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# Evaluation of the Bristol Ageing Better Community Kick-Start Fund

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## ABOUT THIS REPORT >>

This report is part of the wider evaluation of the Bristol Ageing Better programme, an initiative funded through the National Lottery Community Fund's Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better national programme.

The report is the product of a collaboration between many people:

- BAB Community Researchers – CRs- (Christine Crabbe, Jan Fullforth, Jeremy Groome, Jenny Hoadley, Anne Jensen), led on the research fieldwork, data analysis and report drafting
- UWE Researchers (Amy Beardmore, Mat Jones) led on the study design, project management and advisory support to CRs
- BAB staff team (in particular Carly Urbanski, Bianca Rossetti and Claire Chivers) provided practical support for the fieldwork, collected project monitoring and implementation records, and assisted with report design

CRs and UWE collaborated on study questions, the interpretation of the findings, and report production. The interpretations in this report are those of Christine Crabbe, Jan Fullforth, Jeremy Groome, Jenny Hoadley, Anne Jensen, Amy Beardmore and Mat Jones.

We would like to thank the Community Kick-Start fund-holder representatives who agreed to be interviewed as part of this study and who supported the evaluation through providing BAB with information about their project.

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## GLOSSARY >>

<b>A4A</b>	Awards for All
<b>BAB</b>	Bristol Ageing Better
<b>BCC</b>	Bristol City Council
<b>BAME</b>	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
<b>NLCF</b>	National Lottery Community Fund
<b>CD</b>	Community Development
<b>CDOP</b>	Community Development for Older People
<b>CKSF</b>	Community Kick-Start Fund
<b>CMF</b>	Common Measurement Framework
<b>CR</b>	Community Researchers
<b>KS+</b>	Kick-Start Plus
<b>LinkAge Network</b>	Bristol-based charity which is tackling the causes of loneliness and social isolation in people aged 55+ across the West of England
<b>LGBTQ+</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transsexual, Queer/Questioning. The 'plus' is inclusive of all other groups, such as asexual and intersex.
<b>MHF</b>	Mental Health Foundation
<b>OPCP</b>	Older Persons Commissioning Panel
<b>PO</b>	Project Officer
<b>Quartet</b>	Quartet Community Fund – aims to assist in effective grant-making and fund development
<b>SCIE</b>	Social Care Institute for Excellence
<b>UWE</b>	University of the West of England
<b>Voscur</b>	Support and development agency for Bristol's Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY >>

### Bristol Ageing Better's Community Kick-Start Fund

Bristol Ageing Better (BAB) is a partnership of individuals and organisations funded by the National Lottery Community Fund with a grant of £5.9 million to develop and deliver a 5-year programme (2015 to 2020) that identifies ways of reducing both the isolation and loneliness of people over 50.

Small grant and micro-funding schemes are widely used in the voluntary and community sector. These initiatives are thought to offer a wide range of benefits, including engaging diverse and under-resourced groups and stimulating new community activities. However, they are rarely subject to formal evaluation and there is little published evidence of their implementation and impact. This report presents a study of the BAB Community Kick-Start Fund (CKSF), one of the 16 thematic initiatives within the overall BAB programme. The research was led by Community Researchers (CRs), with the support of staff from the University of the West of England (UWE) and the BAB programme team.

Through the CKSF, BAB offered funding of up to £2,000 to support the development of new activities, designed to reduce loneliness and social isolation in people aged over 50. Activities needed to address these issues and aim to continue beyond the initial funding period defined as 12 months from the point of application. There was no cash grant; the individual budgets were controlled by BAB who purchased items on their behalf. Applications could cover supply of goods (e.g. equipment

to start a new activity) or delivery of services (e.g. training provision, room hire and basic refreshments) or a mix of both. The scheme was open to any charity, community group, individual or independent group (as long as there was evidence that older people wanted the activity) and there was no requirement to have a bank account. Selection was by a panel of older people supported by BAB.

At the outset, BAB committed £250,000 to the CKSF. The fund was launched in January 2016 with 10 rounds of application selection, the last one being in March 2019. A staff member within the BAB team, designated as Project Officer (PO), was responsible for coordinating the fund.

### Evaluation structure

The CRs are a group of older people who volunteered to collaborate on the evaluation of a range of projects within the BAB programme. Before this study, they had conducted three evaluations on CKSF covering perceptions of successful and unsuccessful applicants, and perceptions of other grant schemes by community groups. The CRs were seen as a non-threatening, external panel of older, interested individuals who could work to the objectives of BAB, while at the same time offering a friendly ear to the fund users.

The evaluation sought to understand the contribution of CKSF towards BAB programme goals and additional benefits beyond the programme. The CRs undertook semi-structured interviews and received written feedback from 44 stakeholders, of which 37

were award holders. Supplementary evidence came from a literature review, an analysis of programme records collected by the BAB team, case studies, observations, feedback from BAB-funded community development projects, and questionnaire responses from 167 participants in CKSF award-funded initiatives.

### Scale of application and participation

Between March 2016 and March 2019, CKSF received 221 applications and made 141 awards, with a total expenditure of over £229,300. The total number of participants that benefited from CKSF activities between March 2016 and March 2020 is 6,337.

We have a limited impression of the demographic characteristics of participants, based on 126 who completed registration forms. These records show that 81% were female, 22% were from BAME groups, 45% were living alone, 45% stated that they had a disability, and 23% had carer responsibilities. They had an age range of 50–92, and the average age of participants was 72 years. However, it should be noted that these respondents only reflect a minority of those taking part in CKSF projects.

The number of participants completing both the baseline and follow-up BAB programme Common Measurement Framework (CMF) questionnaires was a maximum of 27 (some individuals did not respond to all questions). This is a rather small number upon which to make reliable judgements on the areas of change measured. Nevertheless, the results indicate positive changes for reduced isolation, involvement in the development of activities, and social participation in group activities. These outcomes are consistent with the wider BAB programme evaluation and provides a quantitative indication that CKSF activities contributed towards the main programme goals.

In total 423 volunteers contributed 7,966 hours of their time. Costed at £8.21/hr, the current Minimum Wage, this equates to a labour cost contribution of £41,091. The cost of administration of the CKSF project was equivalent to 23% of the overall costs.

### Findings and implications

The BAB PO's role was crucial to provide support, especially for smaller groups. Every opportunity was available to ask questions (for example by phone, email, Skype and correspondence) and the PO was also available to meet in person. This diverse range of channels was considered particularly helpful by groups unfamiliar with making funding applications. The paucity of community-building networks in the project catchment made the value of this personal approach even more critical.

In general, people were happy with the straightforward application process, particularly after adjustments were made in response to feedback and evaluation at various time points. Applicants reported that they felt that they were being 'treated like adults' and trusted to apply in good faith.

A positive feature of the scheme was the independent selection panel. This was relatively innovative and included older volunteers with good knowledge of community work in the city and life experiences in common with applicants. Despite there being an adequate gender balance in the membership of the panel, they expressed concern at the lack of social diversity. The panel was chaired by a representative of BAB management and the PO was secretary. The panel members were diligent in their assessment and allocated time to discuss all applications and on numerous occasions worked with the PO to request applicants re-apply with a reworked application and additional information.

One short-coming of the project was that only 10% of the applications were from small informal groups. If future schemes are to access a larger proportion of smaller organisations then better advertising, outreach and techniques to embrace a more comprehensive network of community support services need to be considered.

There was evidence that some groups would not have thought to run an activity without the opportunity to apply to a pot of money. At the same time, a number of larger organisations diversified to include activities relevant to >50s: for some this required a re-consideration about how best to work with an older group. The fund has therefore achieved success in initiating a significant number of new activities.

The range of activities implemented was impressive: they included creative and practical skills; exercise and physical activities; social cafe-type events; inter-generational activities; plus a number of supported activities for those with dementia and for residents of care homes. Many activities were locally based, but for some, especially where specialist equipment was required (for example the rowing club or ballet classes), participation was city-wide.

The CKSF highlighted the issue of loneliness and isolation and the wide range of activities generated were implemented within diverse populations (including LGBT and BAME groups) across all parts of the city, including socially deprived areas. However, there were no applications from those dealing with drug or alcohol misuse.

Most award holders thought that the size of the award was about right. However, many had issues with hidden expenses or additional costs (such as transport or marketing) that were not factored into their initial applications. Where this was the case, it was helpful that

BAB had a small additional fund available, on a discretionary basis, to make up for minor oversights in the initial costings (on presentation of relevant receipts).

In the future, if a fund is being targeted towards smaller, inexperienced organisations, the application form should be prefaced with a checklist of items that could be included in the application, such as the cost of publicity and transport.

Levels of participation appeared to hold up well whilst the activities were running. Fund holders appreciated that for groups to be successful, environments needed to be created where people felt safe and welcome right from the outset of walking through the door; this was particularly important for those living with dementia.

Regarding direct receipt of money vs controlled budget, opinion on whether the direct purchasing of goods and services was a help or a hindrance was split fairly evenly, and dependent on the organisation and how they were set up. A recommendation would be that the funder should be flexible and leave the group to decide how it wants to receive the money. Smaller organisations often found it easier to deal in kind.

### Management and continuity

Being a successful CKSF recipient enabled some groups to apply for other pots of money, and their CKSF success appeared to carry some kudos with the new funder. However, 25% asked BAB for help in identifying continuation funding. Kick-Start+ was one opportunity, but the BAB programme team were responsible for nominating CKSF award holders on the basis of funding compliance and performance track record.

Interim results showed that 42% of groups

were successful in identifying additional funding or becoming self-supporting; 35% of the groups ceased operating as their funds ran out; whilst in January 2020 25% were still within their CKSF funding periods.

For some successful groups that wanted to continue and consolidate but not expand, the element of continuity was a constraint as funders insisted on 'new ideas' and 'growth'. Also, the idea of self-funding was not an option for some groups because of the type of activity and/or the participants' income level.

Even though there were costs involved in having a PO, it definitely appeared to be a worthwhile investment: the PO played a critical role in establishing a support service for small and fledgling organisations that aimed to provide activities in their local communities. In addition, the post arranged the purchase of goods and services and supported the selection panel. However, if agencies such as Voscur were in a better position to provide support and/or there was a more visible, comprehensive network of community hubs, then the PO position could spend less time on that support/developmental role.

Nonetheless it is good value in terms of the number and diversity of older people that the scheme reached, the scale of the volunteer contributions, and the range of innovative projects. In fact, the early evidence of success led to the creation of temporary additional funding through St Monica's Trust (Kick-Start+) which was targeted at groups that had already shown competence in utilising funds.

CKSF started as one project amongst many in the BAB programme but has grown into one of the more successful, and one that other Ageing Better agencies have been keen to reproduce. When the funding period ends the role of Bristol Older People's Funding Alliance and the city council's One City Plan will be critical in

taking forward the learning from CKSF's micro-funding experience.



# 1. Introduction >>

## BRISTOL AGEING BETTER

Bristol Ageing Better (BAB) is a partnership of individuals and organisations funded by the National Lottery Community Fund to develop and deliver a 5-year programme (over £5.9 million grant) that identifies the best ways of reducing both the isolation and loneliness of people over 50. The funding runs from 2015 to 2020 – with a recent extension to 2021 – and is part of the National Lottery Community Fund's (formerly Big Lottery Fund) Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better programme.

Part of BAB's proposal was to recruit a group of people over 50 to be volunteer Community Researchers to evaluate part of its programme. UWE, one of the BAB partners, was commissioned to provide the academic support. The group was recruited between 2014 and 2015: many of the CRs had not previously undertaken research work or worked in a collaborative way with a co-productive perspective, so this was a new venture for both UWE and the CRs.

BAB aims to create an environment in which partner organisations can deliver effective services, share their knowledge of what works, and be noticed by the people who matter. The partnership is led by Age UK Bristol and involves the commissioning of projects across the four main themes of:

1. Creating the conditions to reduce and prevent loneliness

2. Identifying and informing older people at risk of loneliness
3. Working with communities to increase the services and activities available
4. Supporting individuals to live fulfilling lives

A major theme running through BAB is to make sure that older people at risk of social isolation and loneliness have strong and vibrant communities around them which they can get support from and to which they can contribute.

To further this end, BAB committed £250,000 to its Community Kick-Start Fund (CKSF) to support the development of new activities, at a neighbourhood level, designed to reduce loneliness and social isolation. The following is an evaluation of the Bristol Ageing Better CKSF micro-funding scheme and was undertaken by a team of five Community Researchers using a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Fieldwork and analysis was conducted with the primary aim of answering five pre-determined research questions, each of which is discussed in turn in the findings and discussion sections. Additional themes were also uncovered during analysis and these are also discussed where relevant.

## BRISTOL AGEING BETTER COMMUNITY KICK-START FUND

The CKSF scheme is one of the 16 thematic

initiatives that make up the BAB programme. The CKSF ran over four years and offered £2,000 in goods and services to any charity, community group, individual, or group who needed support to commence a new project or activity, or to allow new people to access an existing activity to help reduce social isolation and loneliness in older people. Applicants to the CKSF completed a two-page application form requesting details of the proposed project, the type of activity to be funded, the amount of funding needed to set it up, and the difference the project will make in reducing social isolation and loneliness. It was important for a CKSF applicant to provide evidence that this new initiative was supported by older people and how the applicant intended ensuring their initiative continues beyond the initial CKSF funding. Successful initiatives were selected by a panel of volunteer older people, the Older Persons Commissioning Panel (OPCP), who met quarterly to review the applications.

The BAB CKSF is an example of a form of micro-funding widely used in the voluntary and community sector, but with three major distinguishing features:

1. The scheme was open to informal groups of older people, as well as formally constituted community groups. It was hoped that this would provide an opportunity for a wide range of people over 50 to propose innovative initiatives attractive to their peers.
2. Successful applications were selected by a panel of older volunteers through the BAB Older Persons Commissioning Panel, rather than by professionals
3. Funding was available for revenue funding, for example hire of room or payment for a facilitator, as well as capital goods such as food, furniture or craft materials

Applicants could apply for goods and/or services to a value of £2000 to support the proposed activity. However, under National Lottery Community Fund rules, BAB could not award cash grants, but had to directly make purchases through invoices on behalf of the applicant.

