

# Community Chest Toolkit

A partnership approach to working with  
the VCFSE sector to fund and deliver  
preventative health and wellbeing  
activities

2025

Programme led by  
**Community Led Prevention**

**Transformation Partners in  
Health & Care (TPHC)**



**Transformation  
Partners**  
in Health and Care

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# Executive Summary

The [Community Chest approach](#) is a replicable way to enable sustainable funding routes for Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) organisations to deliver health and wellbeing activities, whilst developing partnerships between statutory and non-statutory sectors.

This toolkit takes you through things to consider when planning your own Community Chest approach.

## 3 shared principles of the approach:



1. Co-produced and co-owned
2. Equitable access to funding
3. Use local insights to address unmet needs

## Key messages:

- The approach is transferable across a range of contexts to fund activities that address unmet need and improve the health and wellbeing of local populations.
- VCFSE organisations have the skills and experiences to solve the biggest current challenges to healthcare, they just need the resource and time to innovate and lead.
- This approach should be invested in to foster integrated ways of working across statutory and non-statutory partners to support those impacted most by health inequalities.

# Purpose & Scope

## Purpose of the Toolkit:

- Guides through the approach, process and learnings from the Community Chest pilot.
- Share ways & top tips for delivering a programme of this nature across different settings.

## Who's it for?

- Anyone interested in collaborating at a local level to promote preventative approaches and reduce health inequalities by working in partnership and building on local insights to fund the VCFSE sector to deliver health and wellbeing activities.

## What's included?

- A background to the approach and why investing in the VCFSE sector is so important for reducing health inequalities and supporting prevention.
- A step-by-step guide to the approach including resources, time, tools and assets required to drive this work.
- Two case study examples of how the community chest has been delivered within a borough.

# Background to the Community Chest

The Community Chest programme is a shared investment fund which brings together funding from the NHS and local authorities, and other sources, to support the voluntary and community sector to deliver local health and wellbeing activities.

We piloted a Community Chest approach across the seven boroughs of North East London. Each borough used a slightly different approach to implementing their Community Chest, ensuring that the funding priorities were aligned with their local population's needs.

Over £500K has been allocated to 82 VCFSE organisations and the projects have ranged from delivering weekly basketball sessions for women, to funding community fridges to supporting the immediate pressure from the cost-of-living crisis.

Through the development of the Community Chest approaches within each borough, we have seen collaborative working between local authorities, the NHS and VCFSE organisations to help tackle health inequalities at a hyper-local level.



# Why is it important to invest in the VCFSE locally?

"The Community Chest model can provide positive change for communities - by enabling collaborative working at a local level to help tackle health inequality and drive personalisation within health and social care"

Prof Kevin Fenton, OHID London Regional Director

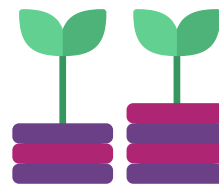
Investing locally in a Community Chest approach builds the capacity within the system to address unmet need, through development in four key areas.

## Building stronger networks



Fostering integrated ways of working by convening the NHS, local authority (LA), VCFSE sector and communities around a shared ambition.

## Enabling health equity



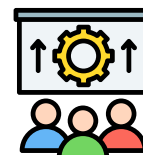
Responding to community intelligence and promoting sustainable impact for communities at a local and hyper-local levels, meeting unmet needs

## Focussing on preventative action



By investing in the VCFSE sector, communities are better supported and the impact of social determinants lessened, improving overall health and wellbeing.

## Enhancing capacity within the health and care system



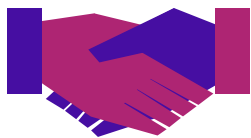
Funding the VCFSE sector to help expand access to care, support prevention, and address the social determinants of health.

[The Community Chest approach aligns to a number of national and regional strategic priorities - read more here!](#)

# Key guiding principles

The Community Chest approach can be adapted across settings, contexts and geographies, however there are some ingredients that are important not to miss!

## Co-produced and co-owned



Collective decision making involving a wide range of stakeholders (including NHS, LA, VCFSE and communities) and building on existing infrastructure for these groups to work together locally.

## Use local insights to address unmet needs



Responding to both the unmet needs of residents and the strengths of local groups and initiatives to address them.

## Equitable access to funding



Ensure funding is inclusive and easily accessible to groups that may have been excluded in the past.



