ireland to supply specialist equipment like sensory light and sound dens and exercise balls to parents to help them deliver specialist sensory and physical exercises at home.

Quality of life support might also come in the form of tailored information. Calls to the [Prader-Willi Syndrome Association UK](#) helpline tripled in the first few weeks of the pandemic as parents struggled to cope with increased care responsibilities, a rise in behavioural issues, home schooling, and work. A grant from the [Coronavirus Community Support Fund](#) boosted the organisation's helpline work and expanded its support through Facebook Live and Zoom.

Making clothes fit, to improve wellbeing and promote independence

A lack of suitable clothing has an impact on disabled people's wellbeing and can lead to dependency on others. **Dressability** is a specialist clothing service which adapts clothes for people in Swindon, helping them to feel comfortable and secure, and reducing their exposure to other people's assumptions about their disability. The organisation makes simple changes like removing excess fabric to prevent pressure sores for people who use wheelchairs, and adapting school uniforms to reduce sensory issues for children with autism.

Dressability provides clothing surgery sessions for more than 250 people every year, helping the community and the wider public to see beyond disability. Hannah, 25, suffered a brain injury and now has cerebral palsy. Dressability adapts her coats by removing the back to prevent pressure sores, and inserting discreet small holes where feeding tubes can be accommodated.⁴⁷

The organisation's National Lottery grant is helping it to expand its services, including increasing the number of external clothes clinics it provides.⁴⁸



HeadStart Blackpool

Healthy habits, informed choices

VCS organisations also support young people to build up the knowledge and habits to maintain good health, helping to prevent conditions that are influenced by our circumstances, lifestyles and choices.

This includes promoting healthy lifestyles, offering non-judgemental information (for example about sexual health), and providing healthy, nutritious food and meals, so that young people can make a healthy transition to adulthood.

Ensuring equal access to sports and fitness, regardless of abilities and circumstances, is important. The National Deaf Children's Society used a Young Start Fund grant to increase the participation of young deaf Scots in swimming. The organisation recruited 10 swimming organisations to deliver learn-to-swim programmes and taster days for deaf young people, and train 325 swimming teachers and coaches.⁴⁹

Charities and community groups also provide information so that young people understand how to stay healthy. Ashfield Football and Athletic Club in Glasgow used a National Lottery grant to get more children and young people into football, dance and other fitness. The group also ran a lifestyle programme to raise awareness of mental health, body image and healthy eating, reaching almost 800 young people and exceeding the initial target of 450.⁵⁰ The [Pennywell Youth Project](#) in Sunderland grows plants and vegetables from seed and uses them to cook healthy food with locals, as well as delivering workshops spanning from fitness and healthy eating, to personal hygiene and bullying. 2,500 young people took part in the group's [Youth Investment Fund](#) project, and around half of these said they had learned or tried something new as a result.⁵¹

School holidays are hard for many families, without the structure and routine provided by school, including school meals. Groups like [Fit and Fed](#) in Wellingborough make sure young people don't miss out on regular, healthy meals during the holidays, and that they can keep active. The organisation runs a holiday sports, arts and crafts programme for 5–18 year olds, where 20-25 participants receive a hot meal on each day of attendance. These meals offer something more than food vouchers; they're a chance for the group to sit down and eat together in a positive social environment, building up good habits and feeling part of a community. [Romsey Mill Trust](#) runs a weekly open access youth group offering indoor football, pool, a music studio, and cooking in Cambridgeshire. A key feature is a meal prepared by two young leaders and a community has grown around this weekly meal. For many of the 56 young people who regularly attend, it's the main meal of the week and the only regular time that they sit down with family or friends to eat together.⁵²