There were several principles upon which the fund was based:

- To encourage, in particular, groups of people over 50 not necessarily constituted as a charitable group to apply
- That the activity was sustainable beyond the period of funding
- That the activity was endorsed by older people themselves
- Within the over-50s demographic, specific groups would be targeted:

1. carers;
2. people who misuse drugs or alcohol;
3. people with dementia;
4. people living in care homes;
5. those who have been bereaved;
6. people with sensory loss;
7. people from LGBT communities;
8. people from BME communities

Between 2016 and 2019 there were 10 rounds of applications considered, resulting in 141 approvals, to the value of £229,332. In partnership with St Monica Trust, a further 11 projects with slightly larger grants were

supported to build upon the success of their CKSF-funded initial applications, under a scheme entitled 'Kick-Start+' (see Appendix 4 for more information on the Kick-Start+ scheme).

## BACKGROUND TO THE EVALUATION OF BAB COMMUNITY KICK-START

Micro-financed projects in the social field are rarely subject to formal evaluation and there is little published evidence of their implementation and impact. Since 2010, in Bristol the political and social environment for the voluntary sector has changed with fewer community development resources available, and a reduction of money available to support small initiatives.

In 2016 a team of volunteer Community Researchers undertook an initial evaluation of how the scheme was working during its first year. They published a report, 'Bristol Ageing Better Community Kick-Start Fund - Evaluation Report on Successful Applicants April 2017'.

In the latter part of 2017, another team of Community Researchers, with the ongoing support of UWE, undertook a second evaluation study to:

- check the reliability of some of the findings of the first study: the impact on loneliness and isolation, recommendations to improve the process, the views of applicants on the process;
- analyse the contribution which could be made by a micro-finance system to ameliorate loneliness and social isolation in older people;
- comment on the place of such a micro-

finance source within the current context of the voluntary sector in Bristol.

This study further develops research undertaken in the field of micro-finance within the voluntary sector, with recommendations about the pros and cons generally of the effective use of small grants systems, and specifically for expanding community activities for people over 50 within Bristol.

The report follows with a review of the literature about micro-finance and some of the issues about loneliness and isolation. It then describes the range of methods used for collecting the data, and the framework of research questions, before working through each question and reporting the findings. Finally, there is a discussion of the issues raised and recommendations, and where further research would be useful.

## 2. Research Context >>

### LONELINESS AND ISOLATION IN OLDER AGE

Older age has been identified as a time of increased loneliness (Qualter et al., 2015) and it has been estimated that 10% of the UK population over 65 are lonely all or most of the time (Victor 2011). As people get older, specific risk factors for loneliness become more likely such as losing a partner, retiring from work, increased physical disability and poor health of self or partner (Dykstra et al 2005, Victor et al 2005, Middling 2011). Loneliness is not simply about individual circumstances: prevalent negative social attitudes towards older people and ageist stereotypes are likely to isolate older people and exclude them from engaging in society (Abrams et al., 2009; Nash 2014).

Loneliness, however, cannot be separated from the issue of isolation. For example, SCIE's research briefing gave the following definitions:

*'Loneliness' was reported as being a subjective, negative feeling associated with loss (e.g. loss of a partner or children relocating), while 'social isolation' was described as imposed isolation from normal social networks caused by loss of mobility or deteriorating health.*

SCIE, 2011

A key message of the paper was that:

*Social isolation and loneliness impact upon individuals' quality of life and wellbeing, adversely affecting health and increasing their use of health and social care services.*

Loneliness may be experienced as social isolation whereby people may have little or no contact with other people or feel lonely because they experience a lack of intimacy and satisfying companionship in their relationships with those around them. Both social isolation and loneliness for many people is experienced as a "subjective negative feeling" (Bernard, 2013, p.3), an absence or lack in their lives. Bernard comments in her paper, "People can be socially isolated without feeling lonely, or feel lonely amongst others" (ibid.).

Whilst loneliness is a phenomenon that can be experienced by all ages, older people are particularly vulnerable for many reasons, for example, failing sight, hearing difficulties, mobility problems, bereavement, friends and family moving away or a change in financial circumstances. Loneliness and social isolation may be detrimental to a person's physical and mental wellbeing, perhaps leading to serious illness such as depression. However, in whatever form it is experienced, loneliness is often considered by many people to be a private matter and something not to be voiced or talked about. By definition, older people who are socially isolated tend to be difficult to access, making assessing the success of

activities that attempt to reduce loneliness in this age group problematic. Therefore, exploring the extent to which certain interventions have made a difference to reducing loneliness and social isolation amongst older people is difficult, and to some extent relies on individual perceptions of the outcomes and impacts.

The main research into the impact of loneliness and social isolation on our physical and mental health has been summarised by the Campaign to End Loneliness. The effects include:

- the increased likelihood of mortality (Holt-Lunstad, 2015)
- the increased risk of developing coronary heart disease (Valtorta et al., 2016)
- higher risk of the onset of disability (Lund et al., 2010)
- greater risk of cognitive decline (James et al., 2011) and developing clinical dementia (Holwerda et al., 2012)
- increased risk of depression (Cacioppo et al., 2006) and suicide (O'Connell et al., 2004)

Greater social participation and social connectedness appears to have a powerful protective effect on health.

There is also an inverse relationship in that poor physical or mental health can be a contributing factor towards limited social participation. Professor Christina Victor, School of Health and Social Care at the University of Reading, has carried out numerous studies on the relationship. People experiencing loneliness and/or social isolation are more likely to report poorer physical and/or mental health (Smith and Victor, 2019), and a study of risk factors for loneliness in later life cited poor current health and chronic mental and physical ill health (Victor et al., 2005).

A longitudinal analysis of loneliness among older people in Great Britain found improvements in physical health were linked to reduced levels of loneliness. People whose loneliness had reduced reported improvements in health status, perceived health, and/or chronic illness whilst those with worse loneliness had declining health (Victor and Bowling, 2012). The authors suggested that strategies to combat loneliness should not be confined to those aimed at enhancing social networks, but could also include those aimed at treating chronic and long term health conditions.

The Mental Health Foundation's (MHF) report 'The Lonely Society' describes the links between feelings of loneliness and increased levels of mental health problems. Their survey found that loneliness is not just a cause of mental health problems but can result in people isolating themselves further. The MHF also report on the high vulnerability of people with learning difficulties to feeling lonely.

## MICRO-FINANCE AS A ROUTE FOR LOCAL ACTION ON ISOLATION AND LONELINESS

*“Research demonstrates that older people spend more time in their immediate neighbourhood and often feel a higher degree of commitment to their neighbourhood, making the immediate locality an extremely significant influence on their wellbeing.”*

Age UK Combating Loneliness, 2016, p.11

There is wide recognition that strategies for tackling isolation and loneliness need to include action at a highly local level (Age UK,

2016). However, there is limited research on programmes that have sought to directly address isolation and loneliness through the micro-funding of small community-led groups. Nevertheless, given the close relationship between isolation, loneliness and other public policy concerns, there may be much to learn from other community focused micro-finance initiatives.

A further consideration for CKSF is that there has been little written about projects that share the same procedure for awarding funds (direct purchase rather than grant awards). A small number of articles were identified which evaluated small grant funded schemes in the health and social care field. These point to relevant factors around the effectiveness of small grants, helping to provide insights for our research questions: for example, how 'small' should small be, what factors might be relevant for a successful small grant scheme, and how far is the CKSF a model for future funding in this field?

In this review we adopted the term 'micro-finance' in its broadest sense, although the CKSF is not technically a 'micro-grant' scheme. Nevertheless, most definitions of micro-grants broadly characterise the main features of micro-finance, for example:

*“Micro-grants are a mechanism for providing funding through subsidies to community organizations or groups to encourage public participation in initiatives that have social goals”*

Johnson et al., 2006

There is no clear consensus on the monetary parameters for a micro-finance scheme. Most of the articles reviewed had a grant maximum of more than £2000 (Johnson et al., 2007: US\$40,000; Lottery Awards for all England:

£10,000; Schmidt et al., 2009: EU 3500; Meuncherburger et al., 2016 AUS\$10,000). Micro-finance schemes in middle- and low-income countries operate at considerably lower value, for example US\$50-100 per person in two schemes in Africa (Van Rooyen et al., 2012). These are often directed at individuals, in contrast to schemes - such as CKSF - that fund group initiatives. The institutional view gleaned from these articles (both by the National Lottery in the UK and abroad) is that these larger sums are nevertheless seen as 'micro-finance', which places the CKSF project at the lower end of the micro-finance spectrum.

## THE RATIONALE BEHIND MICRO-FINANCE SCHEMES

In the UK, the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) has had extensive experience in directly delivering - or sponsoring other agencies - to deliver micro-finance schemes. A review of NLCF work by the Policy Studies Institute summarised the rationale of such initiatives in terms of "Channelling funds to the local community complements Government recognition of community based groups/ organisations as being better placed to identify local needs, deliver flexible services and engage with vulnerable and hard to reach groups" (Smeaton et al., 2009).

Other studies point towards additional benefits. Small grants can provide the stimulus or catalyst to do something and raise an issue for public awareness (Schmidt et al., 2009, p238-9), risks can be taken in designing appropriate interventions (Schmidt et al. 2009, p240, Hartwig et al. 2006, p.96, Hartwig et al., 2009, p.32) and there is flexibility to "tweak" schemes throughout the project life (Johnson et al., 2006, p.303). However, it is suggested that how far meeting local needs is successful might depend on how loosely the funding criteria are defined (Hartwig et al., 2009 p.96).



Small grant schemes tend not to provide money for revenue, i.e. staff or running costs, hence they are seen as a way of extending the monetary grant value through the use of volunteers and payments 'in kind' (Hartwig et al., 2006, p.94,95; Bobbit-Cooke, 2005, p5). One project quantified this investment as 200% over the grant monetary value (Bobbit-Clarke, 2005, p.5). Another example from the UK suggests an even higher rate of return:

*“Gloucestershire Village and Community Agents, a scheme to identify the most lonely and isolated resulted in savings to Gloucestershire health and social services totalling £1.2 million, with every £1 that the scheme cost, the return on investments is calculated to be £3.10.”*

Age UK, 2016, p.7

Such social investment can also have positive unintended consequences: one project aimed at promoting physical activity to secondary school students found that their behaviour also improved (Hartwig et al., 2006, p. 95). Apart from such positive spin-offs for beneficiaries of those participating in the granted projects, a more strategic consequence of small grant schemes may be capacity building of a non-profitmaking sector. This fits with the National Lottery Community Fund's concern about the vulnerability of small-scale organisations in the voluntary sector:

*“There is a perception however that funding is diminishing, reflecting the economic downturn. Concerns have been raised that large, well-resourced organisations will survive at the expense of smaller organisations in a more competitive funding environment.”*

*[NLCF] therefore has an important role to play in preserving diversity in the Voluntary Community Sector, and ensuring that smaller, less experienced and volunteer-only organisations continue to receive the support they need.”*

Smeaton et al., 2009 p.8

Micro-finance initiatives often focus on initiating, innovating and bringing together new forms of community action. This emphasis is reflected in choice of terms such as 'seed money', 'seed corn', or 'pump-priming' to describe schemes. This is one aspect of capacity building, but further research of the Lottery Awards for All (A4A) grants scheme found that recipients had an alternative perspective:

*“Focus group participants requested that A4A should provide some way of showing that “not achieving your objectives” was not always failure: “if you're starting a charity and it isn't the right direction, you may have done a good job but now need to try something else”. This was seen as important to maintain what they saw as the piloting, experimental nature of A4A.”*

Awards for All Evaluation 2013, p. 21

Capacity-building is also about engaging with hitherto unknown organisations (Johnson et al., 2006 p.168), which can be a basis for developing a network of organisations to engage corroboratively with each other and the statutory services for future policy making and implementation (Schmidt et al., 2009 p.239). The whole process of applying for a grant can develop capacity-building skills: The National Lottery recognises that small grants can be a

stepping stone for more growth within a sector:

*“...small grants enable (mainly) small, community based, groups to build capacity on filling in a grant application, and then managing, monitoring and completing a project. Through this experience, it was felt the group would be in a better position to coordinate a new funding venture, plus a previous success would make the group more attractive to other funding agencies.”*

Smeaton et al., 2009, p.2

However later research on Awards for All has urged caution, given that some organisations just want stability once they have proved their model is successful:

*“Evidence suggests that groups are likely to apply for further funding, but not necessarily for larger grants. Many groups that apply for A4A want to sustain themselves rather than grow. A4A should be seen as a “travellator” not an escalator.”*

Awards for All Evaluation, 2013, p.27

However, capacity building is also about informative feedback given to failed applicants from the grant-giving body, so they can learn from their mistakes or misunderstandings (Awards for All Evaluation, 2013, p.18).

## CHARACTERISTICS OF WELL-DELIVERED SCHEMES

The literature suggests that for small grants to have positive outcomes, the grant-giving process is more than adjudicating on who

should receive the money: *The availability of grants is supportive but not sufficient* (Schmidt et al., 2009, p.241). Many of the evaluations had recommendations for enhancements to the process or changes to improve effectiveness. These included:

- the grant giving body to be local (Johnson, et al., 2006, p.167) and thus felt to be more accessible by small groups
- consideration as to whether twelve months (a common time limit on small grants) is realistic given that the set up periods for inexperienced groups can be lengthy
- the grant-giving body to offer grant writing skills workshops, provide networking opportunities to discuss progress, publish examples of previously successful applications as models (Johnson, et al., 2006, p.168), and develop administrative practices which are understood by the recipient and relevant to the implementation of their project (Johnson et al., 2006, p.168; Bobbitt-Clarke, 2005, p.5). 50% of small grant applicants to NLCF sought help with completing the application, 20% from NLCF itself (Smeaton et al., 2006, p.4) and
- qualitative data showed that grant-holders most valued personalised support and having a named contact at NLCF throughout the application process.

