

Annual Report

Grants to Voluntary and Community Sector Partners

2023 - 2024



CONTENTS

Section	Page Number
Introduction	4
Statement from Cabinet Member	4
Sources of funding	5
Advice – Tackling Poverty	6
Support for people on low income - tackling poverty	7
Employment Support - tackling poverty	8
Community Centre - Reducing social isolation	9
Support for Children and Families – Best start in Life	10
Grant Programme to Support Vulnerable Children and Families	11
Support for Older People – Ageing Well	12
Community Offer - Early Help	13
Carers Support - Early Help	14
Support for Vulnerable Adults – Targeted Early Help	15
Community Safety and Prevent	16
Better Health	17
Better Mental Health Programme	18
Better Mental Health Strategy - Consultation Focus Groups	19
Sandwell Health for Hotels – The Wellbeing Programme	20
Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Grant (SSMTRG)	20
Suicide Prevention Staff Training	21

CONTENTS

Section	Page Number
Environmental	22
Arts and Culture	23
Support for our Voluntary and Community Groups (VCS infrastructure)	24
Voluntary Sector Grants Programme	25
Community Partnership Innovation Fund	26
Digital Programme	27
Town Grants	28
Summary	29
Strategic Themes	30
Looking Forward to 2024/25	31
Conclusion	32

INTRODUCTION



The 2023-24 Annual Report of Grants to Voluntary Sector Partners provides a comprehensive overview of the significant impact of grant funding to the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in Sandwell. It highlights the added value brought by these funds such as leveraging additional external funding, organising volunteers and providing essential services to residents. The report aligns with the Council Plan strategic themes, emphasising the importance of collaborative working and the council's commitment to supporting the voluntary and community sector and residents.

The funding awarded to our voluntary and community sector partners enabled them to deliver impactful projects and initiatives that significantly enhanced the lives of our residents. These included addressing and reducing poverty through a variety of advice and support services including support to our foodbanks and food pantries, assisted individuals on low incomes and employment support. The funding also helped reduce social isolation, offered support to our most vulnerable groups, supported children and families, young people, older adults and individuals with disabilities. Additionally, it improved mental health and wellbeing, enhanced community safety, provided substance misuse treatment and recovery services, prevented suicide, supported arts and culture, environmental initiatives, community development, sporting activities, assisted tenants and residents and tackled digital exclusion.

Statement from Cabinet Member

I am pleased to share this year's Annual Report on Grants to our Voluntary and Community Sector partners. It is a powerful reflection of the strength, compassion and commitment that runs through our communities.

Over the past year, the Council has invested over £11 million in grant funding to support a wide range of services delivered by our voluntary and community organisations. These services have made a real difference helping people through tough times, creating opportunities and bringing communities together. Whether it is a young person finding confidence through a local project, an older resident feeling less isolated thanks to a community centre or a family receiving vital support when they need it most, these are the stories behind the funding.

None of this would be possible without the strong partnerships we have built with our VCS partners. These partnerships help us deliver on our shared priorities which are supporting families, promoting health and independence, tackling poverty and building a fairer, more inclusive local economy.

As we look ahead to 2024–25, we know there will be challenges, but our commitment to the voluntary sector remains as strong as ever. We will keep working together to make sure every pound of funding goes as far as it can and continues to support the people who need it most.

To all our VCS partners and volunteers, thank you. Your dedication and care are what make Sandwell such a special place. Together, we' are building a stronger, more connected and more resilient borough.