# Who benefits from the Community Chest approach?

There are a number of benefits across different levels of the system

## Residents



- Better access, outcomes and experience of healthcare
- Focus on preventative health and better able to manage current conditions
- Needs better met with the right care at the right time in the right place

## VCFSE organisations



- Increased capacity to address gaps within local services
- Smaller organisations accessing funding where they usually wouldn't be eligible
- Developed new skills and relationships with the statutory sector

## Healthcare services



- Less pressure on the healthcare system due to prevention as social determinants are better supported within the local community

## The wider system



- Relationships built that flourish into cross-sector partnerships
- Better use of resources across all public bodies



# How did we develop the approach?

The approach was developed and tested in Lewisham before being piloted across each of the North East London boroughs

## Where did this work start?

- The Community Led Prevention team at TPHC were undertaking regional work to support the embedding and mainstreaming of social prescribing (SP) in primary care and beyond, as a means to redress health inequity
- Common challenges the team heard when engaging with SP systems included:
  - **Lack of sustainable investment** into the VCFSE sector who deliver health and wellbeing activities that social prescribers refer patients onto
  - **Local insight and data** from social prescribers not sufficiently informing the commissioning of services
  - **Lack of integration** between primary care and local community assets
- The team went looking for examples of where these issues were being addressed

## Developing the approach

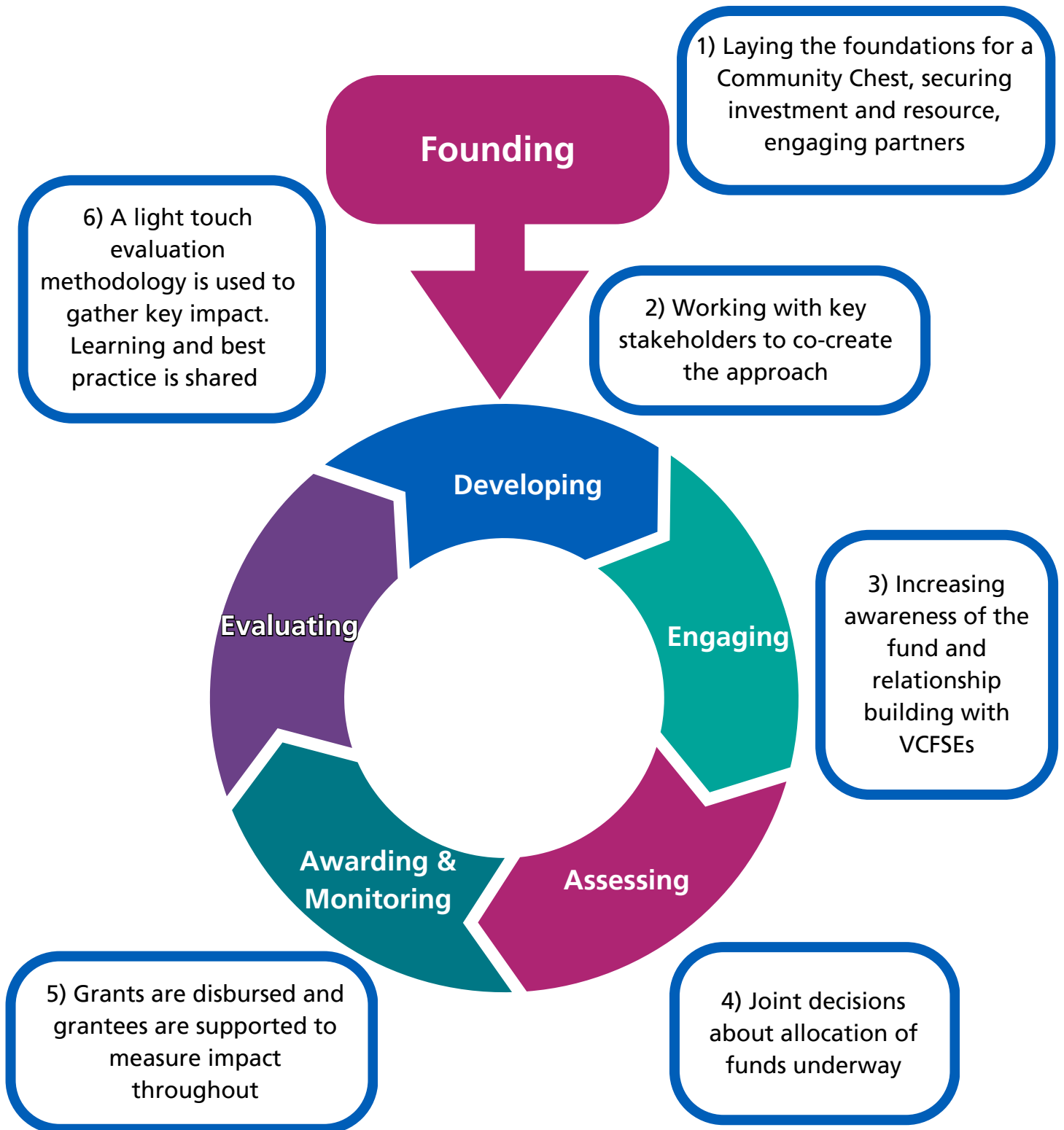
In 2021, the team used this research to develop our own approach, which was tested in Lewisham, and informed a concept paper.