Therefore, if capacity building is seen as a *raison d'être* for a small grant scheme offering a large number of awards, and the process itself is of value, then there will be high administrative costs to underpin the support required by applicants (Awards for All Evaluation, 2013, p.29).

There is also the issue of sustainability and how far volunteers alone can take a project.

The NLCF evaluation found that organisations felt that paid staff could make a big difference e.g. recruiting and supporting volunteers, keeping project delivery on track (Smeaton et al., 2006, p.6). This raised the question about including running costs within the grant criteria. The NLCF evaluation also found that recipients wanted signposting to other sources of grants for follow-on funding (Awards for All evaluation, 2013, p.23,25).

## ISSUES FOR EVALUATION

Many of the studies thought that a small grant scheme had achieved successful outcomes within their own fields. However, the literature is also critical of the degree of evaluation which can be expected from small grant recipients. Small scale projects are unlikely to show measurable positive outcomes (Hartwig et al., 2009, p.32), partly because the target group is often too small to evaluate effectively, or because project duration is only one year and therefore not long enough to fully assess outcomes (Awards for All evaluation, 2013, p.21). One study suggested that data about recipients in the projects should be collected as well as organisational information to provide a more thorough evaluation, but probably with the support of academics (Carprechione, et al., 2010, p.643). Another study, carried out in the 1980s and '90s, found virtually no difference between communities which had a microgrant-financed intervention and those which did not (Wagner et al., 2000, p.584), despite a model based on randomised allocation, control groups, extensive surveying and a four-year follow-up. Methodological limitations were acknowledged, but concluded that more theory needed to be developed to explain:

*“... how interventions will reach the bulk of the target population in sufficient “dosage” to be detectable among*

*randomly sampled residents of a community, since the “study population” will include many individuals who have no exposure to program elements...”*

Wagner et al., 2000, p.586

A later study suggested a clear distinction between when to use small and large grants: small grants are appropriate to promote and document innovations whereas where a high level impact is sought for a targeted issue e.g. a specific disease category, then a larger grant is required (Hartwig et al., 2009, p.33).



# 3. Methods >>

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the early planning stages of the evaluation, key research questions were identified by the CRs and in partnership with colleagues at the University of the West of England, and these can be seen in Table 1 below. Fieldwork and data collection was planned and conducted with a view to best answering these questions, and - once completed - the questions were divided up between the CRs who analysed the findings in order to address each one in detail.

**Table 1. The five research questions**

Research question
1. To what extent do CKSF awards make a difference to: a) isolation and loneliness among older people? b) the influence older people have on decisions in their local area, and how services are designed? c) the contribution older people make to their community?
2. What other outcomes do the CKSF awards contribute towards?
3. How do CKSF awards contribute to these outcomes?
4. To what extent does the CKSF scheme support wider BAB-linked activities?
5. What are the key costs and benefits of some elements of the CKSF scheme?

The evaluation adopted a mixed-methods approach, and these methods are summarised in Table 3 across the page. The aim was to evaluate the impact of the CKSF as a micro-finance system from the perspective of different players: the successful recipient

organisations themselves, the project officer, BAB management, the Older Persons Commissioning Panel members, community development workers in the city, and the major organisations that provide advice on fundraising, and/or provide grants themselves.

**Table 3. Overview of methods**

Research tool	When	Purpose
<b>Quantitative</b>		
CKSF statistics collected by BAB <sup>1</sup>	End of research period	Activity data about CKSF applicants, geographical spread, goods and/or services
Common Measurement Framework (CMF) questionnaires (loneliness scales) collected by CKSF organisations <sup>2</sup>	End of research period	To establish whether CKSF activities were targeting lonely and isolated people
Email survey of successful recipients during last year of fund allocation after the interviews (see below) (n=21)	End of research period	To get feedback from additional successful applicants in order to further support the qualitative findings
<b>Qualitative</b>		
Face-to-face interviews: successful CKSF applicants (n=15)	Beginning of research period	To provide picture of activity, positives and negative of the activity, application process, views on a future micro-finance system
Face-to-face interviews: BAB staff (n=2)	Middle of research period	To understand the process from BAB's perspective, expected and unexpected outcomes
Face-to-face interview: Quartet Foundation (n=1)	End of research period	To understand the grant-giving environment in Bristol, views on a future micro-finance system
Face-to-face interviews: Voscur (n=1)	End of research period	To understand the grant-giving environment in Bristol, views on a future micro-finance system
Group interview: Older Persons Commissioning Panel members (n=4)	End of research period	To understand their role, their perspective, as volunteers, of the CKSF system and process, expected and unexpected outcomes
Observation study of 2 x CKSF Older Persons Commissioning Panel meetings	Penultimate and final meetings	To understand the process for deciding which applicant would be successful, and the volunteers' role

Informal feedback from each of the BAB community development projects <sup>3</sup>	End of research period	Feedback about peers' observations of the impact of the BAB-funded community development projects on number and type of applicants
Case studies provided by the applicant organisations (based on a template designed by BAB), the BAB website, and by CRs (n=4)	Throughout the research period	To provide "pen pictures" of the impact of a small grant on participants

## INTERVIEWS

An interview schedule was prepared for each type of interview and sent to participants in advance. This was to keep interview time to a minimum and facilitate considered responses to the questions. However, the interview itself was informal and the schedule was used primarily as a guide to ensure effective interview flow and sufficient data capture. All interviews were audio recorded, and the interview with The Quartet Foundation was professionally transcribed.

The CRs initially selected 15 successful applicants and the senior management of BAB modified the list to broaden the diversity of projects, ensure that some groups were not being "over-interviewed" by other parts of

BAB, and to avoid those projects which were late in submitting their evaluation data. The groups operated between late 2016 and the end of 2018. In addition, the CRs undertook interviews with four members of the Older Persons Commissioning Panel using an adapted set of questions.

The interviews were based on a questionnaire of sixteen questions drawn up by four community researchers (see Appendix 2). The questions were designed as far as possible to discover the difference CKSF funding made to reducing social isolation and loneliness. The interview schedule was piloted beforehand to provide consistency across the sample.

The researchers who carried out the interviews transcribed the recordings, either selectively or in some cases verbatim. The researchers

used a coding method to analyse the data, which involved the interviewer reading all the transcribed interviews carefully and selecting the most significant words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs. The selected data was labelled and grouped together to form categories or themes. The themes were then ranked according to their importance in answering the research question.

## CASE STUDIES

Organisations were requested by BAB to supply case studies as part of the monitoring information. Some case studies were written by the organisations themselves. The CRs also researched four, and two were taken from case studies on the BAB website. We used these to help us build upon the findings from our other research.

## EMAIL SURVEY

An email survey was circulated to successful award recipients during the last year of fund allocation. Survey questions were based on those asked of other successful recipients during the qualitative interview stage, and on the learning from other research areas throughout the project. The survey was designed using Qualtrics Online Survey Software and consisted of 17 questions, 11 of which were multiple choice, 5 'free text' answers, and 1 Likert scale. Recipients were selected on the basis that they were known by the CKSF Project Officer at BAB to have successfully applied for and received CKSF funding. The survey was circulated to these organisations for completion via an online link that was sent via email. The response rate was reasonable relative to the sample size, with 22 of 95 organisations completing the survey - a response rate of 23% (although in some cases respondents did not answer every question).

The purpose of the survey was to support the other findings of the evaluation, and therefore the response rate was adequate given the intended purpose.

## ETHICAL ISSUES

Participants were provided with a UWE Bristol information sheet explaining the reason for the research and that participation was entirely voluntary. For interviews, two copies of a consent form agreeing to be audio recorded were signed by interviewees. One copy of the signed consent form was kept by an interviewee and one copy for the records of UWE Bristol. The consent form (see Appendix 1) also pointed out that direct quotes may be used anonymously, and that an interviewee could withdraw at any time and up to one month after the interview without giving a reason. The research has obtained ethical approval from UWE's Health and Applied Sciences Ethics Committee.

Footnotes: **1** The BAB Project Officer maintained spreadsheets of applicants' details for both the CKSF and Kick-Start+ about application outcome, geographical spread, type of organisation, target numbers of participants, activity length, and information on targeted engagement with communities of interest as part of her role

**2** The CMF questionnaire was designed by ECORYS as part of the National Lottery Community Fund Ageing Better project and completion is a condition for the project funding. During their initial involvement, participants are given information about 2 CMF questionnaires which they are asked to self-complete and return. One is designed to capture demographic information, the other to provide baseline measurements of loneliness, social contact and participation, mental wellbeing and level of health.

**3** The CKSF community researcher group specifically asked their peers, who were evaluating the community development projects funded by BAB, informally to feed back on the impact on the CKSF project. Mostly the community workers were specifically asked about their knowledge of the CKSF and any help or information they had provided to potential applicants.

# 4. Findings >>

Once the fieldwork and data collection was completed the research team divided into pairs or worked alone on analysing the findings in order to address each of the five research questions in turn. After providing a summary of the delivery of CKSF, the findings for each question and subsequent discussion are included here as discrete sections which have been written up by each researcher or research team.

## Overview of the delivery and implementation of the Community Kick-Start Fund

Kick Start funded activities across Bristol

-  Focus on carers
-  Focus on BAME
-  Focus on dementia
-  Focus on care homes
-  Focus on sensory impairment
-  No target focus

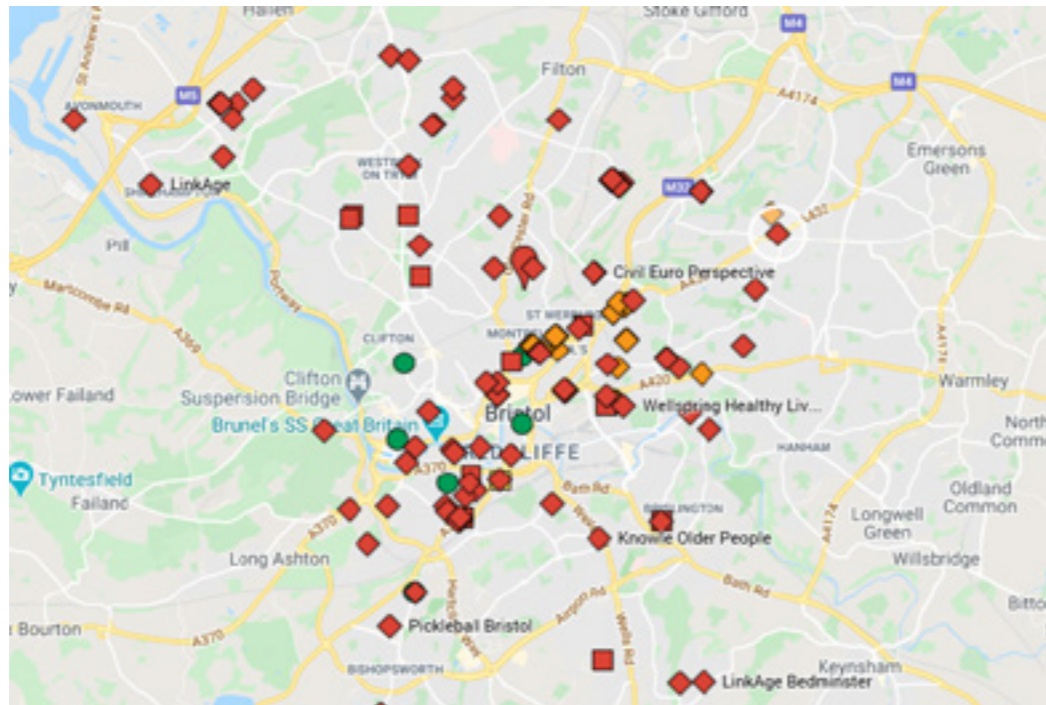


Chart 1 summarises the number of applications for each funding round. It shows that there was a total of 221 applications, of which 141 were successful.