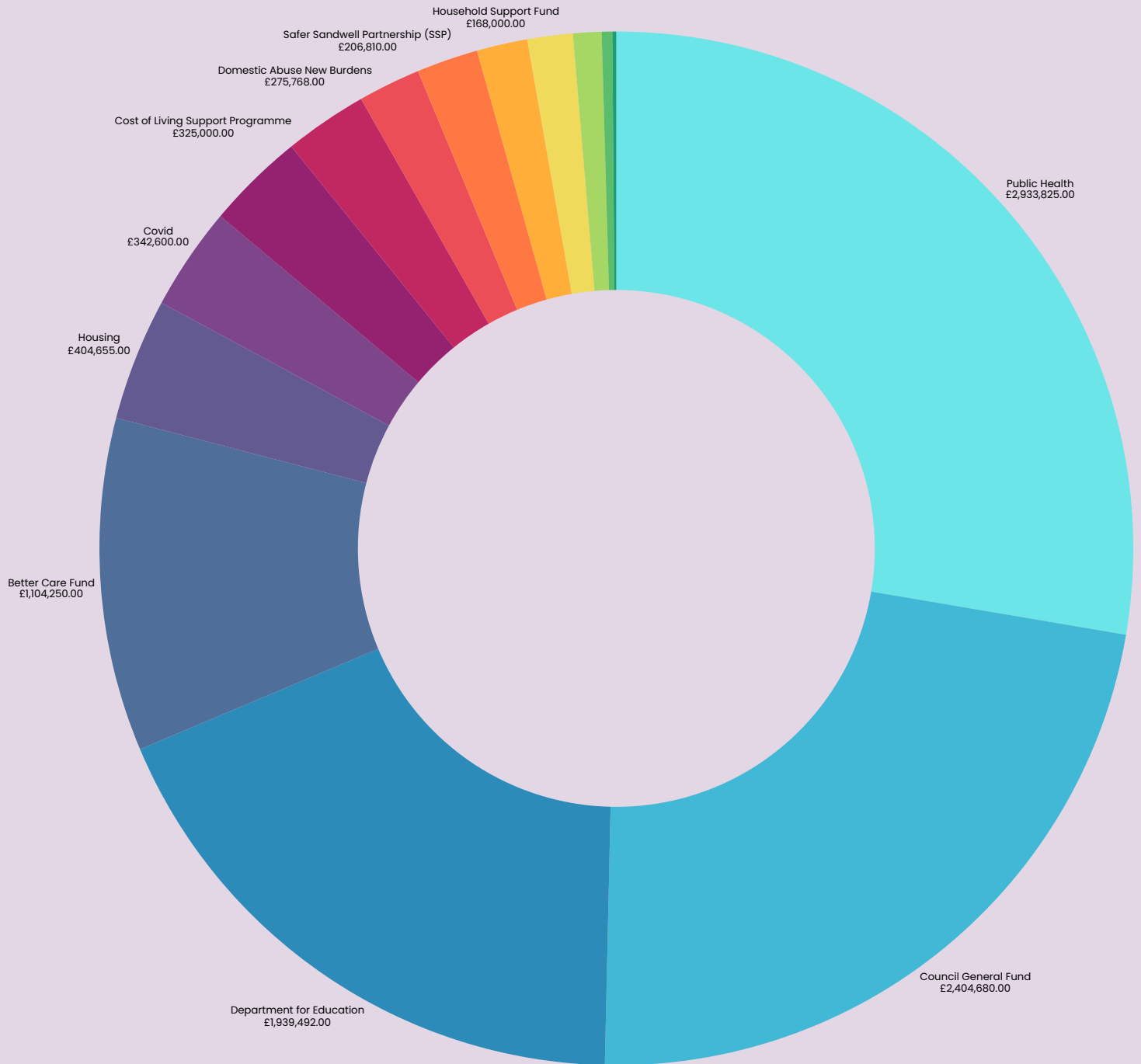
Cllr Suzanne Hartwell

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community



SOURCES OF FUNDING

- Public Health
- Council General Fund
- Department for Education
- Better Care Fund
- Housing
- Covid
- Cost of Living Support Programme
- Domestic Abuse New Burdens
- Safer Sandwell Partnership (SSP)
- Homeless Prevention Grant
- Household Support Fund
- Housing Revenue Account
- Community Infrastructure Levy
- West Midlands Combined Authority
- Tipton Challenge Legacy



ADVICE TACKLING POVERTY

Free advice provided across different community locations, covering a broad range of issues including benefits, debt, budgeting, housing, immigration.



Total Funding:
£1,436,862



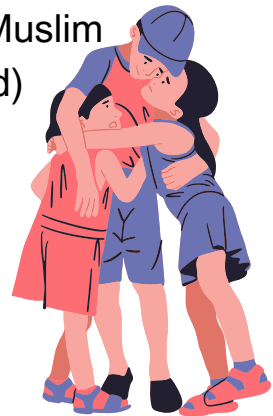
21,938
residents
supported



£34,731,656
in confirmed benefit
gains for residents

Organisations funded:

- Brushstrokes
- Citizens Advice Sandwell & Walsall
- Sandwell Consortium
- Smethwick Pakistani Muslim Association (SPMA Ltd)



Details

Immigration advice.

Generalist advice in community settings and Family Hubs.

Residents are better able to manage changes to their circumstances.

Improve household income, increase financial stability, reduce homelessness and reduce problem debt.

SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE ON LOW INCOME TACKLING POVERTY



Operate foodbanks and food pantries to provide food and support for people who are struggling to afford food.



Organisations funded: Food Banks

- Black Country Foodbank
- Breaking Bread Food Bank (Wednesbury)
- Brushstrokes
- Smethwick Foodbank (Smethwick Church Action Network)
- West Bromwich Food Bank (West Bromwich Community Church)

Organisations funded: Food Pantry

- Brandhall Food Pantry (Brandhall Community Hub)
- Brasshouse Food Pantry (North Smethwick Development Trust)
- J's Pantry Hateley Heath (4 Community Trust)
- The Manna House Pantry (The Manna House CIO)
- Tipton Food Pantry (Murray Hall Community Trust)
- Wednesbury Food Pantry (Open Heaven Wednesbury)
- Smethwick Food Pantry (Smethwick Church Action Network)

Total Funding:

£168,000



59,288

residents supported



39,651

visits/ parcels distributed



EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT TACKLING POVERTY

Intensive support for hard to reach residents with few or no qualifications and experience, enabling them to move closer to work or training.