In 2022, the team secured wholesale take up by North East London ICB to pilot the Community Chest approach across all its seven boroughs.

In 2024, the team commissioned Care City to undertake an independent evaluation of the approach

# The Approach

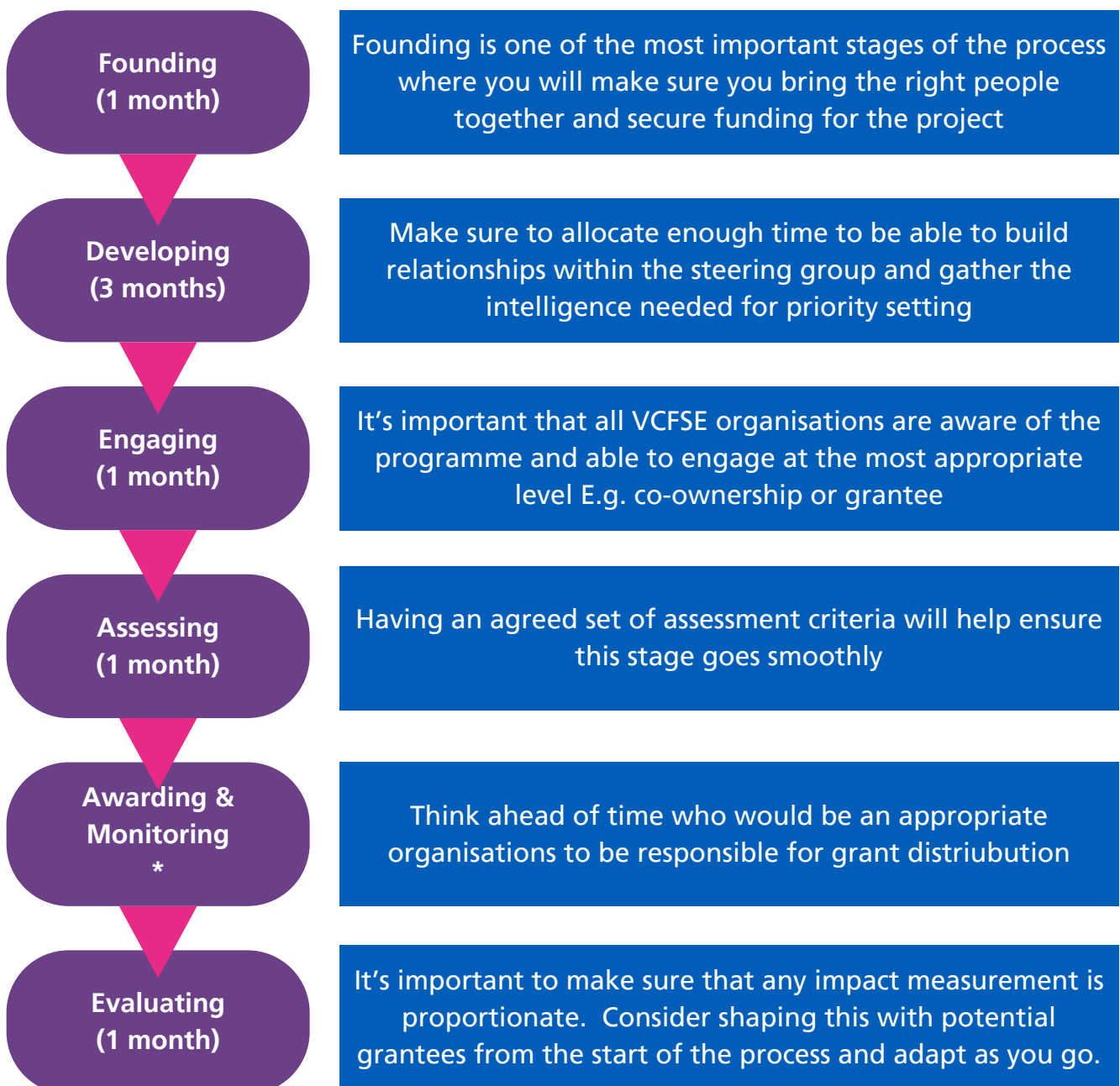
At each stage of the programme, there are aspects to consider



# What resources, time and tools are required?

What are the key ingredients for a Community Chest approach?

## Example activities



\*The length of the awarding and monitoring phase will be dependent on how much time is allocated for grantees to delivery funded activities

# Phase 1 of a Community Chest approach

What are the key ingredients for a Community Chest approach?