Chart 1: Number of successful applications by CSKF funding round

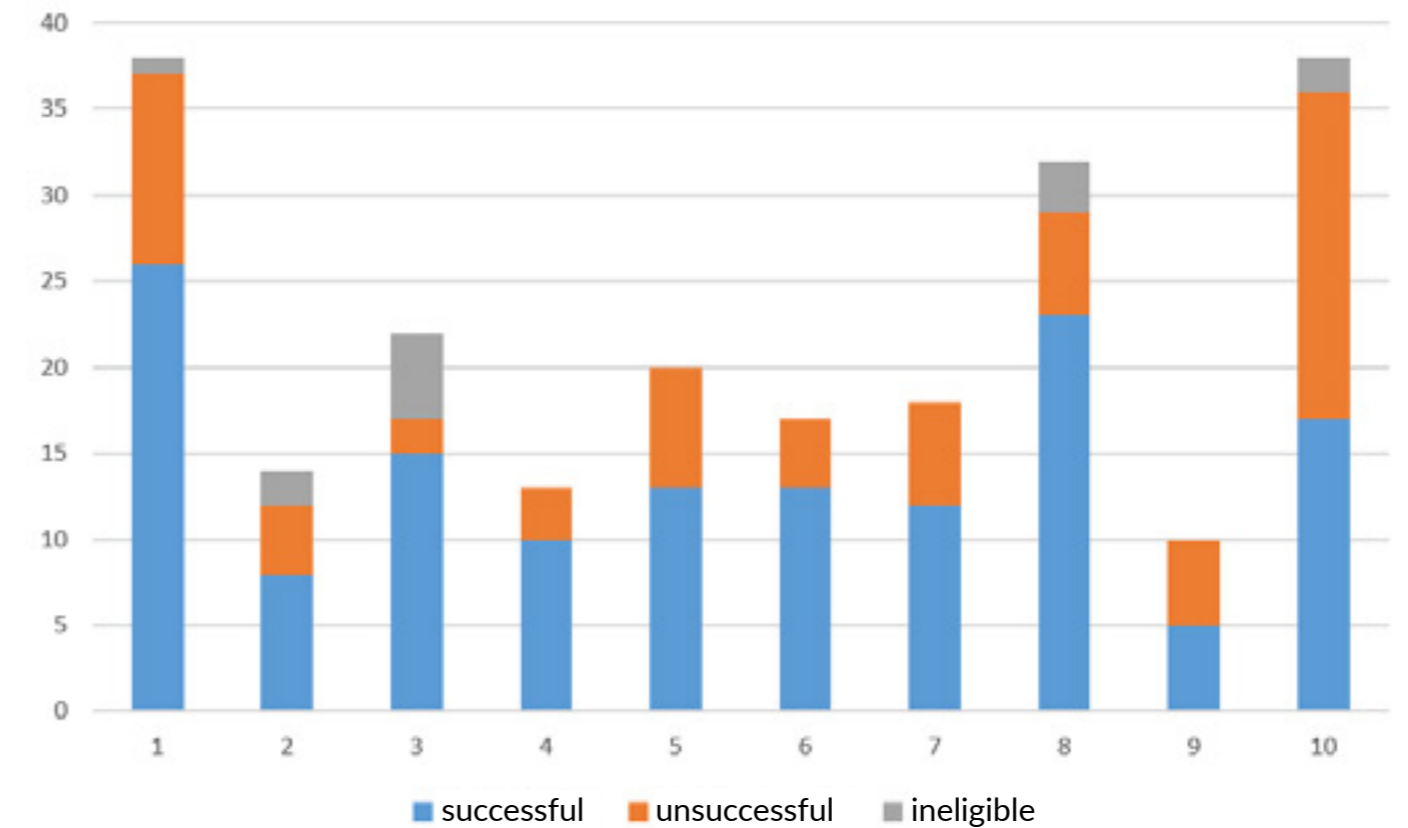


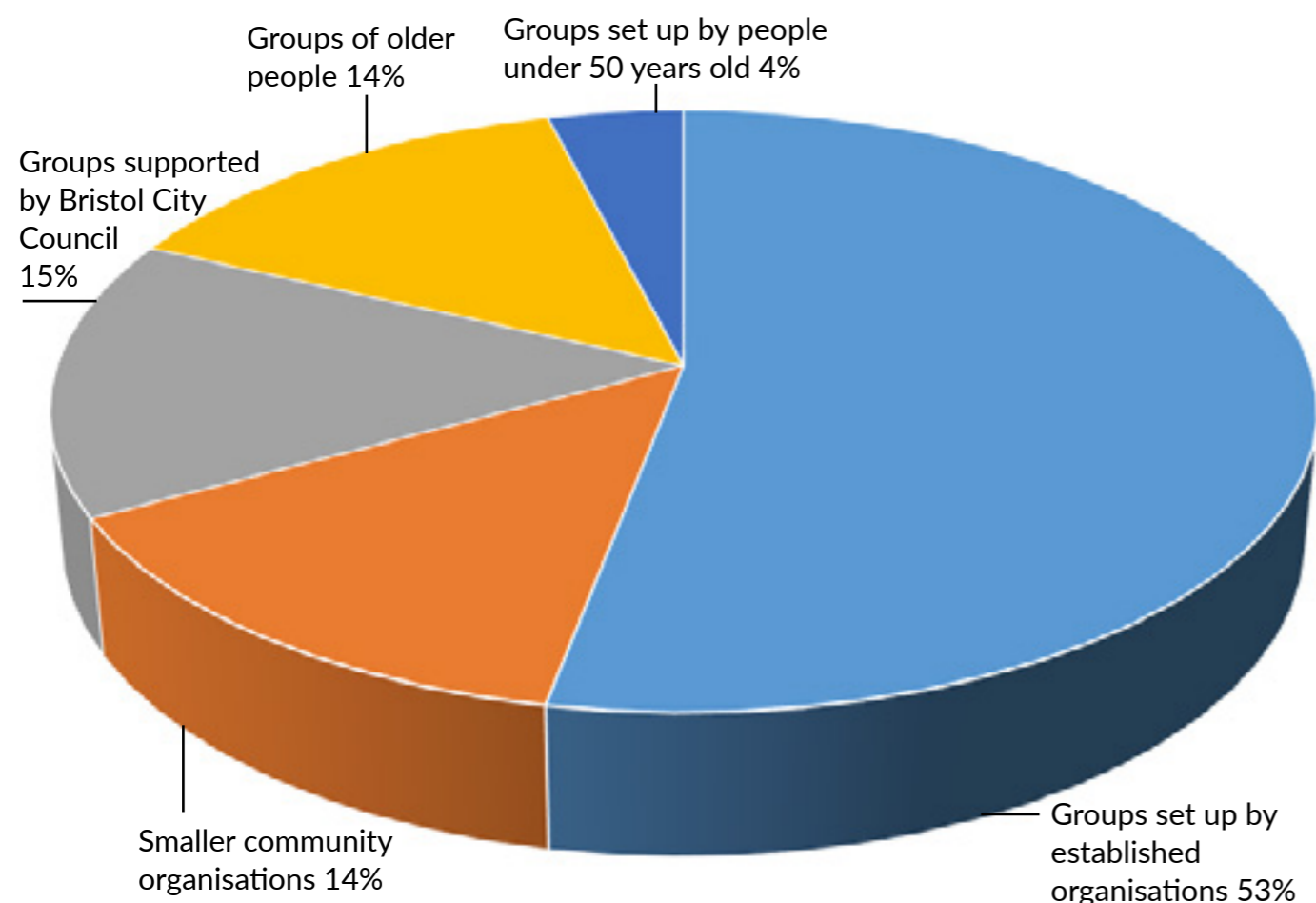
Table 2 shows that the bulk of the funding was committed in the first two years of the active delivery of the project.

Table 2: Allocation of CKSF Funds by calendar year

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
-	£78,900	£77,600	£47,800	£25,000

Chart 2 shows that the CKSF award holders were a range of types of organisations in terms of their scale and governance.

**Chart 2: Types of CKSF award holders**



Information provided by the BAB team shows that the CKSF has been used to support a wide range of projects. While some applications were entirely for goods, others were more service-based or combined both goods and services. Table 4 provides an illustrative list of types of projects.

**Table 4: What gets funded? A summary of types of initiatives funded through CKSF, as outlined in the Bristol Ageing Better CKSF: Evaluation Report on Successful Applicants – April 2017, p.18**

Practical English course for older Asian women including talks by the Fire Service, Police and Ambulance services about how to communicate in emergency situations
Memory Cafe enabling older residents to share their memories of their neighbourhood
Therapeutic poetry, creative writing and visual art group for a small group of older people culminating in a performance at a care home
Set up and initial six months' funding for a community cinema
Orthopaedic chairs to allow very frail people to attend an elders' group at a community hall
Training and studio time to begin a Bengali elders' radio show
Enhanced activity provision for a community group, including sewing machines and kitchen equipment
A year-long programme of craft sessions for older people, using donated materials
Weekly community choir for care home residents and wider community, including events with local primary schools
New Age Kurling class: a team game suitable for all ability and mobility levels

We have a limited impression of the demographic characteristics of participants, based on 126 who completed registration forms. These records show that 81% were female, 22% were from BAME groups, 45% were living alone, 45% stated that they had a disability, and 23% had carer responsibilities. They had an age range of 50–92, and the average age of participants was 72 years. However, it should be noted that these respondents only reflect a minority of those taking part in CKSF projects.

The number of participants completing both the baseline and follow-up BAB programme CMF questionnaire was a maximum of 27 (some individuals did not respond to all questions). This is a rather small number upon which to make reliable judgements on the areas of change measured. Nevertheless, the results indicate positive changes for:

- Reduced social isolation (UCLA loneliness scale).<sup>1</sup> Baseline=5.09. Follow-up=4.39,

Footnote: <sup>1</sup> See Russell, Peplau and Cutrona, 1980

n=23, p=0.01)

- Involvement in the development of activities ('Co-design measure'. Baseline=2.45. Follow-up=3.18, n=22, p=0.001)
- Social participation in group activities ('Social measure'. Baseline=2.42. Follow-up=2.92, n=25, p=0.004)<sup>2</sup>

## RESEARCH QUESTION ONE: TO WHAT EXTENT DO COMMUNITY KICK-START FUND AWARDS MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO ISOLATION AND LONELINESS AMONG OLDER PEOPLE? .....

The sample of 15 organisations interviewed on a face-to-face basis covered a wide range of group activities and are partially representative of all of the organisations grant-aided by the CKSF (see Appendix 1A for list of activities covered by the sample group). Not only does such a diversity provide opportunities for many people to find something that they might be interested in, it also helps reduce and prevent loneliness and isolation as well as providing additional benefits that are positive for health and wellbeing. Older people are heterogeneous with a vast amount of life skills and experience and even this small sample indicates the range of activity which micro-financing like the CKSF can generate.

For people looking to participate in a group activity to help ameliorate loneliness and isolation, as opposed to wanting a befriending scheme, the CKSF encouraged an expansion of opportunities.

Furthermore, group activities have an additional effect that is positive for health and wellbeing, as referenced in the literature, and thus indirectly providing a possible amelioration of loneliness and isolation:

- the companionship of sharing a common activity e.g. art, crafts, walking
- the opportunity of conversation while sharing a cup of tea and cake e.g. friendship groups

Footnote: <sup>2</sup> Note that a P value of <0.05 indicates statistical significance and that the outcome is unlikely to be down to chance.

- exercise groups (such as dancing and rowing) which along with the socialising experience of doing something together, contributes to physical health and mobility, which itself can be a barrier to addressing loneliness. In organisation D one member “has become much more communicative – both in approaching people and also in offering opinions during conversations during the walks”
- for people with cognitive impairment, including dementia, being with others in a small group can be a joyful experience at the time, as well as contributing to maintaining daily living and social skills. For example in organisation C, group members would interact with each other when looking at their handiwork, which normally they would not do but they had a common experience to initiate the conversation.

This sample also provides some evidence that small group activities can attract the target audience of lonely and isolated people over 50 (see Appendix 1 B). These small groups are informal and so there was no requirement to record how many attendees were lonely and isolated when they first came but the organisers estimated that between 40-75% were in fact isolated and gave examples:

- organisation B said that some patients had no visitors and did not want to be discharged home
- 50% of participants at organisation N were bereaved and one had no-one to be an emergency contact. In organisation O, for one person it was the only time the person met other people
- for organisation J, language barriers and cultural reasons prevented many participants from leaving their house before they joined the group

However, some organisations struggled with identifying lonely people. Smaller, volunteer-led groups sometimes lacked the resources to advertise, or otherwise reach-out. Other award holders received help from a larger organisation (such as LinkAge Network), or ‘snowballed’ by recruiting through a previously held group activity (these tended to be the bigger organisations).

A third finding was that attending an activity had an impact on the individual forming relationships outside the group. Organisations were not asked to document how far participants made friendships that endured outside the activity but organisers made the following observations:

- In organisation D “one person attends every week and walking has become ‘part of her life’. So much so that she is now taking part in walks with other groups and has started to enjoy meeting people”.

- In organisation D the activity had become a hub for making arrangements for coffee/lunch/show/visiting each other’s homes.

Another finding was that the scheme provided opportunities for older people to make a contribution to their community. Although over half of the organisations did not use volunteers, those which did recruited 46 volunteers, many of whom were over 50, with a total of over 750 hours of volunteering time (See Appendix 1B).

If “success” is defined by the attendances during the funding period, these were successful (well over 500 people). The reasons why may lie in the finding that words like the importance of “self-esteem” and “self-confidence”, “informality”, and “safe place” keep recurring in the interviews. Considerable thought had gone into the preparation and execution of these activities, and there was some evidence that some of the organisers had

subsidised some of the activities where the budget was insufficient or had put in additional work voluntarily outside the activity time to ensure that they worked well.

## EXAMPLES OF WAYS IN WHICH COMMUNITY KICK-START FUND GROUPS MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO ISOLATION AND LONELINESS IN OLDER PEOPLE

### Creating a welcoming environment

To enable a sense of wellbeing, to increase social contact and confidence, and to encourage older people to become involved in their local community, the environment and ethos in which a CKSF funded activity takes place is very important. Some of the organisers interviewed specifically mentioned the importance of creating a space where people feel safe and comfortable. For example, a friendship group commented that their group provided a “comfortable, safe space to meet, talk, discuss and undertake specific activities” and another group stressed having a “comfortable and safe environment.” A CKSF funded project in a local hospital enabled people with cognitive impairments to have a quiet space with a television, books, and games to be used by patients as a space to take visitors, as well as to engage in one-to-one activities with ward volunteers. By providing a quiet space, patients could relax and retain the social and daily living skills that they had before they were admitted to the hospital.

Providing a safe comfortable space to undertake an activity was particularly crucial for those living with dementia. The aim of the organisers of a memory café was “to create a safe and recognisable environment for older people feeling insecure because of memory loss.” The organisers laid out their hall as a ‘classical’ coffee/tea shop; with round tables, new comfortable chairs, lace table-cloths, ‘proper’ china and cake stands and table

decorations. A carer who brought her mother, who at the time was finding it increasingly difficult to engage in conversation, to the café remarked that her mother was much more responsive and enjoyed attending on a regular basis. Creating this kind of safe and comfortable environment has the added benefit of gaining the trust of carers, enabling them to confidently leave their client/partner at the café and have a couple of hours of free personal time. In addition, a CKSF funded activity arranged specialists from a community farm to bring a little of the farm in the form of eggs, wool, sausages and plants into a residential care home. These visual aids enabled the specialist from the farm to talk about life on the land and stimulate memories and conversation. Residents were able to come into the activity and leave as they wished. This led to fluctuating numbers of between ten and twenty-five persons attending the sessions. One lady who was not usually communicative discussed her memories of her grandparents’ farm, and the visits helped her become more open to other members of the community. It is from such observations, and the perceptions of the carers, families, and staff, that an opinion can be formed about whether an activity makes a difference.

A welcoming, relaxed, informal, non-threatening atmosphere created the conditions whereby participants of a CKSF funded activity could feel sufficiently secure and engaged to converse with others. This lessens the effects of social isolation on the attendees of the activity, their families, and carers. A few organisers specifically mentioned that they endeavoured to ensure their activity took place in a non-judgmental environment and without people being stigmatised in any way.