Total Funding:
£200,760



407
residents
supported



Organisations funded:

- Ideal for All Ltd
- Lion Farm Action Centre (Sandwell) Ltd
- Skills Work and Enterprise Development Agency Ltd (SWEDA)



COMMUNITY CENTRES REDUCING SOCIAL ISOLATION



Manage and operate community centres as point of contact for information, services, support, digital access, opportunities to volunteer available to residents and help to build community cohesion, enabling people from different communities and backgrounds to mix.

Organisations funded:

- Agape Faith
- Bangladeshi Islamic Association, Smethwick
- Bangladeshi Women's Association Ltd
- Friar Park Millennium Centre
- Gayton Road Community Association
- Great Bridge Community Forum
- Hill Top Community Development Association
- Murray Hall Community Trust
- North Smethwick Development Trust
- Sandwell Irish Community Association
- Sandwell Irish Society
- Smethwick Pakistani Muslim Association (SPMA Ltd)
- St Albans Community Association
- St Paul's Community Association
- Yemeni Community Association in Sandwell (Greets Green Access Centre)
- Yemeni Community Association in Sandwell (Lodge Road, West Bromwich)
- The Yew Tree Community Association

Total Funding:

£516,661



350,878

**Number of visits to
community centres**



28,697

**Number of volunteer
hours in community
centres**



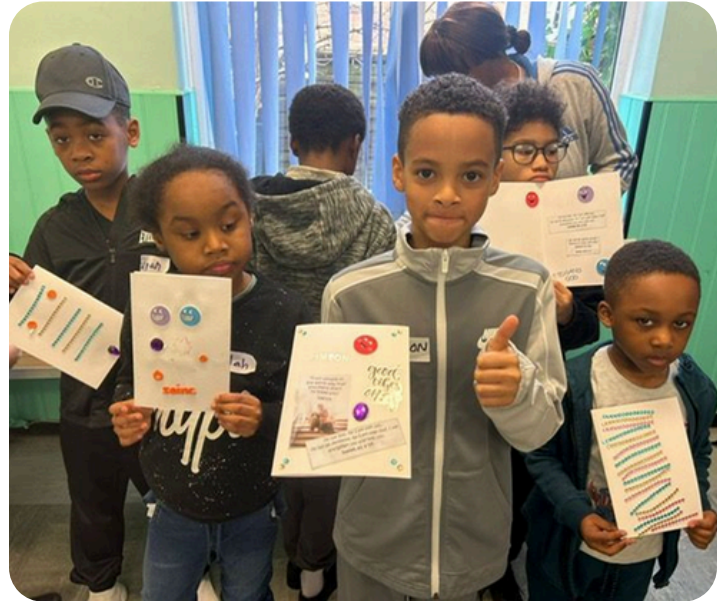
£3,722,128

**in confirmed benefit
gains for residents**



SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES BEST START IN LIFE

Support universal year-round play activities and targeted support for children and families.



Total Funding:
£381,005



10,188
Number of
children/families
supported



Organisations funded:

- Autism West Midlands
- Creative Active Lives
- Groundwork West Midlands
- Heart of England Community Foundation
- Murray Hall Community Trust
- Powered by CAN Ltd (formerly Creative Academies Ltd)
- SADWICA Day Nursery
- Sandwell Parents for Disabled Children
- The Branch
- Time Step Dance
- West Smethwick Enterprise

Details

Parent support group & training for parents & professionals
Go Play Programme across all six towns
Subsidised childcare
Programme of activities and events including briefings from health providers and well-being sessions
Pre-school support for children and families, including stay and play and a contact centre

GRANT PROGRAMME TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



Support play activities, food and targeted support for eligible free school meal and universal children and families during school holiday periods.

Grant Programmes:

Holiday Activities and Food

Programme: 1,633 sessions delivered 3 holiday periods (Easter, Summer and Christmas)

School Holiday Activities Programme

Creating a Playable Sandwell

Programme Children supported across 3 half term holiday periods in May, October and February

Total Funding:

£1,970,620



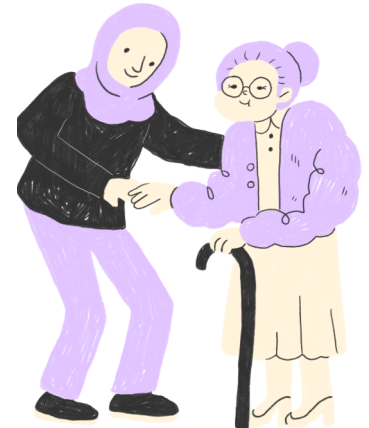
11,910

**Number of
children/families
supported**



SUPPORT FOR OLDER PEOPLE AGEING WELL

Services that enable older people to continue to live independently at home and reduce isolation amongst older adults.



