

It starts with community

The National Lottery
Community Fund Strategy
2023 – 2030





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Cover images

Top right: DanceSyndrome, England

Bottom right: YMCA North Staffordshire, England

Bottom left: African Community Centre, Wales

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**This is an
interactive
document**

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Chief Executive's Foreword



Our new strategy is driven by a simple truth: it starts with community.

Over the past year 18,000 individuals and organisations across the UK have shared their ideas with us. We've heard loud and clear concerns about inequality, the climate crisis, the health of communities and the future for children and young people. We've also heard the hopes and dreams of communities and the extraordinary work going on in the places we together live, work, and go about our daily lives.

We're excited to announce our new strategy. It starts with the social connections and community activities that bring us together as the very beating heart of a healthy, happy and flourishing society. That's why our strategy reaffirms our commitment to supporting communities to shape their future.

As we step forward, we're building on what we've learned over the last 30 years and we'll retain the local and relational grant making approach we know is valued so highly.

But we want to make a bigger difference. We know that bolder change demands greater focus and deeper partnership. We don't expect to have all the answers and, by being more than a funder, want to learn and work with others.

Our strategy is built around three hallmarks.

First, we're doubling down on our grassroots community funding. We've heard the value that communities place on this. We know this is where our funding has furthest reach. And where it supports and creates the most volunteering opportunities. That's why we'll now double both the size of the possible grant award available and the time any project can run for. It's the biggest change to our National Lottery Awards for All for a generation.

Second, we know communities want bolder change to tackle some of the big challenges they face. We've set four community-led missions, where we'll focus our funding, learning and efforts to influence change.

We'll forge new and deep partnerships, rooted in purpose and place, to support the greatest impact.

Our community-led missions will support communities to:

1. come together
2. be environmentally sustainable
3. help children and young people thrive
4. enable people to live healthier lives.

Third, as The National Lottery's 30th anniversary approaches we'll build on the great national success story we've been a part of, supporting life changing projects across the UK. As One Fund we've renewed our values and ways of working to be a springboard for action. We'll adapt to changing circumstances, as recent experience has taught us. But we will not allow this to hold us back from the action and support for longer-term and transformational change where it is most needed.

Across all our work we'll take an equity-based approach to tackle inequality, investing most where there is greatest need and helping communities overcome barriers. We'll put impact on the environment and nature at the heart of our decision making, setting our ambition to be an environmentally regenerative funder.

Our 2030 strategy focuses on making an even greater difference in the years ahead. Working in partnership with communities, funders, the public sector and civil society we'll bring the passion, purpose and expertise of our people to accelerate our shared goal to strengthen society and improve lives.

The journey starts now and it starts with community.

David Knott, Chief Executive

The National Lottery Community Fund



Ellesmere Children's Centre, England

Our purpose

It starts with community.

Social connections and community activities are at the heart of creating healthier, happier lives and a flourishing society. That's why The National Lottery Community Fund supports amazing community-led projects. And why we're looking to make a bigger difference in the years ahead, by listening and responding to communities and by focusing on supporting bolder change.

Thanks to National Lottery players, we'll distribute at least a further £4 billion by 2030, supporting activities that create resilient communities that are more inclusive and environmentally sustainable - activities that will strengthen society and improve lives across the UK.



“Breaking down barriers and encouraging dialogue for matters relating to health is vital. Funding from The National Lottery Community Fund has enabled us to creatively work with those who have health issues to amplify their voices and play a critical part in building awareness, improve understanding and influencing change at all levels of their community.”

Ceridwen Huges, Director (far right)
Same But Different C.I.C, Wales

The building blocks of community

Our work starts with the building blocks that enable communities to connect, build relationships and take action on what matters most to them.

And when people come together across generations, backgrounds and experiences – something powerful happens. Civil society organisations provide vital spaces, activities and opportunities for people to come together. These connections are the bonds that strengthen society and improve lives.

That's why we fund and support communities to take action on what matters most to them. And it's why from autumn 2023, we're increasing funding for smaller, community projects by doubling the size of our easy to apply for, National Lottery Awards for All grants to £20,000.

Our society faces some big and urgent challenges, which require bold responses. Communities are demanding bolder, long-term change, and more power to shape the future. That's why we're increasing our focus and investment in creating lasting change, through targeted missions aimed at strengthening society and improving lives. And why we'll partner with communities, civil society organisations and others to build this change.

We know not all communities have the opportunities or the right set-up to come together. So, while our funding is available to all communities, we'll invest most where the need is greatest, with people, places and communities who experience poverty, disadvantage and discrimination.

