

<h1>BRIEFING</h1>	<b>TO:</b>	Health and Wellbeing Board
	<b>DATE:</b>	11 December 2024
	<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Katy Lewis Carers Strategy Manager, RMBC E-mail: <a href="mailto:katy.lewis@rotherham.gov.uk">katy.lewis@rotherham.gov.uk</a>
	<b>TITLE:</b>	Small Grants for Carers Wellbeing

**Background**

1.1	The purpose of this report is to detail the outputs and outcomes achieved from a grant programme intended to improve the health and wellbeing of unpaid carers in Rotherham. Monitoring information was received from the participating groups in order to establish the number of unpaid carers benefitting from the grant, their locations and the impact on their wellbeing outcomes.
1.2	An underspend of the Better Care Fund between 2022 and 2023 resulted in £100,000 being allocated and offered as grants, to small to medium sized voluntary and community groups.
1.3	The opportunity to apply for a grant of up to £5,000 was advertised on the Council website and by Voluntary Action Rotherham (VAR) throughout May, June and July 2023.
1.4	A total of £82,651 was allocated to 19 groups, with 9 groups receiving the maximum amount of £5,000 while the remaining groups were allocated between £1,037 and £4,992.
1.5	The grants were to be expended by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024, it was however hoped that the organisations would continue to support carers and would look to other funding streams to enable this.
1.6	Grant conditions stated that projects and activities must be based on at least one of three wellbeing themes which were: connecting, being active, and learning and opportunity.
1.7	<p>Applicants were required to indicate how the project would help to build resilience to ensure that unpaid carers are better equipped to face current challenges. Applications also had to indicate how they would improve the health and wellbeing of unpaid and socially isolated carers in one or more of the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity of 11 groups improved physical wellbeing by holding exercise groups and physical activity sessions including drumming fitness, games, seated dance and light weight-based exercise.</li> <li>• Activity of 13 groups improved mental wellbeing by delivering an art therapy course, community support groups, cooking classes and digital development sessions and wellbeing and craft sessions.</li> <li>• Activity of 9 groups improved emotional wellbeing through activities including coffee mornings and fitness classes, hosting trips, mindfulness training, structured activity sessions including journalling, self-care and exercise and creating a 'Choir That Cares' led by professional community musicians.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All groups improved social wellbeing, however one group focused entirely on social wellbeing by providing regular group activities and trips.</li> </ul> <p>A table providing details of the successful organisations, the expected outcomes and a brief description of the project is available at Appendix 1 – pages 4 and 5</p> <p>Photographs of the activities and feedback are available at Appendix 2 – pages 6 to 15.</p>
<b>Key Issues and Outcomes</b>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
2.1	An estimated total of 830 individuals benefitted from the projects and 79% of the groups matched or exceeded the anticipated number of participants.
2.2	<p>Several of the participating groups aimed to generally improve the wellbeing of adult unpaid carers. Other groups chose to specify the type of carers they would target their project towards. As a result, carers from under-represented groups such as those from the LGBTQ+ and ethnic minority communities (including BAME women specifically) benefitted from the projects, helping to address their unique challenges. In addition to this, four groups chose to specifically work with unpaid carers who support a person living with dementia, two groups focused on parent carers, two groups focused on carers supporting those with mental health or severe mental illness needs, two groups focused on carers supporting individuals with a disability and one group focused on carers who support brain injury survivors.</p>
2.3	<p><b>Individual Outcomes for People</b></p> <p>At least 433 individuals reported improved physical wellbeing, 830 improved social wellbeing, 579 improved mental wellbeing and 343 improved emotional wellbeing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical wellbeing.</li> <li>Mental wellbeing.</li> <li>Emotional wellbeing.</li> <li>Social wellbeing.</li> </ul>
2.4	The project improved the Council’s engagement with the participating carers groups and nine attended Riverside House during Carers Week in June to network and build connections.
2.5	All expressed an interest in utilising other sources of funding to offer wellbeing activities, and one group has already reported that receiving the grant has enabled them to successfully apply for further funding.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Lessons Learnt</b>
3.1	Administering the grant programme provided valuable insight into the thorough processes and resources required. Working closely alongside voluntary and community groups such as VAR to help administer programmes in future may provide the opportunity to work more efficiently as well as adding value to the groups concerned.