This phase focuses on building relationships, designing the Community Chest approach and raising awareness within a local system

Stage	Aim	Actions
<b>Founding</b> Approx 1-2 months	Laying the foundations for a Community Chest at a local level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Securing investment</li><li>• Engaging stakeholders</li><li>• Setting up governance structures</li></ul>
<b>Developing</b> Approx 3 months	Designing and developing the Community Chest approach in partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Building relationships</li><li>• Gathering insights</li><li>• Co-designing the approach</li><li>• Agreeing grant management process</li></ul>
<b>Engaging</b> Approx 1-2 months	Ongoing collaboration process with VCFSEs to raise awareness of the funding opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promoting the fund</li><li>• Holding engagement sessions</li><li>• Supporting VCFSEs with applications</li></ul>

# Phase 2 of a Community Chest approach

What are the key ingredients for a Community Chest approach?

This phase focusses on the stages to deliver a grant funding programme

Stage	Aim	Actions
<p><b>Assessing</b> Approx 1-2 months</p>	<p>Sifting and assessing the bids received</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint decisions about allocation of funds underway</li> <li>• Due diligence of applicants</li> </ul>
<p><b>Awarding &amp; Monitoring</b> *</p>	<p>Awarding the grant funding and monitoring delivery of activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distributing grant funding to successful applicants and providing support</li> <li>• Providing feedback to unsuccessful applicants</li> </ul>
<p><b>Evaluating</b> Approx 3 months</p>	<p>Evaluating the programme and sharing learnings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring and evaluating</li> <li>• Sharing successes of the programme</li> <li>• Thinking about sustainability</li> </ul>

\*The length of the awarding and monitoring phase will be dependent on how much time is allocated for grantees to delivery funded activities

# Founding

What's involved in the founding stage of delivering a Community Chest?

Laying the foundations for a community chest at a local level is vital for success. Things to do include: securing investment, bringing together the core governance, and starting to raise awareness of the programme.

## Securing investment



- NHS funding could include health Inequalities funding, accrued underspend, or funding through NHS Charities
- Local authority funding could include public health funds or community development funding
- Consider funding opportunities from other sources e.g. local businesses or philanthropic

## Governance



- Recruit members to the steering group with representation of key stakeholders from across the system
- Consider how the Community Chest docks into wider structures within your local area

## Engagement



- Lay the foundations for a Community Chest
- Engage with key stakeholders across the health and care system to secure buy-in e.g. NHS, LA, VCFSE sector and communities

### Top tips:

- Think about the existing relationships in your local area and how you will address difficult relationships or unequal power dynamics
- Make sure you have appropriate representation within the steering group. This can impact whether you receive future funding
- VCFSE sector stakeholders should be financially compensated for all involvement - the process should be agreed upfront

# Developing (1)

What's involved in the developing stage of delivering a Community Chest approach?

Working in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders to co-create the direction of the Community Chest. Securing buy-in from frontline workers using data and intelligence from social prescribing services to support decision making & setting up the administration and grant management of the fund.

## Designing



- Decisions should be made collectively. Ensure that all steering group members have an equal voice.
- The overall purpose of the Community Chest should be agreed upfront by the steering group before agreeing the approach and priorities.
- There are a variety of forms the Community Chest could take. This would depend on the local context and the timeframe of the funding. The fund could:
  - Focus on one priority, multiple priorities or be left open.
  - Use participatory budgeting techniques or a more traditional model.
- Use creative techniques to support with priority setting - this could be done through workshops or community events.
- Think about how you can ensure you include the voice of lived experience and communities within the development of the approach.

[Find case study examples of the Community Chest here](#)

### Top tips:

- Make sure it is clear what everyone's roles and responsibilities are.
- Consider having a named person to track actions and monitor progress.
- Check in on roles regularly and be flexible if things aren't working.
- Avoid using jargon. Language should be accessible to all involved.
- Developing a logic model could help to facilitate agreement and alignment.

# Developing (2)

What's involved in the developing stage of delivering a Community Chest approach?

Working in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders to co-create the direction of the Community Chest. Securing buy-in from frontline workers using data and intelligence from SP services to support decision making and setting up the administration and grant management of the fund.

## Data and intelligence



- Data collected from a range of sources will help inform the development of the approach and guide what areas to prioritise.

### Top tips:

- Take a mixed methods approach to identifying unmet needs, including analysis of existing data and discussions with social prescribers from across CYP and adults services.
- Make sure you communicate what unmet needs the programme is aiming to address - both to those involved in programme delivery and potential grantees.