Organisations funded:

Age UK Sandwell: Information and advice

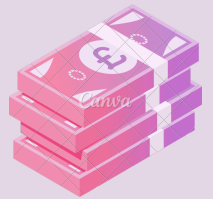
Agewell (Sapphire Services): Support for older patients at Sandwell & Russells Hall hospitals during their stay and for 6 weeks after discharge to prevent readmission

Cape Community Care Day Centre:
Lunch clubs

West Bromwich African Caribbean Resource Centre: Day care, health and wellbeing activities

Yemeni Community Association in Sandwell Ltd: Information, advice and advocacy

Total Funding:
£409,584



10,803

Number of people supported



COMMUNITY OFFER EARLY HELP



Provide a range of community based low level preventative support services to residents aged 18 plus. It is delivered via a partnership of providers to build stronger, more resilient communities, contributing to Sandwell's 2030 vision.



Total Funding:
£880,000



1,266
Number of people supported

Organisations funded:

- Communities in Sync delivering services in Oldbury and Wednesbury
- Ideal for All Ltd delivering services boroughwide access
- Murray Hall Community Trust delivering services in Rowley Regis and Tipton
- St Albans Community Association delivering services in Smethwick
- The Kaleidoscope Plus Group delivering services in West Bromwich



CARERS SUPPORT EARLY HELP



Improve carer health and wellbeing, help to sustain caring relationships and enable carers to take part in social and leisure activities.



Organisations funded:

- Better Understanding of Dementia in Sandwell (B.U.D.S)
- Crossroads Caring for Carers
- Crossroads Caring for Carers (Training)
- Halesowen Asian Elderly Association
- Omega
- Sandwell Parents for Disabled Children
- South Asian Family Support Service (SAFS)
- West Bromwich African Caribbean Resource Centre

Total Funding:
£86,250



1,064
Number of
carers
supported



SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE ADULTS TARGETED EARLY HELP



Specialist support targeted at specific vulnerable groups (victims of domestic abuse, those at risk of homelessness, refugees and asylum seekers).



Organisations funded:

Brushstrokes: Beneficiaries helped with food or resource support and housing crisis support. Holistic support for vulnerable migrants, with a focus on migrant health issues. Holistic support for Afghan refugees. Afghan refugee resettlement support.

European's Welfare Association CIC: Ukrainian refugee resettlement support

Sandwell Citizens Advocacy: To support vulnerable individuals who feel that their needs, rights, and wishes have not been considered when planning and delivering health and social care services.

SHARP: Provision of up to 30 bed spaces for vulnerable teenagers and up to 19 bed spaces for single homeless people.



Total Funding:
£659,227



9,475
residents
supported





COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PREVENT



Deliver services with key partners to tackle crime and improve community safety.

CAUTION CAUTION CAUTION

Believe 2 Achieve: Multi-systemic family support to groups and families

BoxClever Mentoring: Non-contact boxing sessions with therapeutic interventions at West Bromwich Leisure Centre.

Community Reparation ASB: Support young people involved with low-level Anti-Social Behaviour and criminal behaviour.

Community Skills and Knowledge Network C.I.C (CSKN) - Gang Nominals GEM: One-to-one mentoring and skills development to gang-entrenched young people.

Family Action: Specialist support service to parents to recognise and overcome low level domestic abuse in Sandwell.

More Talk More Action (MTMA) C.I.C - Horizons Project - Working with individuals who have previously offended. Highlighting the dangers and consequences of anti-social behaviour and knife crime.

KRUNCH: Working with school pastoral/safeguarding staff to recognise the part that 'toxic masculinity' messages are playing in the development of boys

Powered by CAN - Power of MADE: Provision of preventative mentoring for children who are showing signs of disengaging from education during Year 6.

Rewind UK - Understanding Extremism Training: In-depth training to support practitioners in understanding all forms of extremism, including Al Qaida and Daesh inspired ideology and Far Right ideology.

The Safer Sandwell Partnership: Deliver an annual safer 6 campaign around promoting safety, with activities running in each of the six towns.

The Albion Foundation - Inside out: An educational Inside Out project aiming to upskill and inspire young people.

Victim Support: Provides support for victims of crimes and ASB within Sandwell.

Youth Services Detached Sessions: Additional detached provision in Smethwick and West Bromwich.



Total Funding:
£962,141



9,689
residents
supported

Projects funded:

Black Country Women's Aid: Additional staff to support victims of domestic abuse. Community service, resettlement & other support for families living at a refuge.

Specialist support to victims who want to remain in their own homes through Sandwell's Sanctuary Scheme.

Provision of 2 additional units of refuge accommodation for victims of domestic abuse with complex needs on a 6-month rolling basis

Flourishing Futures Project



BETTER HEALTH



Provision of targeted support to enable residents to manage their condition and improve their overall mental and physical wellbeing.



Organisations funded:

Changing Our Lives: Quality of life reviews, facilitation of quarterly Learning Disability and Autism and Mental Health People's Parliaments

Cruse Bereavement Care: Bereavement counselling

Ideal for All Ltd: Peer support groups for a range of disabilities

O.S.C.A.R Sandwell Co Ltd: Support for Sickle Cell & Thalassaemia sufferers & their families.

Relate: Relationship and family breakdown counselling

Sandwell African Caribbean Mental Health Foundation: Information, advice and support primarily for members of the Black, African and Caribbean Community experiencing mental ill health, their Carers, and their families.