3.2	Whilst recognising that the organisations/groups are small and not highly resourced themselves, a more formal reporting mechanism and outcomes tool would have made analysing the outcomes easier.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>
4.1	18 of the organisations have engaged with VAR who will support them to apply for further funding opportunities to enable them to continue a wellbeing offer that carers can access.
4.2	The groups previously unknown to Adult Care are to be included in the Directorate's asset mapping exercise.

**Key Actions and Relevant Timelines**

5.1	<b>The Better Care Fund Executive Group held on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024 noted the content of the Small Grants for Carers Report.</b>
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**Implications for Health Inequalities**

6.1	Addressing health inequalities is integral to the allocation of BCF resource and funded schemes. This includes contributing to achieving the strategic aims of developing healthy lifestyles and prevention pathways, supporting prevention and early diagnosis of chronic conditions and targeting variation.
6.2	BCF funded schemes which reduce health inequalities include carer support, social prescribing, Breathing Space and project support for the implementation of Population Health Management (PHM) priorities.

**Recommendations**

7.1	<p><b>That the Health and Wellbeing Board notes the:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>(i) The outcomes from the Carers Health and Wellbeing Small Grants Programme.</b></li> <li><b>(ii) The value of voluntary and community sector (VCS) groups in providing a voice for carers to share their insights and experiences is recognised.</b></li> <li><b>(iii) The value of VCS groups in mobilising activities and providing a cost-effective method of improving wellbeing outcomes is noted.</b></li> <li><b>(iv) The need to continue to work with, promote and support VCS groups to allow them to remain operational.</b></li> </ul>
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## Appendix 1 - Participating Organisations

<b>Group Name</b>	<b>Wellbeing Outcomes</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Expected Unique Users</b>	<b>Reported Unique Users</b>
Activate Rawmarsh	Physical, Social and Emotional Wellbeing	Coffee morning, fitness classes, activities, trips	25	29
Active for Life Solutions Ltd	Physical, Social, Mental and Emotional Wellbeing	Exercise programme	20	20
Beacon South Yorkshire Ltd	Social and Mental Wellbeing	Art psychotherapy	15 – 20	15
Headway Rotherham	Social Wellbeing	Activities, meals and trips	10 – 15	22
High St Centre Rawmarsh	Physical, Social, Mental and Emotional Wellbeing	Mindfulness training and physical activities	24	25
Kiveton Park & Wales Community Development Trust	Social, Mental and Emotional Wellbeing	Activities, peer support, exercise, social prescribing	20 – 25	27
Lost Chord	Social, Mental and Emotional Wellbeing	Music sessions and performance	20 – 30	37
Nayi Zindagi	Social and Mental Wellbeing	Art and day trip	15 – 30	18
Pivotal Health & Wellbeing CIC	Physical and Social Wellbeing	Physical activity and mental health conversations	100	167
Rotherham Carers Forum	Social, Mental and Emotional Wellbeing	Wellbeing sessions, choir, events	112	78
Rotherham Parent Carers Forum	Social and Mental Wellbeing	Support, wellbeing packs, advocacy workshops, crafts	75	143
Rotherham United Community Trust	Physical, Social and Mental Wellbeing	Socials, workshops, activity	60	62
Rotherham Wah Hong Chinese Association	Physical and Social Wellbeing	Exercise, coffee mornings, crafts	10 - 15	33
S62 Community Together Rotherham CIC	Physical, Social, Mental and Emotional Wellbeing	Exercise, self-care, socialisation	58	33
The Brecks Community Hub CIC	Physical, Social, Mental and Emotional Wellbeing	Mindfulness, exercise, coffee afternoon, crafts	40 - 50	14
The Centre Brinsworth	Physical, Social and Mental Wellbeing	Events, yoga, activities	20 - 30	5