## Application process and grant management



- Agree the application process and grantee criteria.
- Agree who would be responsible for managing the grant. This would include: managing the application process, eligibility checks, awarding funding and due diligence.

### Top tips:

- Consider alternatives or additions to written bids for funding to make the process more inclusive.
- The grant management process should be collectively agreed by the steering group (who will retain oversight of the process).
- You might consider commissioning an organisation to manage the grant such as a CVS or a grant-giving organisation.



# Engaging

What's involved in the engaging stage in delivering a Community Chest approach?

When the Community Chest goes live it will require additional outreach and relationship building with VCFSEs. This includes communicating about the fund and increasing awareness of it. Think about how you: reach organisations that serve marginalised communities, support organisations to make applications and develop skills and capacity around sourcing funding.

## Comms and marketing



- Advertise through existing forums.
- Consider targeted social media campaigns.
- Visit communities in person and spread the word.
- Identify and collaborate with local VCFSE orgs and clinical champions to help raise awareness of the programme.

## Applicant support



- Have clear guidance explaining the application process - ensuring language is accessible.
- Have resource available to support applicants to submit their bids.
- Think about alternative ways to apply to ensure inclusivity.
- Holding applications workshops online or in-person will also encourage applicants to build relationships with each other.

### Top tips:

- Hold in-person or virtual drop-in sessions to allow potential applicants to ask questions. This provides opportunities for VCFSE organisations to support one another e.g. with joint bids or bid writing.
- Record a walkthrough of the application process.
- Hold 1:1 support sessions for organisations who have less experience of bidding for funding.
- Pull together a FAQ document to support applicants.

# Assessing

What's involved in the assessing stage of delivering a Community Chest approach?

Application submissions close and the process of sifting and assessment begins. Risk is considered and evaluated.

## Application assessment and decision-making



- This part of the process can vary substantially depending on the funding approach agreed.
- It's important to be transparent in decision making.
- Provide clear feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

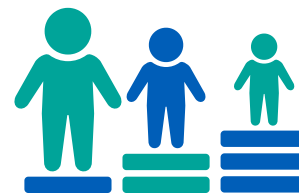
## Risk mitigation



### Questions to consider:

- Is the project achievable?
- How well planned is the activity?
- Has evaluation been committed to?
- Is the budget reasonable?
- How will the funds be managed?

## Ensuring Equity



- Ensure decisions are aligned to agreed priorities.
- Consider how to be inclusive of organisations who have previously been ineligible for grant funding.
- Hold discussions in partnership to ensure decision making is shared.
- Seek to make the process as transparent as possible.

### Top tips:

- If you receive a large number of applications, consider an initial assessment of whether applicants have met certain essential criteria e.g. turnover of organisation or certain compliance requirements.

# Awarding & Monitoring

What's involved in the awarding and monitoring stage of delivering a Community Chest approach?

Grants are disbursed and grantees deliver their funded activities. Grantees are engaged in a light touch process of monitoring through open and flexible follow up with grant managers.

## Grant distribution



- Simple agreements with grantees are signed.
- Grant monies are transferred to successful organisations.

## Ongoing support



- Ensure open and flexible communication and follow up with grantees to build trust and support project needs once funded.
- Ensure simple monitoring is in place before the organisation starts an activity e.g. a monitoring workshop for grantees and a mid phase check in.
- Consider providing opportunities for grantees to come together online or in-person. This can be a space for peer support or sharing successes and learnings.

### Top tips:

- Consider in-person visits to some of the funded activities - this is a great way to continue strengthening relationships and seeing the impact funded activities are having.
- Have a mechanism in place to support grantees with compliance, reporting and monitoring requirements as some organisations may be receiving grant funding for the first time.

# Evaluating

What's involved in the evaluating stage of delivering a Community Chest approach?

A light touch and simple evaluation methodology is used to gather key impact. Learning and best practice is shared through straightforward reporting. This will feedback into stage 2 as a new cycle of the Community Chest begins.

## Measuring impact



- Be led by what grantees already collect.
- Make the process adaptable and consider different levels of evaluation for different grantees.
- Light touch and simple evaluation metrics e.g. number of attendees.
- Data collection tools should be co-developed with the VCFSE sector to ensure relevance and effectiveness.
- Invite video, photo storytelling evaluation formats from applicants.
- Host reflective sessions with all involved in the process.

## Sharing successes



- Develop and share case study examples of successful projects.
- Develop a high level report for the programme.

## Sustainability



- Consider capacity building and mentoring to organisations who may apply for the fund in future.
- Explore opportunities to continue to fund any projects.
- Use learnings to inform future iterations of the Community Chest.