This strategy is shaped by our day-to-day work, and by what we heard through our conversations with communities, civil society organisations and others in 2022, involving over 18,000 interactions.

As the largest single source of community funding in the UK we help communities flourish. We provide the funding, they put the money to work.

“When we get things right for children, we can make a significant and lasting impact in our communities. Children and young people are too often underestimated. At our Storyplay sessions we discover their limitless imaginations, huge capacity for kindness, inclusion and fairness. Supporting children's rights is in the interest of everyone.”

**Virigina Radcliffe, Artistic Director/
CEO, Ruby Zajac, Creative Producer
LicketySpit, Scotland**

Our four community-led missions

Our conversations over the last year have informed where we'll provide greater focus in supporting communities and shaped our four community-led funding missions:

- support communities to **come together**
- support communities to be **environmentally sustainable**
- support communities to help **children and young people thrive**
- support communities to enable people to **live healthier lives.**

Our funding has always supported these areas. Now we're going further, focusing our funding, impact and work with partners around these to make a bigger impact.



Dates-n-Mates, Scotland



We'll support communities to come together

Connections with friends, neighbours and people with shared interests and experiences are key to fulfilled, happy lives. These are the connections binding communities together. The connections that create the networks and the power for communities to lead and shape change. Communities and civil society organisations also create vital spaces where people who have different interests, views and experiences can come together.

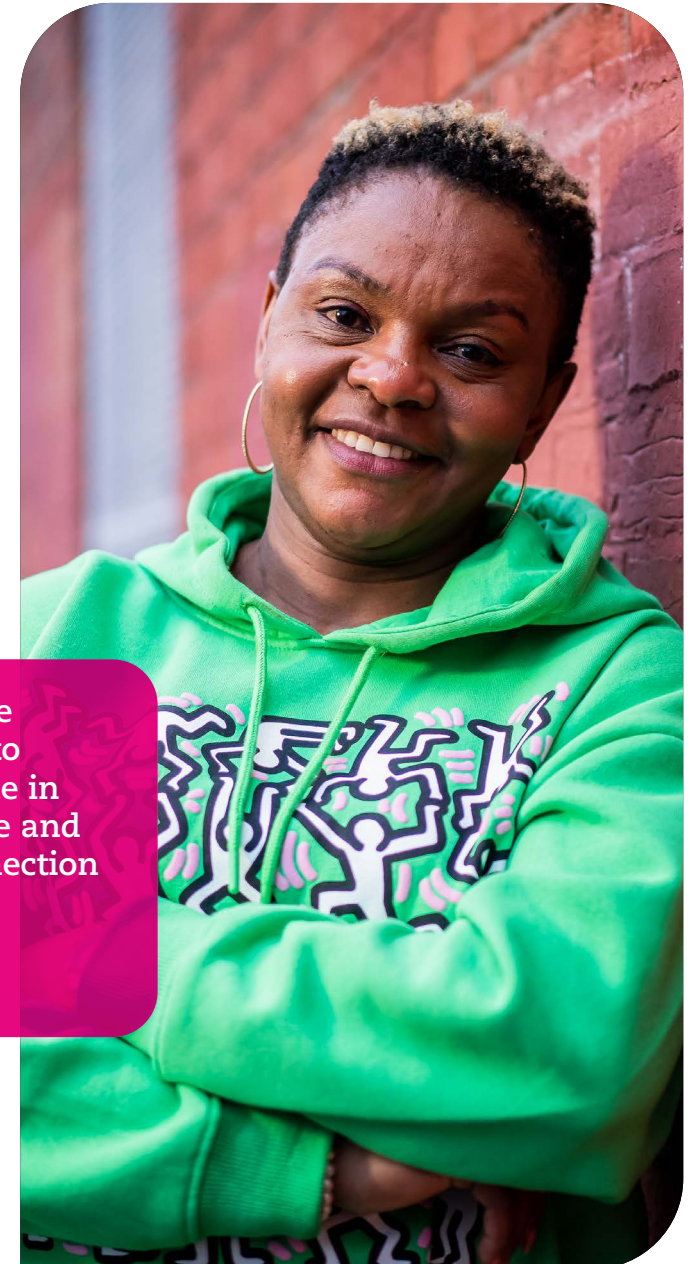
But not all communities are set up to help people come together. Increasingly, many people feel disconnected or isolated.

We'll fund projects that:

- create accessible, welcoming places, both physical and virtual, for people to meet
- initiate engaging and inclusive activities that support connections within and between people and communities
- enable people from all backgrounds to shape the future of their communities
- cultivate an increased sense of trust and belonging.