Sandwell Consortium: Sandwell Health Inequalities Programme, Sandwell Language Network



Total Funding:
£1,082,154



14,437
residents
supported



790
Staff training
sessions



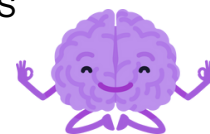
Sandwell Deaf Community Association: Support services for deaf people and for professionals working with deaf people. Support to deaf people who live in their own/rented housing and prevent crises and ill health.

Sandwell Visually Impaired: Support services to registered blind and partially sighted residents and their families.

The Kaleidoscope Plus Group: Care, support & advice for residents with poor mental health



BETTER MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMME



Provide support to residents of all ages, with particular focus on groups at increased risk of poor mental health with an aim to improve understanding of mental health and wellbeing among communities, including available support; and increase capacity among VCS organisations supporting mental wellbeing

Organisations funded:

The Albion Foundation - Team Talk: Educational sessions to improve understanding of mental health and wellbeing, self-care and how to support others for men aged 18+ years.

Bearwood Community Hub - Better Mental Health for the Black Community: 1:1, group activities, awareness workshops & creative arts for adults 18+ from the Black & African Caribbean community in Sandwell.

Beat It Percussion - Relax & Chat: Sound relaxation sessions. Support & signposting for adults with learning disabilities or long-term conditions.

Groundwork West Midlands - Cook Together Eat Together programme: For Adults aged 55+ 6 week programme of healthy eating, mental health & wellbeing, creating social connections and reducing isolation.

Ideal for All Ltd - Inspiring Positive Minds: 3 session programme, focusing on Sandwell's Feel Good 6 principles – Connect & Learn, Move & Give, Notice & Talk.

Kaleidoscope Plus Group – Carers support project: Accredited Mental health training programmes for local residents and local VCS organisations.

Kaleidoscope Plus Group - Mental Health literacy - Accredited Mental health training programmes for local residents and local VCS organisations.

Oldbury United - Emotional Wellbeing & Education Scholarship: Mentoring and education-based programme with sport and physical activity sessions for young people aged 12-25 years from the Black & African Caribbean community

Options for Life - Enhancing wellbeing project - Yoga, meditation and creative therapy sessions for adults with disabilities, autism and PMLD

Sandwell Deaf Community Association - Positive Deaf: Wellbeing coach & peer support advocacy services & activities to inform and promote wellbeing and mental health for people who are deaf or have hearing impairment.

Sandwell Visually Impaired - SEE: Advocacy programme for people who are blind or have visual impairment. To provide peer support, group activities, reduce isolation and loneliness and signpost and support participants to access existing provision for mental health & wellbeing.

Tough Enough to Care - Men's Mental Health Workshops: Educational sessions to improve understanding of mental health and wellbeing, self-care and how to support others for men aged 18+ years



Total Funding:
£429,942



1,515
residents
supported



150
Accredited i-Act
Understanding
& Promoting Positive
Mental Health and
Wellbeing training

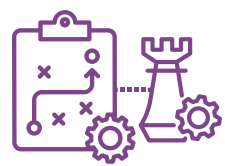


19
community food
champions



75
Mental Health
First Aid training
places

BETTER MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY CONSULTATION FOCUS GROUPS

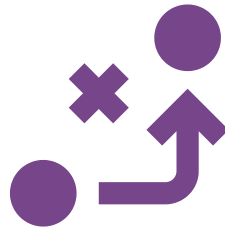


Encourage community participation in focus groups, providing opportunities to discuss, review and feedback on the Better Mental Health strategy whilst improving awareness and understanding of Sandwell's Better Mental Health Strategy.



Organisations funded:

- 4 Community Trust CIC
- Bearwood Community Hub
- Ideal for All Ltd
- Khushi South Asian Women Community Group
- Life in Community CIC
- Migrant integration and Language Academy CIC
- Open Heaven Wednesbury
- Sandwell Consortium
- Sandwell Deaf Community Association
- Sandwell Visually Impaired
- Sandwell Young Carers
- Smethwick Youth & Community Centre
- Steppingstones in the Community



Total Funding:
£10,268.48



SANDWELL HEALTH FOR HOTELS THE WELLBEING PROGRAMME



Support the emotional health and wellbeing needs of the refugees and asylum seekers residing in dispersal hotel accommodation in Sandwell.



Organisations funded:

The Kaleidoscope Plus Group -



Total Funding:

£59,7951

122 people supported



SUPPLEMENTARY SUBSTANCE MISUSE TREATMENT & RECOVERY GRANT (SSMTRG)

Support towards full recovery, reduced harm from drugs & alcohol, increased opportunities for employment and other positive activities to support recovery from drug and alcohol misuse.