Endnotes

- 1 We distribute funding for youth projects from National Lottery proceeds, government and other sources, including funds released from dormant bank accounts and from the European Social Fund. Data in this report take account of our grant-making from all of these sources. All data covers the five-year period from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2021 which refer to young people as beneficiaries. Data for themes are identified via key word searches and the key words used are provided in end notes. These may not be unique figures, as projects may have used more than one key word. For instance, a project that refers to both homelessness and addiction would be included in the data for each of these themes.
- 2 HeadStart Kernow (2020). HeadStart Kernow learning: community and youth facilitators, interim report July 2020. [online]. Available at: [headstartkernow.org.uk/Learning/Revised Final HSK Learning Community and Youth Facilitators Interim Report July 2020.pdf](https://headstartkernow.org.uk/Learning/Revised-Final-HSK-Learning-Community-and-Youth-Facilitators-Interim-Report-July-2020.pdf) [Accessed 21 May 2021]
- 3 These figures represent projects which identified young people as a beneficiary type between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2021. Target group data also relates to beneficiary types identified by the projects, except the data for young people experiencing disadvantage, which is based on a key word search.
Key word search: deprivation, disadvantaged, disaffected, excluded, exclusion, marginalised, poverty, welfare support, food bank, foodbank, foodbanks, food banks, income support, low paid, low-paid, debt crisis, people with debts, low income, unemployment, suffering financially, debt crisis, economically inactive, income support, jobless, unemployed, welfare support.
- 4 All data is from internal grant monitoring, unless referenced below.
Youth in Focus: Beyond Youth Custody (Undated). Lessons from Youth in Focus: Research Report [online]. Available at: tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/insights/documents/Lessons-from-Youth-in-Focus-Research-Report.pdf [Accessed 12 May 2021]
Realising Ambition: Axford, N., Whelan, S. and Hobbs, T. (Undated). ‘Wrong’ answers, right response, learning from randomised controlled trials when you don’t get the results you were hoping for. [online]. Available at: youngfoundation.org/publications/realising-ambition-programme-insights-issue-11 [Accessed 19 May 2021]
Women and Girls: Tavistock Institute (Undated). The Women and Girls Initiative. Synthesis report #1 (2016-2019). [online]. Available at: tavistock.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/WGI-synthesis-report_links.pdf [Accessed 12 May 2021]
Talent Match: This includes 25,885 young people who took part in Talent Match 2013/2019 and 1,305 young people on the ongoing Talent Match sustainability programme, with three of the original 21 partnerships receiving funding for another three years. Damm, C. et al. (2020). Talent Match Evaluation: A Final Assessment [online]. Available at: tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/documents/Talent-Match/Talent-Match-eval-final-assessment.pdf [accessed 08 Mar 21]
- 5 Projects referring to the following key words: prevention, preventative, prevent, preventing.
- 6 Street Teams (undated). Making a difference. With help from Street Teams [online]. Available at: street-teams.org [accessed 04 May 2021]
- 7 Blackpool Council. (2021). Resilience Revolution’s Annual Report, September 2019 - August 2020. [Unpublished]

- 8 Blackpool Council. (2018). HeadStart annual report. [Unpublished].
- 9 The Big Lottery Fund. (2018). Preventing serious youth violence – what works? Insights and examples from the community and voluntary sector [online]. Available at: tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/TNLCF_KL18-12-Serious-Violence.pdf [Accessed 17 May 2021]
- 10 Leap Confronting Conflict. (2021). Impact 2020/21 highlights [online]. Available at: leapconfrontingconflict.org.uk/evaluation-and-impact [Accessed 17 May 2021]
- 11 Humphrey, N., Panayiotou, M. (2020). Bounce Back: randomised trial of a brief, school-based group intervention for children with emergent mental health difficulties. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*. 8 Aug 2020. [online]. Available at: link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs00787-020-01612-6 [Accessed 17 May 2021]
- 12 HeadStart Blackpool (2019). Resilience Revolution Annual Report September 2018 – August 2019. [Unpublished].
- 13 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018). Learn About Mental Health [online]. Available at: cdc.gov/mentalhealth/learn/index.htm [Accessed 22 April 2021]
- 14 Young Minds. (2021). Coronavirus: Impact on young people with mental health needs Survey 4: February 2021. [online]. Available at: youngminds.org.uk/media/4350/coronavirus-report-winter.pdf [Accessed 22 April 2021]
- 15 Kim-Cohen, J. et al. (2003) Prior juvenile diagnoses in adults with mental disorder – Developmental follow-back of a prospective longitudinal cohort. *Archives of General Psychiatry*. Vol. 60, pp.709–717.
- 16 Kessler, R. et al. (2005). Lifetime prevalence and age of onset distributions of DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication, in Department of Health and Social Care, Department of Education. (2018). Government Response to the Consultation on Transforming Children and Young People’s Mental Health Provision: a Green Paper and Next Steps. [online] Available at: assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728892/government-response-to-consultation-on-transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health.pdf [Accessed 22 April 2021]
- 17 The National Lottery Community Fund (2019). HeadStart: Building young people’s resilience to support their mental and emotional wellbeing [online]. Available at: tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/insights/building-resilience [Accessed 22 April 2021]
- 18 Projects referring to the key words: anorexia, anxiety, BDD, bereavement, bipolar, body dysmorphic, Borderline Personality Disorder, BPD, bulimia, depressed, depression, dissociative disorder, dissociative disorders, eating problems, eating disorder, mental health, panic attack, paranoia, paranoid, personality disorder, post-traumatic stress, psychological, psychosis, PTSD, schizophrenia, schizophrenic, self-harm, stress, suicide, suicidal, therapy, trauma, post-natal depression, panic disorders, social phobia, therapies, CBT, therapeutic, mental wellbeing.
- 19 Child Outcomes Research Consortium (CORC). (Undated). Wellbeing Measurement Framework. [online] Available at: corc.uk.net/resource-hub/wellbeing-measurementframework-wmf [Accessed 10 Oct 2019].
- 20 Deighton, J. et al. (2018). Mental health problems in young people, aged 11 to 14: Results from the first HeadStart annual survey of 30,000 children. [online] Available at: ucl.ac.uk/evidence-based-practice-unit/headstart-learning-team/headstart-reports-publications [Accessed 18 May 2021]
- 21 Deighton, J. et al. (2019). Prevalence of mental health problems in schools: poverty and other risk factors amongst 28,000 adolescents in England. *British Journal of Psychiatry*.