“Humans are social beings. When people are isolated and not connected, it leads to so many other negative things – a decline in mental health, people become less active and a depressed society awaits us. Interconnection and cohesion are the keys.”

Alexis Ekwueme, Project Manager
Diverse Youth NI, Northern Ireland





We'll support communities to be environmentally sustainable

Climate change is the “most pervasive threat to the natural environment and societies the world has ever experienced” (UN, 2022). While many environmental challenges are global, there is huge potential for UK communities to make a difference locally.

We'll embed support for environmental action across all funding, including supporting all projects to consider the environment even when this isn't their main focus. And we'll also invest in specific environmental projects, so communities can help create a healthy planet.

We'll fund projects that:

- reduce carbon emissions and negative environmental impact
- create positive environmental impact
- establish equality of access to the natural environment
- improve the quality of natural spaces.

“It's important that The National Lottery Community Fund continues to support communities to be environmentally sustainable. This will enable us to respond to local need and address a range of social, economic and environmental issues through grassroots projects that really make a difference to people and the environment.”

**Karen Healy (left), Environmental Officer
Creggan Country Park, Northern Ireland**





We'll support communities to help children and young people thrive

Community activities, experiences and support are transformative in supporting children, young people, and their families to thrive. Every child and young person should have access to the support of trusted adults, enriching activities, and opportunities to connect with others.

Society can benefit by listening more to young people's views and by recognising their ability to make a positive difference. We want all children and young people to have opportunities to participate in their community and shape the activities and decisions that affect them and their futures.

We'll fund projects that:

- provide children and young people access to safe spaces to play, participate, socialise and get support
- create opportunities for children and young people from all backgrounds to participate in community activities
- help children and young people shape the decisions that affect them and their communities.

“Young people have lived through one of the toughest times in history. This has led to a downturn in their mental health, a feeling of isolation and uncertainty for their future.

Young people need support now more than ever and I'm glad The National Lottery Community Fund is joining us in ensuring they are a priority.”

Ryan J. Matthews-Robinson, Founder
Poetic Unity, England





We'll support communities to enable people to live healthier lives

Evidence clearly shows being a part of a community can make you healthier and happier. There are huge opportunities for communities to support people to live healthier lives. And we know that people with lived experience, civil society organisations and the public sector all have a role to play.

We'll invest in communities that foster wellbeing and good physical and mental health.

We'll fund projects that:

- take a preventative approach
- enable communities to take positive action to improve the health and wellbeing of their communities
- help reduce health inequalities
- increase opportunities for community participation to shape better health services.

“I would not be alive right now if it wasn't for the support I received from Men Matter Scotland. I've gone from feeling suicidal to slowly developing meaning and purpose in my life again. I'm now a proud staff member of Men Matter Scotland and help others who felt like I once did - that to me is my purpose.”

Andrew MacAlistair, Peer Support Worker
Men Matter Scotland, Scotland



How we work

In a fast-moving world, it's crucial we're flexible and able to adapt. So, over the course of this strategy, some things will naturally change. We'll balance this but we'll always remain clear on how we work.

Partnering with communities, civil society organisations, the public sector, as well as other funders, and business will be critical to success. We'll particularly work with organisations who have a deep understanding of communities, people and issues. And in all the projects we support, people from communities must be meaningfully involved.

Our values and ways of working provide clarity on how we work with communities, partners and colleagues, as One Fund across the UK. Our five values reflect our core beliefs. We'll embed and work to live these values in everything we do. And our six ways of working describe the key principles for how we fund and act to support communities.



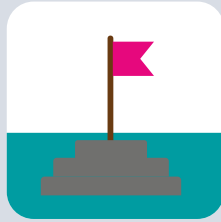
Horn of Africa People's Aid, Northern Ireland

Our values



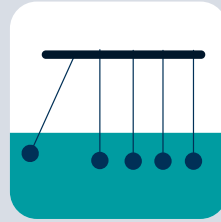
We are inclusive

We know that communities and organisations are stronger when everyone can participate, and work to increase inclusion.



We are ambitious

We believe in the power of community and connection and are ambitious for its potential. We support people and communities to shape the future and lead change.



We are impact focused

We are inspired by communities and learn with them. We listen, reflect and use evidence to improve knowledge, inform action and increase impact.



We are adaptable

We welcome and embrace new ideas and ways of working.



We are compassionate

We work with care, consideration and humility.

Our ways of working



We start with, and build from, the strengths of individuals and communities.

We listen to communities and trust in their abilities. We collaborate, provide support but also challenge, to help make great things happen.



Simple processes, open ways of working.