Total Funding:

£83,832

**643
residents
supported**



Organisations funded:

- **African French Speaking Community Support** - A new project worker.
- **Friar Park Millenium Centre** - Family baking sessions, cycling, welfare advice and CV writing
- **Ideal for All Ltd** - A programme of gardening, growing and cooking along with bee keeping, employment support and welfare advice
- **Places For People (West Bromwich Leisure Centre)** - 111 12-week leisure passes were handed out between July 2023 and March 2024

- **Sandwell Asian Development Association (SADA)** - A Non-contact boxing programme
- **St John's Church Dudley Wood Community Link** - A community café
- **The Kaleidoscope Plus Group** - A series of themed health and wellbeing sessions
- **The Salvation Army** - People supported to become ready for employment
- **Warley Boxing Club** - A fitness and wellbeing programme

SUICIDE PREVENTION STAFF TRAINING



Training offer to provide suicide prevention knowledge and skills to the workforce to intervene early and equip them with the skills and knowledge to have supportive conversations. It aims to encourage all staff to work together to support the communities of Sandwell, and each other, to prevent loss of life to suicide.

Organisations funded:

Papyrus Prevention of Young Suicide



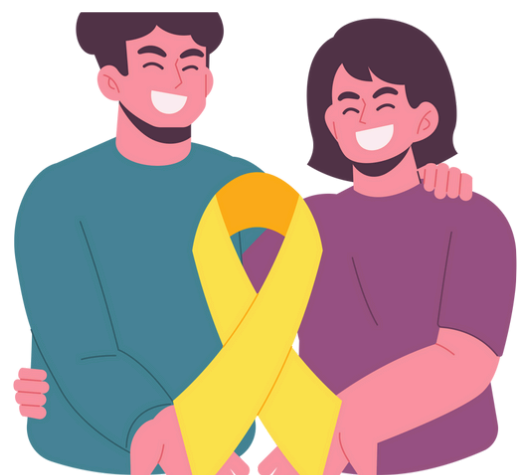
Total Funding:

£49,680



474

residents supported



ENVIRONMENTAL



Support healthy lifestyles for large numbers of Sandwell's residents, providing a safe and healthy environment with a variety of opportunities helping them to be active.

Organisations funded:

- Warley Woods Community Trust - Maintain and manage Warley Woods Park, Warley Woods, an outstanding green flag park in Sandwell and an (Royal Forestry Society (RFS silver) award winner

Total Funding:
£72,488





ARTS AND CULTURE



Organisations funded:

Black Country Touring - A programme of professional theatre, dance, cinema activities in community venues -

Numbers engaged

- 10,432 people attended
- 5,878 Community Promoter Shows
- 681 Rekindle Shows
- 2,696 BCT Productions
- 1177 people attended Sandwell Community Cinema screenings.
- 3,500 people attended the Easter Activity at Sandwell Valley Park with 60 performances by Drew Colby. Wednesday Day (10 and 17 June) attracted total audiences of 3501

Multistory - Artists work with communities to tell and share their stories.

Numbers engaged

- 4137 participants
- 53 events
- 4 publications
- 38 workshops
- 4 outdoor exhibitions
- 1 wildlife meadow planted
- 1 community lantern procession
- 1 podcast



Total Funding:

£121,748



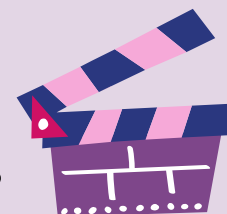
14,569

**residents
attended**



9,352

Number of events



SUPPORT FOR OUR VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY GROUPS (VCS INFRASTRUCTURE)

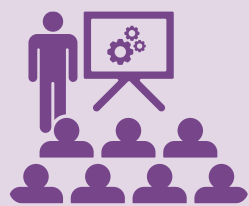
A range of free support to help voluntary and community groups to get started, expand and adjust to changes.



Total Funding:
£455,874



721
**Number of
organisations
supported**



90
**Number of
training
sessions
delivered**

Organisations funded:

- **SCIPS** (Sandwell Community Information and Participation Services Ltd) - Support for groups of council tenants and residents.
- **SCVO** (Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations) - Support for any voluntary and community groups (capacity building, networking, funding, communication and volunteering)
Early Help partnership work



VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR GRANTS PROGRAMMES



Council grant funding enabled SCVO to run the following grant programmes:



Grant Programmes

- Vision 2030
- Vision 2030 - Welcoming Spaces
- SCVO - Vision 2030 Community Grant Programmes
- SCVO -LGBTQ+ Health Challenge Fund
- Young People's Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing Programme



Total Funding:
£943,750



13,347
residents
attended



123
Grants
Awarded
totalling
£365,257



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP INNOVATION FUND

The overarching objective is to make the best possible use of Sandwell's voluntary and community sector offer. It will involve building strong partnerships and potentially redesign services.

INNOVATION



Total Funding:
£62.147



7
Projects
Funded



Organisations funded:

- **Great Bridge Community Forum** - Farley Kids Club
- **Sandwell African Caribbean Mental Health Foundation** - Get Active
- **Sandwell Churches Link** - Sandwell Clothing Bank Project
- **Sandwell Consortium** - Digital Communities (Phase 1)
- **Smethwick Churches Action Network** - 30 air fryers have been purchased. 6 cooking demos and community recipes shared.
- **St Albans Community Association** - Digi-Able.
- **Trinity House Gardens Tenants & Residents Association (TRA)** - Create a community garden within a housing complex



DIGITAL PROGRAMME



Deliver digital equipment to support residents to access the on-line digital world and offer on-going support to make best use of the devices.