- 22 The National Lottery Community Fund (2019).
- 23 HeadStart Kent. (2020). HeadStart Kent 2019/20 year-end report: Outcomes of young people supported by HSK [online]. Available at: kentresiliencehub.org.uk/about-headstart-kent/research-and-evaluation/year-end-report-2019-20-outcomes-of-young-people-supported-by-headstart-kent [Accessed 22 Apr 2021]
- 24 Blackpool Council. (2018). HeadStart annual report. [Unpublished].
- 25 HeadStart Blackpool (2019). Resilience Revolution Annual Report September 2019 – August 2020. [Unpublished].
- 26 Simon Says. (2020). Simon Says: child bereavement support. Business Plan 2020-2022: Supporting the young through bereavement [online]. Available at: simonsays.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/business-plan-2020-2022-published-version.pdf [Accessed 13 May 2021]
- 27 WomenCentre. (2020). Project 1325. Final project report [online]. Available at: tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/insights/documents/WomenCentre-Project-1325-Final-Report-200616.pdf [Accessed 17 May 2021]
- 28 Big Lottery Fund (2018) Young Start Annual Report 2017-2018 [online]. Available at: <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/insights/documents/young-start-annual-report-2017-2018> [Accessed 28 Apr 2021]
- 29 Projects referring to the key words: homeless, homelessness, rough sleeper, rough sleepers, sleeping rough, sofa surfer, sofa surfing
- 30 Cymorth Cymru (2020). Llamau Family Mediation Service [online]. Available at: cymorthcymru.org.uk/en/resources/case-studies/llamau-family-mediation-service [Accessed 17 May 2021]
- 31 Projects referring to the key words: child abuse, domestic abuse, rape, raped, sexual abuse, spousal abuse, spousal abuse, violent partner, violent spouse, violent spouses, violent partners, domestic violence, sexual violence, physical neglect
- 32 Firmin, C. (2020). Contextual Safeguarding Scale-Up Project and Wider Programme. Project Board Update Report – September 2020. [Unpublished]
- 33 Projects referring to the key words: offender, re-offending, re-offender, ex-offender, convicted, criminals, ex-criminal, prison leaver, prisoner.
- 34 St Giles. (2021). Preventative work in schools [online]. Available at: stgilestrust.org.uk/what-we-do/child-criminal-exploitation/preventative-schools-work [Accessed 17 May 2021]
- 35 KIKIT, Pathways to Recovery. (2021). Gangster Jihadi Project. 2019/2020 report. [Unpublished]
- 36 HeadStart Hull. (Undated). Improving Children and Young People’s Emotional Wellbeing and Resilience, End of Year One review. [online] Available at: hullccg.nhs.uk/uploads/chronicler/document/document/293/9125_HeadStart_Hull_28pp.pdf
- 37 Action for Children. (2021). Serious Organised Crime Early Intervention service report – May 2021. [Unpublished]
- 38 Beyond Youth Custody (2017). Lessons from Youth in Focus: Research Report [online]. Available at: tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/insights/documents/Lessons-from-Youth-in-Focus-Research-Report.pdf [Accessed 12 May 2021]
- 39 Amy Winehouse Foundation. (2020). Amy’s Place: End of year. National Lottery Community Fund report. [Unpublished]
- 40 Blackwell, L., (2020). Inside Amy’s Place, a Drug Recovery Sanctuary for Young Women [online]. Available at: [vice.com/en/article/wx8dgx/amys-place-london-a-drug-recovery-sanctuary-for-young-women](https://www.vice.com/en/article/wx8dgx/amys-place-london-a-drug-recovery-sanctuary-for-young-women) [Accessed 17 May 2021]