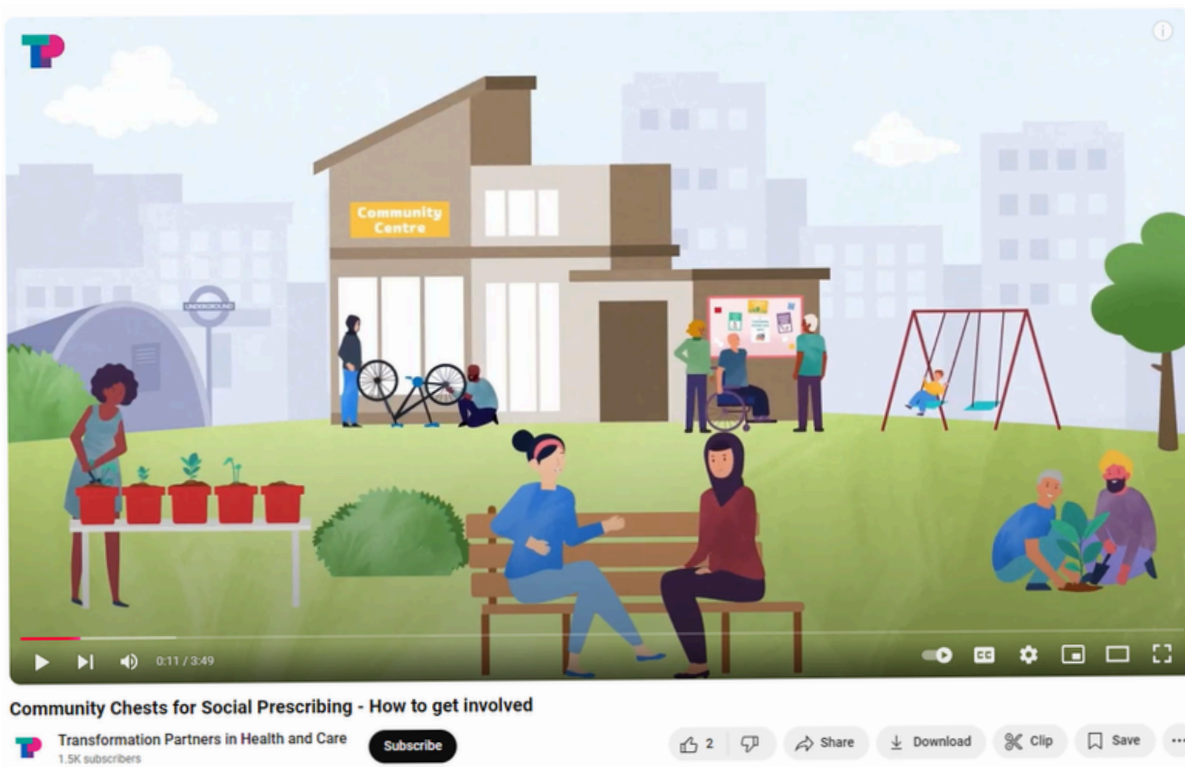
### Top tips:

- Think carefully about what a minimum viable dataset would be for evaluation - ensuring it is proportionate.

- Host a local event or showcase to share and celebrate outcomes of successful projects - invite stakeholders who may be able to provide additional funding.

# How to talk about the programme

How to maximise your communications for impact



- We developed an [animated explainer](#) setting out what a Community Chest is, how it can be delivered and the impact it can have across a local system.
- We have clipped the video into smaller bite size chunks - [you can access these here](#).
- These videos can be used to help raise awareness about the approach and promote the funding opportunity once it goes live.

[We have information web pages for the Community Chest here.](#)  
[These can be used as a basis for any comms materials.](#)

# How to approach funding decisions?

There are number of ways in which the Community Chest approach can be implemented:

## A participatory budgeting approach



Where voluntary and community representatives and residents collectively decide how to distribute the money.

## A community-driven approach



Where control over decision-making and fund allocation is devolved to local communities.

## An open application approach



Where bids are assessed by a panel made up of stakeholders from across the community.

## A partnership approach



Funding could be used to build on existing partnership work taking place locally or convening new partnerships.

# How to demonstrate impact

How do we show what is working and the effect it has at different levels?



## Local System level:

Consider what is impactful for decision makers at this level. If it could lead to a future funding decision, you could encourage data collection of this among grantees.

## Organisational level

An important part of the Community Chest is the relationships built and learnings made. Build in reflection and informal reporting of organisational impacts throughout - this should help grantees rather than add to the to-do list.

## Resident/Patient level

Grantees are likely to have their own ways of collecting this data, especially if they have received funding before. Seek to utilise this rather than replace it. Only add to this if the data will be used to benefit grantees.