<b>Group Name</b>	<b>Wellbeing Outcomes</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Expected Unique Users</b>	<b>Reported Unique Users</b>
The Learning Community Ltd	Physical, Social and Mental Wellbeing	Activities	12	22
The LIFE Group	Physical, Social, Mental and Emotional Wellbeing	Information and advice sessions, crafts, trips, exercise	17	23
The Rainbow Project	Social, Mental and Emotional Wellbeing	Health and happiness nights, crafts	20 - 30	57

## Appendix 2 – Demonstrating Wellbeing Outcomes

### A selection of photos from groups participating in the Carer Health and Wellbeing Grants



*Figure 1- Activate Rawmarsh*

**Activate Rawmarsh** delivered a variety of activities including coffee mornings and fitness classes as well as hosting trips. The group noted the wellbeing outcomes of its members had improved as many members have been able to try new activities which have improved their confidence. One group felt particularly isolated and vulnerable before joining the group but has since made meaningful friendships and has now planned and led sessions and activities. This included taking the lead on fundraising. The group noted that fundraising is now taking place to fund future days out.

**The LIFE Group** delivered a series of structured activity sessions with the aim to give carers a break from their roles. The group reported that the sessions not only provided respite but also enhanced skills, boosted confidence, and facilitated a supportive network amongst participants. Case studies identified that participants feel empowered and the sessions boosted self-esteem and overall happiness. The group provided recommendations for future sessions which included expanding the variety of activities, increasing the frequency of sessions and enhancing outreach.



*Figure 2 - Kiveton Park and Wales Community Development Trust*

"I felt my stress melt away as I painted. It was great to be around others who understand what it's like to be a carer."

"It's amazing to have a space to work out and then unwind by talking and laughing together. It's a highlight of my week."

"It's therapeutic to talk openly with others who understand the challenges of caregiving. And doing it in such a relaxed setting after some good exercise is perfect."

Quotes from The LIFE Group members

**Kiveton Park and Wales Community Development Trust** held activity-based sessions and support groups. Members were found to enjoy attending the group and "being part of a community that cares and supports". Survey respondents noted that the activities improved their sense of mental wellbeing which exemplifies the overall importance of such community groups.

“It has changed my life. When it was closed at Christmas I realised how much I rely on the days there.”

“Being able to talk to people and have fun at the sessions immediately helps with mental health.”

Quotes from Kiveton Park and Wales Community Development Trust members



*Figure 3 - Pivotal Health & Wellbeing CIC*

**Pivotal Health and Wellbeing CIC** delivered gentle exercise sessions for carers including drumming fitness, games, seated dance and light weight based exercise to help increase participants strength and overall health. One of their participants had been noted to have lost motivation to exercise since becoming an unpaid carer for their spouse but has responded very positively to the sessions.

“I have really loved being a part of the gentle exercise sessions. They have not only improved my physical health and increased my motivation to move more but the group has also supported my mental wellbeing whilst adjusting into my new role as an unpaid carer for my husband.”

Quote from a Pivotal Health and Wellbeing CIC member.





*Figure 4- Rotherham Carers Forum*

**Rotherham Carers Forum** aimed to improve social wellbeing outcomes by holding wellbeing sessions, financial advice sessions, a Carers Choir and a Christmas Party. The group noted ways improvements could be made for future projects and activities in the feedback provided. They also noted that hosting the Christmas Party was enjoyed by carers as they could relax and build connections and social bonds. They also highlighted that the event provided a platform to build and develop relationships.

“These meetings are a lifeline – meeting others, sharing problems and ideas ...would be lost without this group in Rotherham”

Quote from Carers Forum Member



*Figure 5 - Rotherham Parent Carer Forum*

**Rotherham Parent Carers Forum's SEND Connect** project aimed to facilitate opportunities for parent carers to come together to offer each other mutual support by holding group sessions, workshops and wellbeing and craft sessions. They sought to promote self-care and positive mental health. Quotes from members highlighted this had been achieved and that “the group has provided much needed escape for parent carers to refuel their energy to continue to provide the best care and support for their children and young people”. The group noted that receiving the grant has successfully enabled them to apply for further funding which will sustain and enhance the support available for parent carers over the next 12 months.