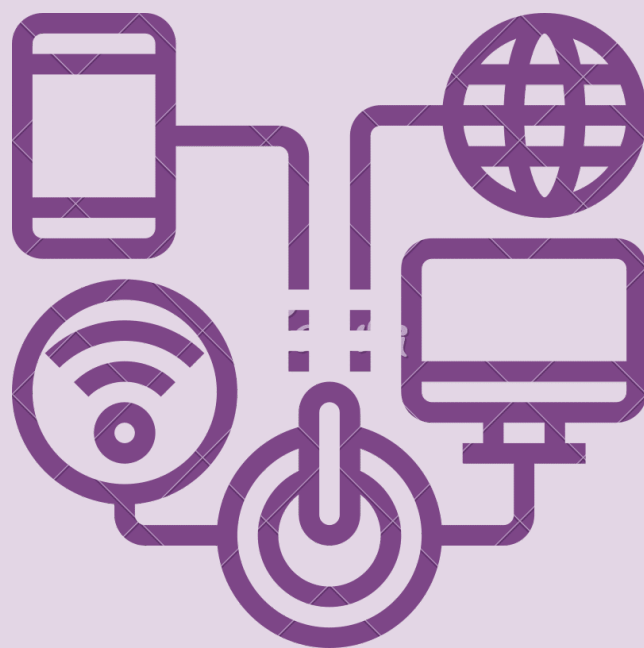


Organisations funded:

- Agewell
- Black Country Housing Group
- Crossroads Caring for Carers
- Ideal for All Ltd
- Options for Life
- Sandwell Community Information and Participation Service (SCIPS)
- Sandwell Visually Impaired

Total Funding:

£65,000



TOWN GRANTS



Total Funding:
£94,084.69



31
Organisations supported

Projects funded:



- **617th Sandwell Air Scouts** - Camping tents and cooking equipment
- **Central (& Woods) Methodist Church** - Water boiler, coffee machine, toaster, fridge, microwave and grill
- **European Welfare Association** - Shelving, heavy duty trolley, scales and storage boxes/crates
- **Friar Park Allotment Association** - An accessible Portaloo
- **Friar Park Millenium Centre** - Laptops, desks, office chairs, printer and laptop locks
- **Friends of Bromwich Hall** - Outdoor tables and chairs, children's games and a coffee machine



- **Hamstead Over 60's Club** - Games, coffee machine, karaoke machine and cake stands
- **Ideal For All Ltd**- Polytunnel
- **Bangladeshi Women's Association Ltd - Jubilee Park Community Centre** - Toys, children's chairs, aprons, cutlery and mugs, playmats and musical light bench
- **King's Community Church** - Shelving, paint and storage boxes
- **Let's Dance Again** - Laptops, Tablets, printer, water boiler, mugs, storage boxes and a toaster
- **Lion Farm Action Centre** - Ramps and handrails
- **Yemeni Community Association in Sandwell Ltd- Lodge Community Centre** - Chairs and tables
- **Oakham Community Club** - Games, water boiler, cutlery, mugs and plates, extension lead, cabinet and storage boxes
- **Old Cross Bowling Club** - Mechanical equipment to maintain the bowling green
- **Open Heaven Church** - Partition doors and chairs
- **Our Lady of Lourdes** - Specialist heavy duty shelving
- **Sandwell Churches Link** - Clothing racks, clothes rails, shoe racks, storage crates, divider panels and heaters
- **Sandwell Deaf Community Association** - Specialist sensory toys and learning resources
- **Sandwell Irish Community Association** - Interactive whiteboard
- **Smethwick Youth Community Centre** - Bench, decking, planters and evacuation chair
- **St Hilda's** - Chairs and paint
- **St Johns Youth Club** - Laptops, iPads, software, speaker and dodgeballs
- **Tipton Community Association** - Laptops, tablets whiteboard, soft play games, toasters and plates
- **The Salvation Army - Oldbury** - 2 smart TV's, TV stands and table-football game
- **Visamo** - Musical instruments, games and resistance bands
- **Warley Baptist Church** - Boxing gloves, pads, skipping ropes, head guards, groin guards, mats, canvass
- **Wednesbury Cultural Hub** - Baby equipment, toys and learning resources
- **Wernley Bowling Club** - Lawnmower

SUMMARY



SUMMARY



The 2023-24 Annual Report on Grants to Voluntary Sector partners shows the positive impact of grant funding on Sandwell's voluntary and community sector. The report highlights the diverse range of funding sources, including central government, the Better Care Fund, the Council General Fund, and various other grants. These funds have been instrumental in supporting a wide range of services and initiatives across Sandwell, enabling the provision of free advice, support for low-income individuals, employment support, community centre activities and services for children, families and older people.

