

Agenda Item	11.
Report No	CPPB/13/24



Highland
Community
Planning
Partnership

Com-pàirteachas
Dealbhadh
Coimhearsnachd

na Gàidhealtachd

Highland Community Planning Partnership Board – 5 June 2024

Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund

Report by: Chief Officer, Highland Third Sector Interface

Summary

- i) Consider the proposal, provide comments, guidance and feedback
- ii) Agree the approach in principle

1. Background

1.1 The Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund is a national initiative that supports community-based projects that improve mental health and wellbeing for adults in Scotland. The fund is part of the Scottish Government's response to the mental health challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and is delivered locally by the Third Sector Interface on behalf of the Scottish Government and in partnership locally with the CPP or HSCP. The fund aims to invest in projects at a grassroots level that address mental health inequalities and contribute to the national outcomes of the National Performance Framework and the Mental Health Transition and Recovery Plan.

1.2 Following on from year three, the panel members have had the chance to reflect and consider an alternative approach to the distribution of funds this year. This report outlines the key aspects of this proposal, which have been initially discussed with the Scottish Government and are now with the CPP for scrutiny and agreement prior to work in developing the local plan and programme for distribution later this year.

2. Proposed approach

2.1 There have been challenges in relation to using the funding strategically and consider how we can leverage maximum change due to the short term notice and timelines attached to the fund over the last three years.

2.2 We have noticed however, that there are also challenges in relation to collaboration and that some areas of Highland have not provided either applications or applications of a sufficient quality. This has meant that some groups have refused to work

collaboratively even if this means that funding would not be forthcoming and that some areas have not had any or have had very limited funds.

2.3 The proposal is to try and work on funds across three areas of activity/type:

1. Small grants, potentially of £3k for smaller grass roots organisations
2. A collaborative larger grant programme of grants up to £50k where there is a partnership or collaborative approach.
3. A capacity building theme where there is a combination of investment in communities who have undertaken wide ranging consultations and planning and are looking to move into action with investment and an intensive piece of working within a few communities to support the development of a town team.

2.4 We hope that this is likely to encourage grassroots investment, better collaboration and/or capacity growth in areas where we have identified more support is needed to build community action in relation to mental health and wellbeing.

2.5 Small Grants:

Small grants (Ring Fenced, £175k, approximately 50+ grants)

- a. Targeted for local community actions, can be local thematic community action too.
- b. Could explore potential income limits to ensure it is for grass roots smaller organisations
- c. Would be interested in exploring consideration of match funding but need to support a wide understanding of the match funding options i.e. own income generation, staff time etc.
- d. Grants of up to £3.5k
- e. Likely to run as one open process at the start of the year, some consideration given to two rounds for capacity.
- f. Panel Assessed, using application.
- g. Look at where the application can be strengthened and shortened

2.6 Collaborative Grants:

Collaborative Support Grants (Ring Fenced, £300k, approximately 6 grants)

- a. These can be for geographic and thematic community groups who want to collaborate to make their approaches more effective, stronger and more sustainable.
- b. Grants could be for joint delivery, for supporting a change in the way they work or for testing change
- c. Grant levels would be for up to £50k to be spent within 18 months.
- d. Possibly initial interest through EOI
- e. Possibly provision of collaborative training to support applicants who get through EOI stage, i.e. how to collaborate
- f. Applications likely to be end of year with a selection or all invited to present their final proposal to a selected panel at HTSI office early 2025

2.7 Intensive Capacity Building:

Intense Capacity building (Ring Fenced, £200k, for up to two £50k grants and five £20k grants)

- a. Two aspects to this area of the grant giving process.
 - i. Up to £100k in two £50k grants to communities who have undertaken community consultation, have identified community needs around mental health and wellbeing and are looking for investment to start the process of initiating activities to meet those needs across their community. Communities could be thematic or place based but they need to have strong evidence of their engagement and response against their community members needs.
 - ii. Developmental Community-based grants of up to £20k for five communities. This is for areas of Highland where the engagement with the fund so far as been minimal relative to their demographics and economics which suggest there should be more activity, not less, around community mental health and wellbeing. The intention would be to utilise the admin and capacity grant to work with communities who are willing to establish a group of key people to engage the community around their needs and what they think the community would respond to. Building the community resilience and capacity to design options for services as a test of change or low level activity that could meet those needs and start a process of community led change.
- b. There would be two processes for grant assessments, firstly the larger community led activity:
 - i. EOI would be received from communities who felt they were ready to implement changes based on their communities identified needs.
 - ii. They would be invited to present their ideas to a panel at the HTSI office in the autumn for decision.
 - iii. We would need to limit the number of proposals from communities at the EOI stage to be competitive but not unrealistic in the number coming to panel
- c. For the smaller grants, this is conceived as the longest preparation and support need and as such there is a longer process and a potentially divide release of funds:
 - i. Communities would be approached based on a partnership based identification process to see if they are interested in working with the TSI and others to develop an engagement with the community and then design activity based on those needs. If they accept then they progress:
 1. After identification of the communities, a team will be formed to design an engagement process and to cost that process. Costs once agreed would be met from within their

£20k but up to a maximum of £2.5k and need to be undertaken no later than the end of November.

2. Once the consultation is back and written up, the team would then go on to explore and design activity that could be used to start to meet those needs. A plan to utilise the remaining budget would be drawn up and submitted to the 'panel'
 3. A small group from the panel would then visit the community in the early part of 2025 and discuss the proposal, listen to the presentation from the community team and then agree, or otherwise, the release of funds to put the work in place
- d. Support from within the TSI could vary over the two different grants with the focus on the smaller grants and the provision of support, guidance, training and signposting to other services as part of the process. They would have a single point of contact and support and the ability to work repeatedly with them throughout the process from May – March.

2.8 There has been some discussion around some communities that might be approached in relation to the smaller intensive grants, specifically one in Easter Ross, East Sutherland, The Plantation/Fort William but nothing definitive was agreed. Ideally, they would focus on the identified CPP communities using the SIMD and SEP indexes.

3. Risks and Challenges (Plan B)

3.1 There are risks in adopting this approach:

1. The third sector has been increasingly dependent on these larger c.£25k grants to keep activity going and the loss of this could potentially frustrate some areas of activity; but the fund is not guaranteed and one of the concerns of the panel with rolling through a similar approach to last time was the increasing dependency on this funding stream.
2. The timeline from the Scottish government is incredibly tight and the resource to run a very large small grants programme and the intensive support process at the same time is going to be challenging and realistically need to start in July 2024, If the Scottish Government do not provide details of the funding and secure the information around this before then we would be struggling to deliver all aspects of this in the financial year.

3.2 Should the funding information not come through in time we will have to modify the approach, this may look like an increased level of small grants in terms of upper limit and larger collaborative grants.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to:

- i) Consider the proposal, provide comments, guidance and feedback

ii) Agree the approach in principle

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Date: 29/05/2024