We operate with transparency, openly sharing information and requirements. We're honest, clear and straightforward, and provide and welcome respectful feedback.



Open to all, investing in need.

Our funding is open to all communities, but we invest most in those with greatest need. We listen and use evidence to target resources to help communities overcome barriers and achieve their potential.



Positive action for the environment, climate and nature.

We're an environmentally regenerative funder, so our decision making and investment is focused on environmentally positive actions, climate adaptation, climate resilience and nature recovery.



Impact and learning.

We use and invest in evidence, both lived and learned, and share what has and hasn't worked. We're creative, using our learning to adapt and help those we work with to do the same. We focus the funding we provide on where it can help make the biggest impact.



Making connections, building partnerships.

Wherever possible, we build partnerships that bring people together with a common purpose. We encourage everyone we work with to collaborate and share their experiences with others.

How we'll fund and support communities

An equity-based approach to tackle inequality

Though our funding is available to all communities, we'll take an equity-based approach. This means across all our work with communities and our four missions, we'll invest most in places, people and communities who experience poverty, disadvantage and discrimination.

Our work aims to support communities to build from their strengths. We'll support what matters most to different communities, including long-term investment to address deep-rooted challenges.

Types of funding

We'll invest in projects supporting bold new approaches, transformation and long-term change with an explicit focus on our four missions. We'll also offer funding that is responsive to communities both in the four mission areas, and more broadly on what matters most to communities.

We'll continue to offer different types of funding, from accessible grants starting from £300 up to £20,000, to longer term grants or strategic investments with partners. Typically, funding will be for between one and five years, with flexibility to support some projects and approaches targeting longer-term or transformational change up to 10 years.

We'll explore different costs with organisations to help determine the most appropriate type of funding. These include project, capital, organisational, partnership and developmental costs.



“The strength of connection is what underpins all that STAR Project does. Our strong ties are in being part of something bigger, a shared sense of ‘we’re in this together’. It is vital that we, as a sector, value the importance of this and recognise its power to reduce isolation, improve wellbeing and strengthen our communities.”

Sharon MacAulay, Chief Executive
STAR Project, Scotland

More than a funder

Although our funding is the most important way we support communities, we also help in other ways:

- **Supporting**

We'll give grant holders advice and information to help increase their impact and organisational resilience. This will include support for grant holders to improve their environmental impact, increase inclusion and harness the benefit of digital and data innovation.

- **Learning**

We'll use proportionate ways to gather data, evidence and learning, creating useful insights and helping to understand impact. We'll share learning to increase understanding of communities that are useful to grant holders, those interested in delivering and supporting community-led change, and wider society.

- **Convening**

We'll bring different organisations together to explore challenges and develop new opportunities and partnerships.

- **Championing**

Using our position and influence, we'll celebrate and promote the power of communities to strengthen society and improve lives.

- **Partnership**

We know there is huge power in working together with others. We'll create partnerships with other National Lottery distributors, funders, governments, civil society representative organisations, researchers, businesses and communities themselves.

- **Participation**

We'll increase the involvement of civil society organisations and communities in shaping our work. This will help us to strengthen our support for communities.



“Social connectedness is vital for mental and physical wellbeing. It empowers diasporas, and people of all backgrounds, to identify their own needs, emotions and enables empathy from those around them by sharing similarities and celebrating differences. It gives a sense of belonging and community.”

Saj Ghafoor OBE, CEO
Multicultural Cumbria, England

Our 2030 ambition

The ambition through this strategy is to create resilient communities that are more inclusive and environmentally sustainable, funding activities and organisations that strengthen society and improve lives across the UK.

We're focusing our efforts where there is greatest need. We're looking to make a bigger difference in the years ahead, both by listening and responding to communities, and being more focused on supporting the greatest impact.

This is the beginning of the journey, and we'd love communities, civil society organisations, and others to build the change with us. If you'd like to be involved in helping us shape plans and discuss our 2030 ambitions, please contact

itstartswithcommunity@tnlcommunityfund.org.uk

It starts with community.





Sol Café, England



The National Lottery Community Fund is a non-departmental public body set up to distribute National Lottery funding.

National Lottery players provide most of our resources every time they play. We're One Fund based in communities in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and our work reflects the diversity of the UK.

We're the largest single source of funding for community activities in the UK. We make our funding decisions independently, but we're accountable to Parliament and subject to policy directions from the UK Government and devolved administrations.

Find out more

Visit our website: tnlcommunityfund.org.uk

Email: itstartswithcommunity@tnlcommunityfund.org.uk

Call our advice line: 0345 4 10 20 30

Text Relay: 18001 plus 0345 4 10 20 30

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