An open and informal approach was adopted by the organisers of a CKSF funded activity to undertake specific leisure pursuits accompanied by tea/coffee and cakes. They provided a

welcoming environment where people find it easy to come in and do not find it threatening. This approach enabled attendees to recognise their friends immediately when they arrived. The community researcher who interviewed the director of this organisation commented, “participants were older people, some with dementia and some accompanied by carers but no older person was excluded...The friendship and obvious pleasure of meeting together on a continuing basis well after the ending of the CKSF funds is a testimony to the success of the original project.”

Some of the interviews involved CKSF funded projects centred on physical activities such as ballet, walking, rowing and dance. The ballet tutor who was also the organiser of the activity commented that all participants are treated alike and everyone works together.

All the interviewees of the CKSF funded activities interviewed appear to do their utmost to ensure they provide a supportive, relaxed, welcoming, safe, comfortable environment and ethos. By so doing they encourage the participants in their activities to have social interaction with each other, make friends, engage with the organisers and enjoy themselves. Therefore, making a difference to the extent of any social isolation and loneliness the participants might experience.

### Catering for different abilities and capabilities

Some older people engaged in CKSF funded activities present with a wide range of health problems, whilst others are extremely fit and healthy. This necessitates that organisers and tutors are flexible to meet the needs of the range of abilities and capabilities of participants. This point was made by the organisers of the ballet and dance groups interviewed as they both remarked on the need to constantly adapt their sessions to what people can do and as far as possible

accommodate everyone’s abilities. This approach also took into account people’s changing abilities and needs and meant that participants could continue to enjoy the benefits of CKSF activities and enjoy social contact despite changing health or mobility problems. The dance tutor interviewed considered that adapting to individual needs and thus accommodating everyone’s abilities did not limit anyone and helped ensure that participants could safely engage in an activity. In the same way, organisers of other groups that include physical and social activities endeavoured to ensure that what they were offering was within the capacity of the participants.

However, this approach can cause difficulties and a volte-face on the part of organisers as demonstrated by the games café leaders who found they had not anticipated the level of vulnerable members of the community coming along to their activity. Whilst they were happy to accommodate the needs of the participants so that they could attend the café, the organisers did not have the means to offer the type of support that some people needed. Nevertheless, instead of seeing this as a negative the organisers’ viewed it as a challenge to try and help their isolated and vulnerable members of the community. In addition, the games café was in a good position to signpost people on to other agencies who may be able to offer more help. The approach taken by a choir was to make its activity appropriate to a wide range of people in the community by not requiring an audition. For one group it was commented that people enjoyed getting out to see different places as so many of the older members of their community have some form of physical disability and only rarely leave their homes.



### Catering for a range of ages and intergenerational activities

Not all the activities were solely attended by older people. A rowing group used young trainees to help deliver rowing for the over 50s and the intergenerational aspect of the funded activity worked better than expected. Whilst many of the people who came along to the games café were over the age of 50, the activity also attracted people to come in with families. The walkers group were from the older range of 60s to 80s and the dance group ages ranged from 69 to 83.

### Increasing confidence

Some organisers reported increased communication amongst participants, both in approaching people and also in offering opinions during conversations. It was observed that people start an activity thinking that they can't do too much because they may have physical and degenerative problems, but with some encouragement they can achieve more than expected. This was certainly the case with a Parkinson's dance group:

*“When somebody finds a flyer that says “dance with Parkinson’s” people would often think I can’t dance, I can’t do that, particularly with a condition like Parkinson’s. So that’s why we went out and did some demonstrations, but I think there needs to be more of that to help people feel more comfortable about coming.”*

Group leader



## CASE STUDY: DOWN ON THE FARM

### Lawrence Weston Community Farm comes to Blaise Weston Court Residential Home

The lounge at Blaise Weston Court Residential Home was busy early that Wednesday in March 2018. Everyone had heard about the visit by some of the more able residents of the Home to Lawrence Weston Community Farm for a day out. Now the farm was coming to them.

*“I can’t get about so easily now, dear, so it’s a lovely idea for them to come to us! I remember when the farm started back in the 1980s; I used to go there quite a lot.”*

The lounge was just the right place for the meeting; there was plenty of room and everyone used it at some time in the day and knew their way to and from their own rooms.

Over the next ten months, a team from the Farm came one day each month loaded with goodies! They met up with everyone interested, sometimes 10 but at others up to 25. Nevertheless, this was not a lecture! Kelly and Helen from the Farm chatted about what was going on and passed around the things they had brought; eggs, wool, sausages, seedlings and plants. In addition, they had many photos of farm activities on a tablet; the first time many of the residents had touched such an IT device. This started a discussion about life and work on the land when the residents were younger and more active.

Most of the residents had grown up in the area in houses with allotments or smallholdings and in their school holidays had worked on local farms. They surprised

their visitors with vivid memories of their experiences and willingly shared them in the group. This helped them remember some of the good times in their lives and diverted them from their day-to-day problems of illnesses and disability.

Kerry, the team leader from the Farm, said:

*“We had many wonderful conversations about participants’ lives and childhoods. There were memories of growing and cooking food, helping with livestock and scrumping for apples and medlars. We made sure everyone was able to take part - weaving some wool, making lavender pillow cushions and tasting farm produced honey”.*

One lady in her late 70s who is severely physically disabled tends to spend a lot of time talking about her own problems. Listening to the farm discussion stimulated her to discuss some of the better times of her life – particularly memories of her grandparents’ farm. As a result, she has become more open with other members of the community.

In the same way, an elderly man who has dementia is normally very introverted and does not communicate much with the other residents. Listening to the discussion started him talking about the animals that his family had kept on their smallholding.

Overall, everyone had a good time - residents, staff and the team from the farm! Moreover, this good feeling lasted into the following days and it would not be long until the team from the farm would be back again.

## RESEARCH QUESTION TWO: WHAT OTHER OUTCOMES DO THE COMMUNITY KICK-START FUND AWARDS CONTRIBUTE TO?

The CKSF awards contributed to a suite of positive qualities that can be associated with an increase in the skills and attitudes of the group organisers, the specialist service providers, the participants themselves and their carers/ helpers. They can be aggregated under four headings.

### Opportunities for the development of supervisory and pedagogic skills

The opportunity to develop new initiatives generated new thinking and helped increase the competencies of instructors and group organisers. They acquired new skills and approaches to teaching through the development and refining of the processes of interacting with older people. When dealing with the transfer and sharing of knowledge they reported that they needed to be much less structured in their presentations and approaches so that they created an environment where the audience could contribute from their personal experiences. This was needed from the outset of any interaction and needed to accept that responses would come in a spontaneous way (organisation I).

Right from the start of the different activities, the organisers realised that there were a number of participants with additional mental or physical needs within the group, which meant adapting activities accordingly. As such it was not always appropriate to manage the group in the style of a class but more as a gathering with the inclusion of guided conversation where individuals opted in and out to suit their specific needs and abilities.

This approach led to a greater involvement of members of the group as it gave an opportunity for spontaneous participation. On occasions, this involvement led to contributions towards the arrangements for the session e.g. individual members organising the seating at the venue (organisation G).

Instructors realised the need to prepare presentations that were not only clear and precise but also innovative after their experiences of working with older people. These different approaches meant that a variety of styles needed to be mentally prepared so that the instructor could switch if one model did not fit the group on that specific occasion. The core reason given for these mental gymnastics was to ensure that all activities were participant led (organisation O).

Important knowledge on the local environment was acquired from working with older people. The comments and experiences of different members of the group uncovered a great deal of knowledge and memories of forgotten skills. This learning needed to be captured and recorded so that it could be ‘remixed’ for other audiences (organisation I).

A number of the group managers, especially those working with smaller groups and those experiencing project supervision for the first time, considered that there were advantages in BAB undertaking all purchases and payments (organisations D and G). This eliminated any opportunity for disagreements within the group on the handling of the finances and allowed the managers to focus on providing a motivational and considerate service.

### Competencies of group organisers enriched

During the preparation of their activities, organisers often became aware of similar events that were already running or being planned in other parts of the city. This

information originated from their own enquiries directly with other groups or through contact with full-time Community Development workers from larger organisations (for example Bristol City Council, LinkAge Network and Bristol Charities). This increased awareness and often enhanced contact with others working in the same geographic or topic area. It also led to the development of informal networks between managers of the different groups, occasionally with more formal linkages with specialists providing inputs to the groups. Organisers were able to 'swap' movable assets (indoor games and equipment) and compare notes.

For smaller groups, the award of the CKSF grant took the financial pressure off the management group. For example, they didn't need to worry about the money for the next month's rent and could use their energies to plan for the future: for example, to undertake local research of suitable suppliers (e.g. Fareshare); build a repertoire of internal skills such as the use of focus groups to identify needs and the use of taster sessions to confirm grassroots practical needs.

The security of the availability of funds encouraged the sharing of information with similar groups which in turn helped to minimise any conflict with the timing and content of activities of other similar groups.

The confidence generated by achieving a successful application to BAB encouraged organisers of small groups to apply to other funders.

### **Broadening of relationships between participants in the groups**

CKSF funded group activities assisted in creating a 'hub' from which social interaction between individuals expanded outside the specific funded activity. By being brought together physically, opportunities for

communication increased, developed and matured, firstly into casual acquaintances and sometimes into friendships. This increase in communication occurred not only in projects where the participants travelled from their individual homes to share in regular social interaction but also appeared to increase the interaction of individuals who lived under the same roof within a care home environment (organisations D and I, respectively).

The increase in social interaction sometimes inspired an increase in mobility through building confidence to attend activities outside the immediate area i.e. in other parts of the city and by the initiation of deeper social interaction extended to visiting each other's homes. Small groups organised additional meetings to those arranged through CKSF; these included coffee mornings, lunches and dinner parties, attendance at public events and shows (organisation G).

In addition, the increase in social contact encouraged the likelihood of the development of internal, informal support groups. Individuals were 'missed' if they did not attend regular activities and this led to a process of checking up – an informal 'buddying' process. This was either undertaken by group members or by the project organisers at the instigation of the group members.

Any deepening of contacts between individuals was not recorded as occurring between individuals with cognitive impairment, including dementia. However, in some instances, the carers explained that the activity stimulated a positive reaction and a greater degree of interaction and reaction with their carers and supporting relatives back in their home environment (organisation H).

### **Improved opportunities of respite for carers**

An unanticipated finding was the potential impact on carers. For example, some carers attending the activity provided by organisation O said they felt it was safe enough to leave the cared-for person whilst they had a couple of hours of respite. Additionally, carers supporting their disabled partners at events developed relationships through the sharing of experiences. Through this process they learnt that they were not the only people living in a challenging environment; 'a problem shared is a problem halved'.

The formal events with guaranteed quality support provided opportunities for the carers individually to have some personal time and also to have some recreational time with others dealing with a similar situation.

### **Budget process constraints**

For a number of the larger organisations, the preparation of formal quotations from 2-3 suppliers incurred additional management time and extra costs that could not be included in the budget submitted with the application.

A minority of organisers considered that they lost control of the budget as all purchasing was undertaken by BAB with the individual suppliers even though they did receive the item of equipment that had been their preferred choice. This process also created accounting problems as without any money going through the books the organisation had to account for the purchase of services and assets (organisation H).

Some organisers were very concerned that because payments were undertaken by BAB, they were losing an important aspect of their contact with the trainers and instructors who were working directly for them. There were comments that invoices were not always paid

promptly which led to concerns voiced by the contractor that could not be immediately answered.

Initially, one or two group organisers voiced the opinion that the process inferred a lack of trust on the part of BAB/NLCF Lottery in them as grassroots managers.

It was felt by some that by taking away the need for the individual organisations to manage their budgets, the BAB programme missed an important opportunity to build the skills base of managers of small and micro groups.

## CASE STUDY: HORFIELD SHED MEN PROJECT

During 2014-15 The Friends of Horfield Common refurbished the community building (The Ardagh) as a community café. This renovation project provided a space, which proved popular with local volunteers from all age groups, but it was noticeable that it had specifically interested and motivated older men in the community to engage with the project, who wouldn't be interested in volunteering through traditional VCSE channels. These were men who had specific practical skills and who lived locally. Horfield Common CIC knew there was more work to be on the Common and felt there was a potential for a project where men in particular might wish to come together because of a shared interest in making or renovating things: a men's shed project.

Once an old container was purchased to serve as a workshop space the group then applied to the Community Kick-Start Fund for tools and facilitation to get the project moving.

*"The Kick-Start Fund has been fantastic for us; it has allowed us to test something that we thought there was a need and a demand for. But funding can be difficult, so this has allowed us to actually get the shed and the tools together, and get this group up and going....The Shed Men project has supported the development of this derelict space, and has brought different people together to work on different things; it's been a lovely merging and sharing of skills."*

Horfield Common CIC

*"The people who have come along are people who live locally, people whom we see wandering about all the time. Suddenly, they have realised that this is an activity that they are interested in and they have decided to come along. The majority of them have had engineering experience or building trade experience, but have found themselves just at home, usually watching television on their own."*

Shed Men facilitator

The project started with making bird and bat boxes for Horfield Common, but it went on to build planters and other garden furniture.

*"The project has done all the things we were hoping for, it has linked people to a wider group, it means people know each other. We have younger people – volunteers from the edible garden project - popping round to theirs to help do things, changing light bulbs... it has created those links between different communities, which is what being a community organisation is all about."*

Horfield Common CIC

## RESEARCH QUESTION THREE: HOW DOES THE COMMUNITY KICK-START FUND CONTRIBUTE TO THESE OUTCOMES?

The findings for the previous research questions demonstrated that the CKSF had successfully targeted lonely people over 50, provided opportunities for people to extend social connections, build up new skills within the provider group about how to work effectively with older people and for first-timers how to apply for grants and run an activity. Our findings below suggest how the CKSF made a contribution to these outcomes for lonely people.

### Raising the issue

The very presence of the CKSF has created an awareness of the issue of loneliness and isolation in older people and has thus unleashed some creative thinking. The literature is clear that the availability of small grants is a good way of encouraging experimentation around an issue important for social policy. 66% of the email survey respondents said that they would

not have organised the activity unless the CKSF money had been available. At least 2/15 of the interviewed applicants would not otherwise have considered setting up a project to target this group unless they had been stimulated by the CKSF.