“This group has been a real lifeline to me, before I started to come to SEND connect alone I didn't know where to turn for help! This group has helped to signpost me to support and given me strategies to work with services. I have developed friendships with people I now socialise with outside of the group.”

Quotes from Rotherham Parent Carers Forum members



*Figure 6- Roth Wah Hong Chinese Association*

**Wah Hong Chinese Association** held badminton sessions, coffee mornings and craft workshops to improve wellbeing outcomes. The feedback provided suggests the activities allow carers the opportunity to relax, talk with others and concentrate on activities they enjoy. One carer was noted to have experienced improved social wellbeing as taking part in the sessions allowed them to have their “own space and talk to others concerning personal issues”. Feedback also highlighted that members at who come from Hong Kong for example feel less nervous to attend the group as there is no language barrier, encouraging their socialisation.



*Figure 7- S62 Community Together Rotherham*

**S62 Community Together Rotherham CIC** provided a 6 week course of sessions including journalling, self-care and exercise. The group provided feedback in the form of quotes which highlighted the positive impact on member's wellbeing outcomes. People expressed the benefit of "talking to people who are experiencing similar things" in a "relaxed atmosphere" and "non-judgemental environment".

"Increase in self-confidence and self-esteem. More able to accept and love myself just as I am."

"Meeting other carers and making friends, not feeling as isolated as I spend a lot of time alone. I enjoyed the different activities it was a good way to try a new skill and to keep learning. Feeling like I am part of a family and feeling valued as a person. Also having something to look forward to each week that was for 'me' time."

Quotes from S62 Community Together Rotherham CIC members



*Figure 8- The Brecks Community Hub CIC*

**The Brecks Community Hub CIC** provided bi-monthly activity sessions including coffee afternoons, craft sessions, yoga and gentle exercise. Attendees found the exercise sessions made them “feel better physically and mentally. They were good fun too!”. It was noted by the group however that there is still room for its users to continue developing and to allow them to thrive in every aspect of their wellbeing. The group therefore hope to continue holding sessions for carers to enable this.



*Figure 9 Lost Chord 'Choir that Cares'*

**Lost Chord UK** delivered their 'Choir That Cares' project which created a choir of carers who participated in 11 music sessions led by professional community musicians. Carers reported feeling less anxious and that the sessions provided a supportive environment for expressing their emotions through writing and singing and between sessions. Feedback collected verbally and through surveys by the groups also highlighted that carers felt happier, more resilient and fulfilled.

"Through the choir, I've realised that being a carer is not all that I am. The support from choir leaders and fellow carers has been a lifeline, reminding me of my worth and giving me something to look forward to."

"As a regular in a community choir the confidence gained to give of your best both as a singer and as part of a group socially shows up well."

Quotes from Lost Chord UK members



*Figure 10 Beacon South Yorkshire*

Beacon South Yorkshire held an art therapy course and found the art boosted mental wellbeing and reduced stress for attendees. Some members were even reported to have purchased their own art materials to continue at home. Attendees were able to share their caring experiences whilst at the sessions and express what they are going through. Beacon South Yorkshire are now hoping to start their own art class due to the success of the course and because the outcomes of the grant were successfully achieved.

“It has really helped me listening to others in similar situations expressing themselves and made me feel not alone.”

“I love it, I really do. It is therapy and I could do it forever, it’s lovely. It’s nice to work in a group and helps me verbalise things and think of words.”

“I’ve found this very effective I’ve brought all oil crayons and chinks and paints and all my family are doing it too. Recommend to everyone.”

“It’s a great place to offload, it’s helped me to be more outspoken with my words. I’ve been and got myself a set of chinks from the charity shop to do art at home as she enjoyed it so much.”

Quotes from Beacon South Yorkshire members