# How to demonstrate impact

How do we show what is working and the effect it has at different levels?

## Example Framework for mapping out how you'll measure impact

MEASURE	HOW
<b>Residents/Patient level</b>  A. Wellbeing measures B. Feedback of funded project C. Demographic of participants D. Case studies	Feedback survey for the funded projects
<b>Organisational level</b>  A. Increased capacity to take referrals within the VCFSE sector B. Increased breadth of activities delivered C. Better able to target those who are most in need D. Better able to demonstrate impact and access sustainable funding	Project reports; interviews with grantees
<b>Local System level</b>  A. Increased capacity within local system B. Better integration between NHS, LA and VCFSE sectors C. Health inequalities are being tackled	Reflective sessions; project reports; interviews with grantees; activity feedback survey



# Key learnings from evaluating the approach

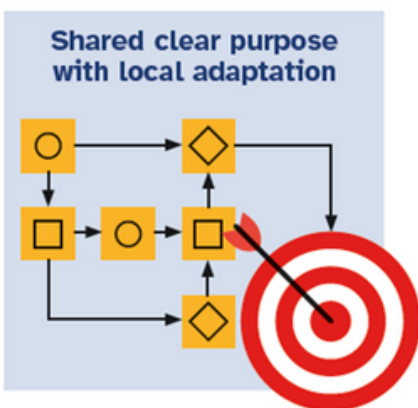
Key learnings and recommendations from the Independent Community Chest evaluation carried out by Care City

The team commissioned an independent evaluation by Care City, a social enterprise based in North East London, of its implementation in Tower Hamlets and Barking & Dagenham.

These two London boroughs took different approaches to local development and delivery of the programme: one took a traditional grant model approach to distributing funds and outsourced the ongoing delivery of the programme to a third party; and the other took a more collaborative, participatory and VCFSE-led approach to programme development, fund distribution and ongoing delivery.

Both approaches demonstrated strengths and weaknesses in relation to the aims of the Community Chest approach.

## Key enablers for success:



- Places should articulate a clear purpose statement for the programme, tailored to local needs and agreed upon by all stakeholders.
- Developing a local logic model can facilitate agreement and alignment.



- Places must openly address any difficult relationships or power imbalances between statutory and non-statutory partners.
- Communication from both sides should be free of jargon.
- Shared decision-making and inclusion of the VCFSE sector is crucial, and financial compensation for their involvement in the process is also essential.

# Key learnings from evaluating the approach

Key learnings and recommendations from the Independent Community Chest evaluation carried out by Care City

## Strong communication and engagement strategy



- The organisation of local events is vital for building enthusiasm around the programme.
- Events should include all key stakeholders and clearly articulate aims and decision-making criteria.
- Consider organising frequent opportunities to bring participants together to share learning, allowing a more iterative approach to delivery.

## Using local insights to identify unmet needs



- A mixed methods approach should be adopted, combining existing data analysis and consultations with social prescribers.
- It's essential to clearly communicate identified unmet needs to all stakeholders and integrate these needs into funding decision criteria.

## Transparent and accessible application process



- Places should consider alternatives to written funding bids, ensuring equal opportunities for organisations less experienced with bid writing.
- Clear decision-making criteria and communication processes with unsuccessful organisations are essential.

## Co-leading and partnership working



- Ideally the programme should be delivered by both statutory and non-statutory partners working together.
- Regardless of the delivery method, the programme should also ensure there is focus on building relationships between funded organisations and those referring to them (i.e. social prescribers).

# Key learnings from evaluating the approach

Key learnings and recommendations from the Independent Community Chest evaluation carried out by Care City

## Ring-fenced programme management and support



- A named individual responsible for programme management should ensure timely delivery.
- Support mechanisms for funded organisations, including compliance and reporting, are crucial for relationship building.

## Complimentary to social prescribing services



- Engagement with digital SP referral platforms and the active involvement of social prescribers with funded organisations are necessary for effective SP referrals, evaluation and monitoring.

## Proportionate data collection and evaluation



- Careful consideration should be given to the minimum viable data set required for monitoring and evaluation.
- Data collection tools should be co-developed with the VCFSE sector to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

## Collaborate with local champions



- Identifying and collaborating with local VCFSE organisations and clinical champions for the programme is vital to engaging and solidifying support of these sectors around the programme.

# Appendices



# Links to national policies and strategies

The Community Chest approach aligns with several national and regional strategic priorities

## National Policy

- **National policy** supports a cultural shift across health and social care, away from a biomedical model of care to a more biopsychosocial model of care, facilitated by **community leadership, collaboration and prevention**.



The Labour Manifesto states 'The National Health Service needs to move to a Neighbourhood Health Service, with more care delivered in local communities to spot problems earlier. To achieve this, we must over time shift resources to primary care and community services.'