### Structure of award

CKSF is different from many other micro-funding schemes in as far as it supports revenue projects i.e. "services" like paid sessional workers, venue hire, transport, as well as capital ones. Over 80% of the interviewed sample included "services" as part of their application.

*"...It was particularly important to our group that we could use grant money to pay our instructors. Facilitation fees were extremely necessary. Couldn't have functioned well without them. Also very glad we could use the grant to pay for transport and for facilitators to accompany less able people on group outings...."*

Respondent from the email survey

This pattern is repeated across all applications as they stood at the end of December 2018. The availability of revenue funding has thus made it easier for a broader and more sophisticated range of activity to be offered than if only capital funding had been available.

Table 5: Goods and services claimed by applicants

	Just goods	Just services	Both	Neither/not specified
No. of successful projects claiming...	20	28	79	N/A
No. of unsuccessful projects requesting...	13	13	27	4

Source: BAB November 2019 email

## The application process

Unlike many grant giving systems and the later Kick-Start+ fund, BAB did not require applicants to be constituted, a registered charity or under the umbrella of a constituted body. The idea was this would encourage more small local groups of older people to apply. Additional support was also offered to organisations regarding printing costs, meeting spaces and so on.

The entire interview sample thought the process was straightforward as did almost everyone contacted for the email survey. Some of the interview survey respondents said that they found the face-to-face support from the Project Officer was extremely helpful. The literature suggests that having a local “face” for a grant source usually made a difference, especially to smaller groups.

Nevertheless 70% of the email survey, and 33% of the interview sample said that they had help from someone else to write the application.

## A “non-cash” grant system

Due to the conditions of the BAB programme stipulated by the NLCF, the CKSF could not offer cash awards, but had to purchase on behalf of the applicant the goods or services they requested. This fitted in with BAB’s intent that the CKSF would be accessible particularly to local groups of people over 50 to run local activities.

*“The organisations which are the smaller older-people-led organisations have actually said that they like really like the fact that I just bought everything...been really great for them as a small organisation...this way of doing it helps more grassroots groups...”*

BAB Community Kick-Start Fund Project Officer

There was no ‘inspection’ of activities or ‘audit’ of finances; the individual applicants were trusted to implement what they had applied for, just providing activity data on a quarterly basis and a short report. In addition, there was a friendly voice at the end of the phone. This in itself was manageable for some organisers in that there were no social media options, just a friendly dial-up telephone or email.

## Larger organisation v. volunteer-led projects

The majority of the award holders were larger organisations, often with funding sources to pay staff and/or were faith-based institutions or other organisations with their own building (see table 6). Despite setting up a grant giving system following much of the good practice in the research literature, CKSF activities run by local older people were in the minority. It was felt that maybe some people needed a community development worker or a professional person to help them get started.

*“(perhaps) overly-optimistically hoped that groups of older people (would) apply...overoptimistic about people’s capacity to do that”.*

and

*“(Not that many people)... who have the confidence to think “we will set up our own thing”.”*

BAB Community Kick-Start Fund Project Officer

The advantage of larger organisations being involved was that there was often paid staff who could co-ordinate the CKSF activity within their normal job role and thus provide some continuity. This kept the costs down. In addition there may be personnel available to look ahead to future sustainability of the

scheme. Volunteers often found that running the activity in itself took up most of their time. Nonetheless the BAB Project Officer felt that the most successful activities were those either volunteer-led, or where the professional had a participatory approach.



## CASE STUDY: INNER CITY ART GROUP

This group was set up within the BAB Community Development project in St Paul's and evolved from an art and craft group with a paid teacher who decided not to continue as not many people attended. Once the group had CKSF funding additional people were recruited when one of the members took the initiative to make a poster and take it to her Tai Chi class. The group is focused on art "We're all people who see themselves as artists" (group member) and the weekly meetings provide the space and time for this, "I think of it as my appointment with art". Sometimes they have temporary teachers or facilitators, but members also used the skills within the group to inspire each other. They feel they have a mixture of abilities and although there is a strong core group, that they were an open group and there were always new people coming in. There are generally 8-10 participants each week.

Some members of the group described themselves as having been isolated or lonely. A couple commented on thinking more about looking after themselves: "we definitely help each other, otherwise we neglect ourselves". They had greatly valued joint trips out with the Old Market art group, and felt going as a group gave them confidence; they would never have gone to these places alone. The joint art exhibition had been a "joy"; they felt, "that's us".

Five of the core members completed a 'Grow your own group course' run by Bristol City Council's Community Learning Team, which they had found very useful, and the group has become largely self-managed. Members have been active in planning for the future and took the initiative in changing the name of the group from the St Paul's

over 50s Art Group and moving the venue from the Learning Centre to the Scrap Store in January 2019 as part of their plans for sustainability as the venue was offered free of charge. Part of the agreement with the Scrap Store was that members participated in an intergenerational art project with children. Four members attended CANVA training for designing newsletters and posters and for social media. They had developed a mission and aims by the end of the Community Development project in March 2019 but were not formally constituted. An application for future CKSF funding to extend their activities to doing art in residential homes was being considered, and other plans included creating an installation and selling their work, and attendance of a free fabrication workshop.

## RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR: TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THE COMMUNITY KICK-START FUND SCHEME SUPPORT WIDER BAB- LINKED ACTIVITIES?

### The Community Kick-Start Fund and Community Development projects

One of the issues arising from the analysis of the CKSF is how far the provision of small grants has allowed the development of new groups and activities from within the community. The table below shows the types of organisations funded: 73 of the 141 successful applications for CKSF by March 2019 were from established organisations.

Table 6: Types of organisations funded by the Community Kick-Start Fund

Applicant Category	Number of projects
Established organisations (RCs, CICs, Partnerships etc.)	75
Smaller community organisations based at one location (faith communities, community centres, etc.)	19
Groups set up with support from Bristol City Council, LinkAge Network, BAB Community Development projects etc.	21
Groups of older people	10
Projects set up by individuals aged under 50 run entirely by volunteers	5
Projects set up by individuals aged under 50 – facilitation paid for	1
Projects set up by individuals over 50 run entirely by volunteers	1
Projects set up by individuals aged over 50 – facilitation paid for	9

The majority of the 15 CKSF projects included in our sample were linked in some way with a larger organisation that provided support, or where the CKSF activity was an extension of their activities. Twenty one of the total successful applications are known to be from groups set up with support from the council, LinkAge Network, BAB Community Development projects etc.

There has been an interchange between the CKSF and BAB Community Development schemes for mutual benefit. The BAB funded community development workers have supported the CKSF by promoting the scheme and providing encouragement and support to groups who wish to apply. There have been variations in the level of promotion/support depending on the assessment of existing local assets and the interests that have been expressed by local people, for example in Stockwood, there was already a strong network of existing groups and setting up additional ones was not seen as a priority. In some cases in-house activities budgets have been used to fund projects.

In the BAB Community Development areas of St Pauls and Old Market, the community development workers have been instrumental in encouraging local people to set up new activities/groups to meet interests that have been expressed. The CKSF has provided the resources to enable such locally based groups to become established:

*“Many of our group activities would not have got off the ground if there hadn’t been the initial opportunity of Kick-Start funds”*

Community Development worker

The CKSF format had a) provided a specific pot of money, b) required the groups to

detail what they were going to do and set a time-frame, c) commit themselves to doing something specific, and d) by implementing an activity plan, gain confidence to go forward and show other funders that they were trustworthy and viable groups. However, despite the efforts made by BAB to make the application process simple and to offer help where needed, new groups in St Pauls and Old Market often needed considerable input from the Community Workers to provide information about the grants, work with them to develop the applications, as well as assisting them in making arrangements for sustainability.

This raises questions about how far the provision of small grants can support the development of ‘bottom-up’ projects without some kind of supporting infrastructure.

## CASE STUDY: JACOBS WELLS TAI CHI

(formerly the Harbourside Tai Chi Group)

The Harbourside Tai Chi group started in September 2016. Judy, one of three local people who set up the Jacobs Wells Community Hub, was the driving force behind the project. In 2018/2019 the group was renamed Jacobs Wells Tai Chi.

The Jacobs Wells Community Hub began because it was felt the area was a ‘forgotten community’. In addition, there are many new flats by the Harbourside occupied by older people and the area lacks community activities. Initially the Tai Chi group was based in a small community room at a local block of flats managed by the council. The group moved premises to the more spacious and better-equipped Pavilion on Bristol’s Harbourside. The Pavilion was built by the council as an ‘urban village hall’, and the room upstairs had been let at a commercial rent. However, after a campaign by local people to reclaim the room for a proven community use at a realistic rent, and with the help of Community Kick-Start funding the Tai Chi group was able to go ahead and offer Tai Chi classes in the more spacious premises.

The group made tea and coffee after the Tai Chi sessions to enable participants to socialise, friendships were forged, and networks increased.

Community Kick-Start funding covered the rent, insurance, brochures, and tutor fees for twenty classes. A charge of £3 for people over fifty up to the end of the grant period was levied. Although the charge for classes had to be subsequently increased to cover costs and ensure sustainability the

class continued with twenty older people participating in the sessions, which were led by a professional trained teacher.

The charges are currently £5 and £4 for those on benefits.

Feedback from participants included:

*“I had the joy of attending this class last Thursday. What a fabulous teacher, venue and price. I hope to attend regularly.”*

*“I’ve met people I’d never have met.”*

*“We have a real community feel.”*

Around 2018 the Harbourside Pavilion suddenly became unavailable without warning. The Tai Chi group quickly found a new welcoming home in a room at Bristol University Students Union Building. This room was cheaper than the Pavilion, with excellent disabled access and facilities, plus a good in-house cafe to socialise in afterwards. The group meets on Thursday mornings in school term times.

The Students Union appreciate helping out community groups of older people such as ourselves. The group was renamed “Jacob’s Wells Tai Chi” and there is a waiting list to join. It is comfortably self-funding and prices have not increased.

## RESEARCH QUESTION FIVE: WHAT ARE THE KEY COSTS AND BENEFITS OF SOME ELEMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY KICK-START FUND?

Based on the financial records kept by BAB and the CMF returns, this section looks at the costs incurred in running the CKSF and the apparent benefits which arose from that expenditure.

The table below summarises the main direct costs.

**Table 7: Summary of costs**

Item	Cost
Project Officer (0.6 F/T/E and including on costs and overheads)	£16,922.90 per year
Publicity of the CKSF Scheme	£168
The grant awards 2016- 2019	£229,332.24

The table below summarises the tangible benefits. Some caution needs to be taken with the figures as data returned to BAB was incomplete, so the figures are likely to be an under-estimation; small organisations relying a lot on volunteers do not always prioritise record-keeping so reliability cannot be guaranteed. However BAB's instruction for completing the quarterly record sheets is clear about only including new participants and volunteers, so double-counting is less likely.

**Table 8: Tangible benefits**

Item	Beneficiaries
Number of applications	221
Number of successful applicants	140 (£1638.9 average award, maximum £2000)
Number of recorded participants who took part	6,337 (Oct 2016 – March 2020)
Number of recorded volunteers involved <sup>1</sup>	423 (Oct 2016 – March 2020)
Number of volunteer hours	7,966 (Oct 2016 – March 2020)
Total value of CKSF awards	£229,332

The table below shows a way of costing the benefits.

**Table 9: Cost/benefits**

Benefit	Cost
% Cost of the administration of the scheme <sup>2</sup>	23%
Labour costs saved through using volunteers to deliver the schemes (based on current Minimum Wage - £8.21/hr) <sup>1</sup>	£41,091.05

Footnotes: **1** This figure does not include the volunteers involved in the OPCP

**2** This was based on the total of the grant sum distributed and 0.6 FTE PO's salary for 4 years, plus on-costs and management overheads (30% of salary costs)

The administrative cost was higher than the voluntary sector administration's standards of 10-12%. This was, however, an innovative scheme with features which were uncommon for a micro-financing scheme and would lead to an increase of the workload of a fund administrator/co-ordinator:

- where older people served on a panel that advised on the selection of applicants

- the goods and services were purchased on behalf of the applicant

- the target group of applicants was small local groups where volunteering would play a large role.

The PO's job included:

- The organisation of the 10 funding rounds between April 2016-2019
- The publicity - mainly through the BAB website and notification to BAB membership organisations, running workshops for would-be applicants, visiting lunch clubs and volunteer groups to give short presentations
- Answering queries from would-be applicants
- Recruiting and training the Older Persons Commissioning Panel
- Managing the panel meetings with the BAB Director
- Notifying the applicants of the outcomes and providing feedback to those who requested it
- Purchasing the goods and services required by the successful applicants

- Maintaining a quarterly monitoring programme of the applicants

The research literature is clear that where a major thrust of the small grant fund is capacity-building and the process itself is seen to be of value, then such funds will be proportionately more costly to administer (Awards for All Evaluation, 2013, p.29). The paucity of supportive community building networks in Bristol also meant that the PO's role included the extra support and guidance for applicants new to grant applications, which in circumstances where the voluntary sector was more supported, may not have been necessary.

Behind these figures is a more nuanced story about the benefits of the CKSF:

- Every area of Bristol benefited from a successful application
- A vast range of activities were generated (see appendix) many of which would not have been started without the CKSF (see research Question 3).
- 42% of all successful applicants were known to the BAB Project Officer to have continued their activities beyond the period of CKSF funding either through attracting other funding, becoming self-sustaining through the CKSF award, or receiving Kick-Start+ grants; 35% had been found to be unsustainable; at August 2019 the remaining 23% of activities were still within their funded period and so have not been counted.
- The CKSF appeared to have reached its target group of people over 50. The interviews with applicants confirm this and the CMF data (at January 2019 n=86) the age range is 50-92 with an average age of 72 years.



- The added value achieved by volunteers playing a substantial role in CKSF activities (£41,091.05 based on reported volunteer hours and current minimum wage) showed firstly the effectiveness of small grant schemes (for every £100 of grant money, an additional equivalent amount of £17.90 was created through volunteer labour), but also that a benefit of the CKSF is an increase of involvement in local activities which enable communities to thrive. Many of those volunteers themselves would have been over 50.