Added Value and Impact of Grant Funding - Grant funding has been instrumental in supporting a wide range of services and initiatives across Sandwell. The voluntary and community sector leveraged approximately £2,772,274 in external funding and engaged 508 unique volunteers who contributed 43,130 volunteering hours of service significantly enhancing the reach and impact of funded activities. Voluntary and community groups have demonstrated remarkable flexibility and responsiveness to changing needs, adapting their service delivery models to ensure residents can access support in various ways. This adaptability has been crucial in addressing emerging challenges and ensuring continuous support for the community.

Commitment and Strategic Themes - The Council is committed to supporting the voluntary and community sector and residents through ongoing funding and collaborative efforts. This commitment is reflected in the Council Plan strategic themes which prioritise community well-being, social inclusion and economic stability.



The funded services/activities align with the strategic themes as follows:

Growing Up in Sandwell

Support for Children and Families: Funding for universal play activities and targeted support for vulnerable children ensures that young people have the best start in life. Programmes like the Holiday Activities & Food Programme and the Go Play Programme engage thousands of children and young people, promoting their development and well-being.

Living in Sandwell

Community Centres: Grants for community centres help reduce social isolation by providing a mix of free and affordable activities. These centres serve as points of contact for information, digital access and volunteering opportunities, fostering community cohesion.

Support for Older People: Services that enable older people to live independently and reduce isolation align with the council's goal to support healthy aging. Programmes funded by the Better Care Fund and Public Health grants provide day care, health and wellbeing activities and befriending services.

Healthy in Sandwell

Mental Health Support: Funding for mental health programmes and support services aligns with the council's priority to improve mental health and well-being. Initiatives like the Better Mental Health Programme and various support services for vulnerable adults address mental health needs across the community.

Advice and Support: Grants for advice services help residents tackle poverty by providing free advice on benefits, debt, budgeting, housing, and immigration. This support is crucial for improving financial stability and overall well-being.

Thriving Economy in Sandwell

Employment Support: Intensive support for hard-to-reach residents with few or no qualifications helps them move closer to work or training. This aligns with the council's goal of fostering a thriving economy by improving employability and economic stability.

Community Safety and Prevent: Funding for community safety initiatives and support for victims of domestic abuse contributes to a safer environment, which is essential for economic growth and community well-being.

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2024/25

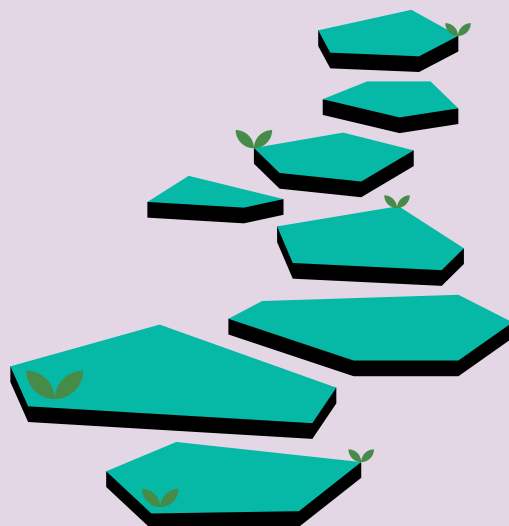
Importance of Grant Funding - Grant funding remains crucial for Sandwell's voluntary and community sector, enabling it to deliver vital services that support residents' well-being and community cohesion. The council's commitment to maintaining and enhancing this support is essential for the continued success of these initiatives.

Financial Challenges - The council faces financial challenges, but it remains dedicated to finding innovative solutions to continue supporting the voluntary sector. This includes leveraging external funding and optimising the use of available resources.

Strategic Review of VCS Grant Funding - The Strategic Review of Voluntary and Community Sector Grant Funding will provide valuable recommendations that will shape the future distribution of funds. These recommendations aim to enhance the effectiveness and impact of grant funding, ensuring that it aligns with the council's strategic themes and delivers maximum benefits to residents.

Collaborative Working - The strong relationship between the council and the voluntary sector will continue to be a cornerstone of the council's approach. Collaborative working will be essential in addressing emerging needs and ensuring that services are responsive and effective.

Outcomes for Residents - The goal of grant funding is to improve outcomes for residents. This includes enhancing financial stability, reducing social isolation, supporting mental health and promoting community engagement. The council will continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of funded activities to ensure they meet these objectives.



CONCLUSION



Conclusion

The 2023-24 Annual Report of Grants to Voluntary and Community Sector Partners demonstrates the significant impact of grant funding on Sandwell's communities. The funded activities align closely with Sandwell Plan strategic themes, ensuring that grant funding continues to deliver valuable outcomes for residents.

Looking forward to 2024-25, the council remains committed to supporting the voluntary and community sector and ensuring that grant funding continues to deliver valuable outcomes for residents. The strategic allocation of funds across different categories, such as advice and support, foodbanks, employment support, and community centres, has ensured that resources are utilised effectively to address diverse community needs. The focus on value for money has enabled the council to maximise the impact of available funds, delivering essential services and support to residents in a cost-effective manner.