- 41 Amy Winehouse Foundation. (2016). Amy's Place – A new recovery house for young women [online]. Available at: amywinehousefoundation.org/2016/08/01/amys-place-new-recovery-house-women [Accessed 17 May 2021]
- 42 Projects referring to the key words: addiction, alcohol, alcoholic, cannabis, cocaine, dependence, drug use, drug user, drugs, ecstasy, hallucinogenic, hallucinogens, heroin, legal high, marijuana, MDMA, metamphetamine, meth, narcotic, narcotics, opioids, rehabilitation, substance abuse, substance abuser, substance misuse, substance misuser, addict.
- 43 Projects referring to the following key words: AIDS, arthritic, arthritis, asbestosis, asthma, blind, cancer, cerebral, chronic disease, chronic illness, COPD, deaf, diabetes, endocrinal, fertility, HIV, ill health, injury, lymphoedema, multiple sclerosis, musco-skeletal, obese, obesity, palsy, rheumatism, rheumatoid, silicosis, terminal illness, terminally ill, Cerebral Palsy, Spina bifida, chronic lung disease, Hydrocephalus, scoliosis, muscular dystrophy, Cohen Syndrome, Prader Willi Syndrome, congenital heart, health needs, life limiting condition, respiratory conditions, Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, post viral fatigue, myasthenia, Spinal Muscular Atrophy, Meningitis, Behcets disease
- 44 Full Circle Fund Therapies (2021). Report and financial statements for the year ended 30 April 2020 [online]. Available at: fullcirclefund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Full-Circle-Fund-Therapies-Annual-Report-YE-30-April-2020.pdf [Accessed 17 May 2021] This was funded through the London Community Response Fund, to which we contributed £7 million of National Lottery funding.
- 45 Hearts & Minds. (2018). Hearts & Minds Strategic Programme Review 2014-17. [Unpublished]
- 46 Ekosgen (2016). My Skills, My Friends, My Future, End of Year 3 Assessment Report [Unpublished].
- 47 Dressability (Undated). Case studies, Hannah's story. [Online]. Available at: dressability.org.uk/2019/05/13/hannahs-story [Accessed 20 May 2021]
- 48 Dressability (2020), Funding application to The National Lottery Community Fund for Specialist Clothing Adaptation Service. [unpublished]
- 49 National Deaf Children's Society (2016). Deaf-friendly swimming Scotland – Big Lottery Fund. [Unpublished]
- 50 Ashfield football and athletic club (2019). Progress update form – end of grant. [unpublished]
- 51 Pennywell Youth Project (2020). Youth Investment Fund – Year Three Update and End of Project Report. [Unpublished]. Pennywell Youth Project (2019). How are things going with the Youth Investment grant?. [Unpublished]
- 52 Romsey Mill Trust (2020). Youth Investment Fund – Year Three Update and End of Project Report. [Unpublished]

Legal disclaimer

This report tells personal stories of grantholders and staff and shares examples of what has worked well for others. Any views, thoughts or opinions expressed by grantholders and staff do not necessarily represent the views, thoughts or opinions of The National Lottery Community Fund (“the Fund”). The Fund does not endorse or recommend any organisation mentioned, nor does it endorse any external content linked to in this report.

The content of this report should not be taken as an instruction, guidance or advice and you should not rely on the information in this report as an alternative to professional advice.

To the fullest extent permitted by law, the Fund accepts no responsibility and disclaims all liability to any third party who purports to use or rely for any reason whatsoever on the report, its contents, conclusions, any extract, reinterpretation amendment and/ or modification by any third party is entirely at their own risk. We make no representations, warranties or guarantees, whether express or implied, that the content of this report is accurate, complete or up to date.

© Crown copyright 2021

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned. This publication is available at gov.uk/government/publications

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at The National Lottery Community Fund, 1 Plough Place, London, EC4A 1DE, or you can email us at knowledge@tnlcommunityfund.org.uk

The Knowledge and Learning team at The National Lottery Community Fund share insights from the experience of our funding and the difference it makes. If you would like to tell us what you think of this report, or share relevant findings and learning, please email us at knowledge@tnlcommunityfund.org.uk

Key contacts: Jo Woodall and Anne-Mari Hall
Design: Colin Turner

The National Lottery Community Fund Version 1. Published in June 2021. Reference: KL21-04