It is not possible to say precisely how many people who attended the activities were isolated and/or lonely, but there is evidence from the interviews (see Research Question 1) and the CMF data (at Jan 2019 n=7) that the levels of isolation and loneliness were higher than the average for the UK.

Almost half of the activities have continued beyond the initial CKSF funding. Nothing is known about those participants who attended a CKSF activity which did not continue; it is likely that for some, that one activity provided an avenue of opportunity for the lonely person to move into other activities. Data was not collected to do a Return on Social Investment assessment, but there is academic evidence (see <https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/threat-to-health/>) to indicate that loneliness and isolation is linked with increased risk of mortality and with obesity, is associated with an increased risk of coronary disease, as well as being associated with cognitive decline. The CKSF would have made a contribution towards reducing the health risks of loneliness and isolation, as well as improving wellbeing.



# 5. Discussion - key themes and learning >>

This section summarises the learning from the previous five questions. In order to do this, the research team have developed a number of broad themes and learning points, which are discussed in this section.

## Activities funded through the Community Kick-Start Fund

One of the successes of the CKSF is the range of activities that have been established as a result of the applications received. Furthermore, there was good evidence that the fund had generated a wide range of activities across diverse populations. These include groups offering practical and conversational English speaking sessions to South Asian women, a Bangladeshi women's group, clubs targeted at men and women in both the Pakistani and Somali communities, and a Chinese women's group. The inclusive funding criteria appears to have an important role in attracting diverse applicants (Hartwig et al., 2009). However, not all the target groups initially identified benefited from the CKSF, including some disability groups and those aimed at older people with experience of substance misuse.

Based on anecdotal evidence collected as part of this evaluation, it is also believed that many of the groups applying for the funding were inspired to establish new activities purely because they had been made aware of the

fund. Many of these applicants implied that they would not have thought about setting up a new group or activity without the offer of a monetary award. In this sense it is clear that the CKSF has inspired the creation of activities that did not previously exist locally, adding to the broad range of activities on offer across the City. This stimulus or catalyst effect is reflected in similar research (Schmidt et al., 2009). In addition it has offered opportunities for organisations which would not otherwise have considered extending their work to include people over 50, because they could experiment on a small scale.

Unlike many charitable funds, CKSF was available for both revenue (recurring) and capital funding, and it is suggested that this was a factor in the wide range of activity delivered. Only a minority of applications were for capital money only. Consequently the funding for venue hire, for example, (which can be costly for small groups) and the sessional fees for professional staff could be covered. In particular this enabled physical activities like ballet and rowing and creative activities like intergenerational art or drama sessions to be offered, all of which require an input of expertise.

## Size of applicant organisations

Initially, the expectation from BAB was that the CKSF would be strongly oriented towards small

volunteer-led or informal organisations, but in reality this was less than 10% of applicants. The fund was more popular than initially anticipated, as successful applicants tended to represent larger, more established organisations with better skills in bid writing.

However, the fund's popularity with larger organisations may have been at the expense of others, and this report found that there were some potential barriers for smaller organisations applying to the fund. In reality, the number of applications from small voluntary groups without any professional staff was very small given that these were the intended target group when the fund was first established. The evaluation found that most of the money went to professional organisations or to those with links to them. A significant barrier to smaller organisations applying to the CKSF is a lack of successful advertising for the fund, as well as a lack of community networks outside of BAB funded work through which to circulate such information. Getting information out to smaller organisations and offering support throughout the application process to groups who are new to the process of managing money is therefore important. The issue of supporting smaller, less experienced volunteer-only organisations is a challenge reported in other research (e.g. Smeaton et al., 2009).

## Supporting the application process

In general, applicants were pleased with the process of applying for funding, and this success can largely be attributed to the role that the Project Officer (PO) at Bristol Ageing Better played in assisting and supporting applications to the fund. The PO actively met with some applicants in order to discuss any issues they had, offering guidance on organisation-specific points, and this led to a feeling of mutual trust and respect. The application process was described by many as straightforward, particularly after some

adjustments were made to the format following feedback from applicants. Overwhelmingly applicants appeared to be happy with their experience of applying to the fund, and it appears therefore that having a supportive person in the agency providing the funding is crucial. This reflects other research on the need for a highly supportive process for inexperienced applicants (Johnson et al., 2006).

Those administering the CKSF took a flexible approach and were able to listen to the feedback of individual applicants (particularly those that had been unsuccessful) and adjust the application process accordingly. For example, during the last round of funding the PO offered applicants the chance to attend a pre-application workshop, which some found useful. Although this workshop did not appear to improve the quality of the applications, it did encourage organisations from previously underrepresented areas to apply. It appears that this was partly due to efforts on the part of the local community development worker in promoting the workshop, further demonstrating the need for good promotion. Such flexibility and adaptation of the awards support process was found to be important for similar schemes (Awards for All Evaluation, 2013).

It was recognised that perhaps one of the reasons why the PO's role was so crucial was that it acted as a potential substitute for community networks. This was particularly true for smaller groups who did not have people within their organisations who were skilled in writing bids. As mentioned previously, a forum offering peer support as a way to ask questions might be helpful for these organisations. Alternatively a website with successful applicants' application forms online might also provide some guidance. If vibrancy and diversity of activities is the aim then simply financing on its own isn't enough - a support system is also a necessity, especially where a

rejected application requires refinement before it can be submitted. The PO was able to offer that with good results.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that the benefits of employing a PO to coordinate and support bids far outweigh the costs. However, that is not to cover up the well-known fact that there is currently a demonstrable lack of community development skills in the voluntary sector – particularly in Bristol - largely due to austerity and cutbacks. If there were a bigger and better network of community hubs available to share ideas, concerns and expertise, and if Voscur – the body who supports voluntary and community enterprise in the City - was in a better position to support small groups, then said groups would probably be more able to tap into funding sources like the CKSF. At the moment it appears that where there is funding particularly available for activities for people over 50 it is not always easy to find – which is where an organisation like Voscur would be able to help, if its capacity is big enough.

### Reaching the target group of socially isolated older people

As with other aspects of the BAB programme, assessing the extent to which the CKSF has reached out to lonely and socially isolated older people is problematic. However, it should be noted that several of the projects were specifically targeted at people with chronic physical and/or mental ill health such as a dance class for people with Parkinson's disease, a choir for people with breathing problems, and a dementia café. Two of the projects within our study were delivered in residential/nursing homes where participants were likely to be in frail health, and one was in a hospital. Furthermore, other projects - although not specifically targeted at lonely or socially isolated older people - have attracted participants who fall within the groups particularly vulnerable to

loneliness. An example is a games club which was aimed at people with disabilities who live in supported housing nearby, including people with learning difficulties.

Many of the CKSF activities involve physical exercise of some sort, including dance, rowing, and walking, which it is hoped will help maintain or improve the participants' health. Other projects are directed at maintaining participants' mental capabilities such as the memory café.

CKSF funded activities have generally been well attended and are popular with their target communities. The focus of some awards reflects wider research demonstrating the need to create localised and tailored community activities to tackle loneliness and isolation (Age UK, 2016). There is therefore an argument to suggest that awards such as this could be even more successful in the longer term as a preventative scheme rather than in reaching those who are already isolated. If, for example, older adults were to get involved in activities at an earlier stage then it is more likely that they will stay engaged and maintain social links for longer into old age.

For those attending CKSF funded groups and activities, motivation to attend a group in the first place is key. By their very nature, many people who are socially isolated may not have that motivation, or may be anxious about the prospect of attending alone. Furthermore, it is important that a welcoming environment is created in order to lessen any anxieties people might have and ensure that they feel safe and unintimidated. The results of this study indicated that some of the applicants had used some of their CKSF award to promote their scheme and successfully create welcoming environments for attendees.

### The Community Kick-Start Fund and the wider BAB programme

The CKSF began life as one project amongst many within the BAB programme, but has since grown into one of the more successful outcomes. This is particularly evident in the fact that many other areas across the country have shown an interest in the learning so far and are keen to replicate the scheme in their respective areas.

Whilst many other areas of the BAB programme have also been very successful, it could be argued that the CKSF represents better value for money than some of the others when considering the levels of engagement with the groups and activities that have benefited from the funding. Furthermore, where some community development initiatives for example have suffered from inconsistencies in management, organisations funded through the CKSF do not have to worry about this as activities are generally more specific and targeted, usually focusing on a small geographical area.

### Continuation funding

A concern for some groups funded through the CKSF is how to continue their activities once the award money has run out or been spent. Priorities were often focused on sustaining existing activity, rather than creating new opportunities, as the Awards for All Evaluation (2013) found, a micro-fund scheme might be better understood as a "traveller not an escalator". Many groups that are ongoing need some level of funding in order to ensure continuity. Whilst some may charge their members a small fee in order to address this, this is not always practical and could act as a barrier to attendance. There may also be changes within the local area, increased costs or unexpected expenses which can make it very difficult for some activities to be self-sustaining.

In some cases applicants were unsure where to go next in terms of securing more funding. Kick-Start+ went some way to meeting this need, but was not suitable for everyone and relied on the BAB Project Officer putting groups forward for it. These groups were also often those who produced the most reliable monitoring and reporting documentation, which again may preclude smaller organisations with less resources or capacity to produce such reports.

Lastly, it is interesting to note that an unexpected positive outcome of being a successful applicant was that it appeared to carry with it some kudos when applying for awards offered by other funding bodies.

### Funding awards process

Organisations received the funding via a controlled budget held by the Project Officer at BAB (payments for goods and services were paid for by the BAB office). Opinion on whether this was preferable to receiving the money directly was split fairly evenly, depending on the individual organisation and how they managed their finances internally. Larger organisations found that this system did not fit easily into their financial systems, and as BAB was not VAT-exempt, they could not take financial advantage of their own VAT status. The smaller groups on the other hand were generally pleased that they did not have to worry about invoices, bank accounts and payments – indeed, they found this system liberating. Ideally, if the aim is to encourage small local groups to thrive, then both systems of payment should be on offer by funding organisations, or it is made much simpler for small organisations to find an umbrella organisation, which is happy to receive grants on their behalf.

The size of the award – up to £2000 – was generally thought to be about right for the applicants' purposes, although some

organisations found that there were often hidden expenses of additional costs that they had not considered at the time of the application. Where this was the case, it was helpful that BAB had a small additional fund available, on a discretionary basis, to make up for minor oversights in the initial costings (on presentation of relevant receipts).

As part of the funding award process, applications were examined and assessed by an independent scrutiny panel of older people. It was felt that this panel was a great asset to the process, primarily as – like the Project Officer – they were able to get to know the applicants and understand their individual organisations. This panel is a unique and positive feature of the CKSF, and some of the volunteers came from a similar background to the applicants. The members of the panel stayed largely the same throughout the process and this further enabled them to identify projects that re-applied for funding.

### Capacity building in the Bristol voluntary sector

As reported in research question two, the CKSF has proved to be a vehicle for developing fundraising and project management skills, important for vibrant communities. Some new schemes had been successful in going on to apply for funding from other sources - one or two reported that their successful bid for CKSF money had been a factor in their success. As the research literature indicates, small grant schemes can be very effective in skilling up communities to solve problems or promote a better quality of life.

### Collaborative applications

In our interview with them, Quartet were keen to point out that small groups applying for funding need to be aware of whether they might be duplicating something similar in the neighbourhood. Collaborative applications

would appear to be good value for money for funders, as well as encourage further community links within the voluntary sector. BAB did pass on information about other groups operating in the area to applicants who asked, but there was no concerted effort to encourage collaborative applications. We did feel that there would be some scope for funders in Bristol to specifically encourage this sort of application. However, this is likely to require some pro-active intervention by commissioners and community development networks around the city, but we have already pointed out that the latter are lacking in scope and resources.

### The 12-month delivery period

A time-limited 12 months for the delivery of a small grant-funded project is common. However, several of the applicants remarked that the 12-month period was not long enough (this was echoed in the research literature). Set up times were much longer than anticipated, especially where volunteers were doing much of the preparation work. In the future funding organisations may wish to consider a longer period (for example, up to 2 years) for completion.

### Monitoring and evaluation

Where micro-grant schemes are set up to achieve a social purpose (in this case, to tackle the issues of loneliness and isolation) funders are, rightly, keen to want to know if the money has achieved appropriate outcomes. BAB's experience was that the quarterly reports were not always completed and it was uncertain how reliable the data was. However, our contact with the applicants indicated a high level of commitment to delivering a good scheme, and that was what most people wanted to put their energies into – good regular attendances at the activity was sufficient for many to show that they were doing a good job.

The literature research (see section Issues for Evaluation) questions how realistic it is to expect small groups to have sophisticated data collection systems. In some circumstances it might be appropriate to seek support from an academic institution. As researchers we felt that the case study was a useful tool for recording the impact of an activity which did not require special skills or a lot of time. Our experience of this evaluation led us to feel that although public money needs to be accounted for, monitoring impacts should be proportionate to the value of the award, and not deter enterprising people setting up activities which would enhance their local community.



## 6. Limitations of the evaluation >>

This report relies on researcher perceptions of the extent of outcomes and impacts to determine the difference the CKSF scheme makes in reducing isolation and loneliness. The analysis also relies upon the organisers of the funded activities identifying people they consider could be described as isolated and lonely, together with the researchers' perceptions and observations when interviewing and meeting people involved in the funded activities.



## 7. Recommendations >>

There are a number of recommendations arising from this evaluation:

1. If a fund is targeted towards smaller organisations the application form should be prefaced by a checklist of items, including items such as publicity and resources for the activities provided.
2. The funding organisation should finance a dedicated staff member to provide administrative and technical support to applicants; this is a critical component of the support network. The funding organisation should continue to support the work of a dedicated staff member throughout the project period to manage the finances, act as a back-stop for problem resolution and establish and manage a monitoring system.
3. In the absence of extensive community networks, applications from smaller organisations should be encouraged by targeted advertising, outreach activities and structured ongoing support by the fundholder throughout the application period.
4. The possibility of linkages between organisations in the provision of services to potential users should be promoted.
5. To encourage vibrancy and diversity within small organisations a structured support system should be implemented throughout the application process; pre-application, during the application process and during either the initiation/set-up process or to assist in re-application.
6. The involvement of older volunteers in the selection process should be encouraged. They should, as far as possible, represent all sections of the community and receive relevant induction training and support from the funding organisation.
7. Grants should be structured to provide a recurring element as well as capital. This enables a greater diversity of applications.
8. Fund users should be free to decide how they would like to receive their funds – either by direct payment for goods and services by the funder or via a controlled budget allocation.
9. The funder should consider establishing a flexible system whereby a sum up to 10% of the award is available to cover unforeseen costs that were not factored into original bids.
10. An extended time-frame in which to spend the money should be negotiable e.g. 2 years rather than one; this would be particularly beneficial to smaller groups.

11. The funding agency should provide opportunities for the successful applicants to share experiences, which may help new applicants with their funding applications, build skills, develop collaborative ventures and, where possible, swap assets.
12. The funding agency needs to provide information regarding continuation funding, where needed, to all fund users. Continuity funding needs to be available for groups with different aspirations: those wishing to continue to provide the same activities; expand these activities; or change to different activities.

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## 8. Conclusions >>

Through the CKSF, BAB is working with communities to make a difference to older people's experience of social isolation and loneliness by micro funding a wide variety of new activities across the City of Bristol. Funding these activities for older people enables participants not only to take part in an enjoyable activity, or learn something new, but also to increase social contact. Consequently, this work can help make a difference to the isolation and loneliness experienced by older people in a range of circumstances. This may improve individuals' wellbeing, create the conditions where friendships might be formed, and increase confidence. Greater confidence may encourage older people to have a voice in their community by becoming involved in community matters such as steering groups, forums, volunteering and sharing the expertise, skills and life experiences gained over many decades with others.

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## APPENDIX ONE: INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

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### Bristol Ageing Better Evaluation: Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in an evaluation of a Bristol Ageing Better project. We would like to ask you about BAB's Community Kick-Start Project. Before you decide whether or not to take part it is important for you to understand why this research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information and discuss it with others if you wish.

#### Why is the research taking place and who is organising it?

A group of community researchers are working with the University of the West of England and support from Age UK Bristol to evaluate some of the activities that are taking place across Bristol as part of Bristol Ageing Better (see: [www.bristolageingbetter.org.uk](http://www.bristolageingbetter.org.uk)). We would like to invite people who have taken part in projects to give their feedback.

#### Do I have to take part?

No, taking part is voluntary. If you decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form. But even then you will still be free to change your mind and withdraw your data without giving a reason; however, we ask that you do this within one month of taking part. Nobody will be offended if you do decide not to take part or change your mind.

#### What do I have to do if I want to take part?

If you agree to take part in an interview this would take place at a time and place convenient for you. We may ask to audio record the interview and then transcribe the interview; once it has been transcribed all the recordings will be destroyed.

#### What are the possible risks and benefits of taking part?

We are required to tell you about any risks to you should you agree to take part in research. However, in this instance we are not aware of there being any risks to you, although it is important to note that the evaluation will involve you spending time thinking about loneliness which can be upsetting for some people. Similarly, we don't expect there will be any direct benefits for you; however some people find it interesting to take part and talk about their experiences. The information you give us will help us to understand your experience and this is your chance to discuss your ideas about the project you were involved with and its value in reducing isolation and loneliness.

#### What will happen to the results of the research and will my taking part be kept confidential?

Any personal information which is collected from you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and will only be used for research and evaluation purposes. Quotes from your responses may be used when we are explaining our findings but we will not use your name or

identify you or your organisation. The findings will be sent to everyone who takes part in the study. They may also be reported in professional publications or meetings and events including: Bristol Ageing Better Evaluation and Evidence Group; the organisations running the project you have taken part in; and, The Big Lottery that is funding the work.

#### Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed by the University of the West of England Research Ethics Sub-Committee to make sure that it is being carried out in an ethical and scientific manner that will not put participants at risk.

#### Can I ask more questions about this project?

Yes, please contact Mat Jones (Evaluation Lead), Associate Professor of Public Health, UWE Bristol [matthew.jones@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:matthew.jones@uwe.ac.uk) or 01173288769.

#### Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Participant Number:

### Consent Form for Participants

#### Bristol Ageing Better Evaluation

Title of Project:

Name of UWE Researcher:

Name of BAB Community Researcher:

Please strike through the option that is not applicable

1. I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.  
Yes/No
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw up to one month after today's date without giving any reason.  
Yes/No
3. I understand that direct quotes may be used when the project is written up. They will be quoted anonymously.  
Yes/No



4. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.

Yes/No

5. Photos are taken at some evaluation events. These photos may be selected for use when this project is written up to help describe what we have been doing and why it is important. Are you happy for us to share pictures of your project in this way?

Yes/No

6. I agree to take part in the above study

Yes/No

**Name of Participant**

Signature

Date

**UWE Researcher and/or BAB Community Researcher**

Signature

Date

**APPENDIX TWO: INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE**

**COMMUNITY KICK-START FUND**



**Fund-holder Interview**

*Introduction:* I am a member of a team of volunteer Community Researchers who work with the BAB Programme evaluation team from the University of the West of England (UWE Bristol). The answers and comments you give today will help us advise the BAB Programme Management Team on the impact the Kick-Start scheme has made on reducing social isolation and loneliness. All information is kept strictly confidential and any report will ensure your anonymity.

Name of Interviewer/s .....

Date of interview .....

**Title of your Kick-Start funded activity:**

Name:

Position in organization:

Number of paid employees: *full time equivalent*

Number of trained volunteers:

Your Income: UNDER £25k  OVER £25K

Were you involved in submitting the Kick-Start application to BAB? YES/NO

1. I have read your submission; however, can you please tell me how your project actually worked?

2. What elements of your project did your KS award pay for?

- Goods
- Services
- Event

3. How many people have participated in the project?  
How many of that number have not engaged with other activities the group have been running.

3a. What proportion of those people that benefitted from the project do you consider were isolated? We define isolated as typically less than weekly contact with family, friends and neighbours.

**3b.** Can you provide an example? Naturally, being mindful of confidentiality and anonymity? Such as: gender, age, ethnicity, domestic situation, mental state, housing situation, family relationships.

**4.** Are you aware of any participants forming individual friendships or friendship groups through participation in the project?  
YES/NO

**4a.** If Yes, do they meet up outside the project, for example:

attending other K-S activities  
meeting independently for coffee/lunch  
going to other social activities in the city or beyond  
other group activities  
Examples:

**5.** Has your project linked up with any other local groups and agencies to share resources, expertise, and information? Groups such as LinkAge Network, the Care Forum and other groups in your community?  
YES/NO

WHICH ONES AND TO DO WHAT?

**6.** Was the project successful/unsuccessful in terms of:

Venue  
Access to volunteers  
Resources Available  
Meeting the wants and needs of participants  
Local insight  
Fun and informality  
Other

**6a.** Overall, did you consider your project successful and how do you define that success.

**7.** Were there any positive or negative outcomes and changes that surprised you, and which you had not anticipated.

positive   
negative   
anticipated   
surprised at   
Do you have any examples?

**8.** Have you any other comments to make about your project?  
Such as has it helped you raise further financial contributions (donations, grants etc)  
And if so how much? Or, have any other local agencies benefited from your project.

**9.** What new things have you learnt about the process of setting up/running a local initiative by

running this K-S project?

**10.** Were there other costs, apart from those supported by Kick-Start, linked to running your project?  
YES/NO

Could you estimate what these costs might be (even if this is a rough estimate)?

Examples:

Room hire

Paid workers

Important in-kind contributions. (A person with professional background who does not charge, for example, poster design.)

Receptionists

Printing

Publicity services

**11.** Have you or one of your project team applied for money previously?  
If yes, how did the experience compare?

**12.** What would you have done if your Kick-Start application had not been successful?

**13.** Now that your Kick-Start award has run out, what has happened to your project?

**14.** With hindsight, what do you think you could have done differently?

#### THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS CONCERN THE KICK-START PROECT

**15.** What was your experience of applying for a Kick-Start award like?  
Easy/difficult?

Supportive/Negative

No requirement for a bank account/lack of financial responsibility

What did you especially like/dislike?

**15a.** Is the £2,000 maximum too high, too low or a suitable level?

**15b.** Would you have preferred the option of a cash award?

WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW YOUR VIEWS ON SMALL GRANT SCHEMES LIKE KICK-START, WHICH ARE AIMED AT SMALL LOCAL INFORMAL ORGANISATIONS.

**16.** If a funder wanted to set up such a scheme in the future, what would be your advice to make it successful?

**Thank you very much for your time and help in completing this form.**

## APPENDIX THREE: BACKGROUND TO BAB AND THE CKSF

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**This summary of the background history to BAB was provided by Bianca Rossetti (BAB Project Officer) and Kay Libby, (Co-Chief Executive of Age UK Bristol part-time and BAB's Sustainability & Legacy Lead part-time) in October 2019.**

'The National Lottery Community Fund's Ageing Better: Fulfilling Lives programme was set up in 2013 to enable partnerships in different regions in England to trial new ways of combating social isolation and loneliness, all taking different approaches but all focusing on enabling older people to be engaged in designing services and challenging negative stereotyping. The Lottery committed £82million to the programme, which funded both background research from the Centre For Ageing Better and funding for 14 regional partnerships to run 4-6 year programmes.

Bristol was one of 100 areas invited to submit an Expression of Interest to the Lottery. The Expression of Interest was submitted by Bristol City Council with input from several consultants, older people, and experts. Bristol also had the full engagement of an Older People's Partnership Board (OPPB) chaired by Bristol City Council. Representatives of the voluntary sector including Bristol & Avon Chinese Women's Group, Bristol Older People's Forum and Age UK Bristol were key early champions on the OPPB.

Following this, Bristol was among 32 areas shortlisted to submit a comprehensive vision & strategy document to outline how a partnership of organisations would spend a grant of up to £6million. This document was created by Bristol City Council again with input from a variety of charities, public bodies and professionals working with older people including Bristol Older People's Forum; Positive

Ageing Associates; Age UK Bristol, Bristol & Avon Chinese Women's Group, UWE, LinkAge Network and Aardman Animations.

It was stipulated by the Lottery that lead partners of Ageing Better programmes should be voluntary sector organisations, and Bristol City Council commissioned Voscur to run an election process within the voluntary sector. The outcome of this was the appointment of Age UK Bristol to take on this role, submitting the vision & strategy and agreeing to host the programme management team. The vision & strategy document included the four key outcomes for the programme; the four themes and 16 activities contained therein (of which the micro-funding scheme that went on to become the CKSF was one); the organisations engaged with the partnership; information about the amount and kinds of older people the programme aimed to reach; and a programme budget.

Once this was approved by the Lottery, a more detailed Programme Plan was developed with a risk register and specific programme outcomes tied to individual activities. The programme officially launched and began commissioning in 2015, with the CKSF launching in January 2016. The first Programme Board chaired by Age UK Bristol had members from Bristol Older People's Forum; Bristol City Council, Positive Ageing Associates; UWE; Bristol & Avon Chinese Women's Group, LinkAge Network; Aardman Animations; RSVP; Cruse Bereavement Care; Carers Support Centre and Bristol Clinical Commissioning Group'

### **Background to the structure of the Community Kick-Start Fund.**

Adam Rees, the Programme Director at BAB from September 2015 until 2019. This

information was given by him at an interview in February 2019.

The National Lottery did not want to call the CKSF the 'small grants fund'. Nor was it proposed that money to be given directly to the applicant but that Bristol Ageing Better should manage the money. The original plan was for the CKSF to be called 'Seed Corn' money, the idea of people being given a small amount of money to invest their money as a way of solving a problem in their community.

'The Funding Challenge' was another possible name suggested for the CKSF. However, it evolved to a concept of helping people come up with an idea, rather than a challenge and a problem needing solving in their community. This was therefore a more positive approach towards encouraging small group community activity.

BAB is therefore a commissioner, not a grant body so either a contract had to be given to the applicant or BAB could buy the items required by the applicants.

Consequently, BAB does not fund the CKSF bidders to pay for their staff, the money has to be used for either goods or services.

## APPENDIX FOUR: BACKGROUND TO KICK-START+

A city wide Bristol Charity, St Monica Trust, offered additional funding for a Kick-Start + in February 2017 and 2018. Altogether £45,000 was given, £20,000 the first year and £25,000 in 2018. St Monica Trust were impressed by the way the CKSF was offering support to groups that might not necessarily get funding elsewhere.

The Process. A list was drawn up from all the successful CKSF applicants with their impact on Loneliness and Isolation. The criteria were;

- Had it demonstrated being older people led?
- Has it considered sustainability?
- Had it the potential to be skilled up?
- Will it offer something additional to what it is doing already? For example running more sessions from once every 2 weeks to once a week or more frequency with more people. It was therefore not a continuation of the funding for the same people.

For example, one group running music sessions in care homes wanted to develop sheltered housing sessions as well.

The BAB project officer for the CKSF then created a document for the Older Persons Commissioning Panel with mini reports detailing how many participants they reached versus how many they had set as their original target (most had met or exceeded their target); any feedback from participants, how well it was felt it could be expanded or skilled up.

The Older Persons Commissioning Panel chose the applicants they wanted to apply for Kick-Start+, targeted invitations were sent out to

apply for up to a £5,000 grant using a slightly more complicated application than the original CKSF one.

The St Monica Trust representative attended all the short listing meetings and the panels. She oversaw the process but no barriers were put up or anything vetoed. She was trusting of the volunteers on the Older Persons Commissioning and of their discernment.

There were additional interviews with a 20 minute presentation. Each applicant had specific questions sent to them. Then there was a Question and Answer session.

The applicants would have to have Health and Safety and Protecting Vulnerable Adults policies in place, correct insurance and banking accounts.

One group went on to the Voscur course and became constituted. Several were given more time to improve their policies.

Altogether 11 applicants were funded with about six not being successful. The Kick-Start+ applicants came from all over the city.