Other Reports/Strategies	Links to Community Chest approaches
<a href="#">The Darzi Report</a>	Stated that "the NHS budget is not being spent where it should be - too great a share is being spent in hospitals, too little in the community, and productivity is too low"
<a href="#">The Fuller Stocktake Report</a>	Emphasises that proactive, preventative and personalised care and community led prevention are key facilitators and enablers of the future of modern general practice.
<a href="#">The Hewitt Review</a>	Calls for a shift to upstream investment in preventative services and interventions recognising that a significant amount of activity is delivered by the VCFSE sector.
<a href="#">London Health Inequalities Strategy</a>	Emphasises the need to work in partnership with the VCFSE sector, who have always played a crucial role in addressing London's health inequalities, but recognising the challenges that the sector faces such as funding.

# NEL pilots

Overall summary of each of the NEL pilots plus borough report links

Borough	Approach	Funding priorities	Management of fund
<a href="#"><u>Barking &amp; Dagenham</u></a>	Participatory budgeting	Must evidence there is a need for the activity proposed and complements the priorities outlined in the Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy	VCFSE Steering Group
<a href="#"><u>Havering</u></a>	Traditional grant model	Cost of living, learning disabilities, long term conditions, mental health and isolation	Local authority
<a href="#"><u>Newham</u></a>	Funded 3 health advisors	Health advisors co-ordinated activities to target Somali, West African and South Asian communities to improve their health and wellbeing	One Newham / Newham New Deal Partnership
<a href="#"><u>City &amp; Hackney</u></a>	Traditional grant model	Access to health services, access to financial support	Hackney Giving
<a href="#"><u>Redbridge</u></a>	Traditional grant model	Cost of living, mental health, asylum seekers and refugees, learning difficulties and disabilities, elderly people support	Redbridge CVS
<a href="#"><u>Tower Hamlets</u></a>	Traditional grant model	Social isolation/loneliness, mental health, culturally targeted health and wellbeing activities for Black Caribbean and African communities and cost of living	East End Community Foundation
<a href="#"><u>Waltham Forest</u></a>	Traditional grant model	Mental health and loneliness, cost of living, learning disabilities, digital exclusion, health access and literacy	Local Authority

# Barking & Dagenham case study

## Background

Recognising the historical power imbalance between the statutory and non-statutory organisations, the Community Chest in B&D was used as a way to devolve power to the VCFSE sector.

## Community Chest approach

- A participatory funding model was used building on the participatory budgeting approach pioneered in Brazil
- The Steering Group held a Consortium Festival to provide an opportunity for other VCFSE organisations to feed into the design process of the fund, build partnerships, and understand the application process and links to social prescribing
- Applicants submitted an EOI which included project information, intended outcomes and provisional budget
- Applicants were then invited to attend a participatory budgeting event to pitch their projects for 5 minutes
- Only VCFSE organisations that pitched were able to vote on the applications and scoring was out of 10 against the 4 core criteria
- VCFSE organisations were remunerated for taking part in both events

## Impact

- Attendees of funded activities saw an increase in health, happiness, connection and self esteem
- The fund enabled VCFSE organisations to increase capacity or deliver additional activities
- There was significant collaboration with LBBDD officers and the VCFSE steering group members, with increased positive relationships formed as a consequence.
- More VCFSE organisations were made aware of social prescribing within the borough

## Funding & Governance

- The NHS and Local Authority each match funded £45K for the Community Chest plus there was some underspend from 2023
- The total budget was **£96,474** which was used to fund projects and remunerate VCFSE orgs
- A Steering Group was formed which was entirely made up of VCFSE representatives with the Local Authority providing admin support
- Steering Group members led the delivery which included designing the approach, supporting potential applicants, facilitating the participatory budgeting event and supporting grantees with measuring impact
- Steering Group members were remunerated for all of their involvement

## Funding criteria

- **Equality, diversity and inclusion** – a focus on supporting those who are left behind or not well provided for by the current offer
- **Capacity building** – applicants needed to show how they were strengthening their organisation's capabilities to deliver projects
- **Existing health priorities** – proposals needed to support and compliment local health priorities
- **Evidence** – all proposals needed to show the impact of their work and share this with other organisations

*"Business in general, and running a social business can feel lonely, applying for grants can feel tasking and competitive but I felt genuine awe for each and every business/project presented"*

**Feedback from grantee**

## Find out more!

[Barking and Dagenham Community Chest case study](#)

## Contact Information

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# City & Hackney case study

## Background

Hackney Giving, London Borough of Hackney (LBH), the NEL Personalised Care programme and the City and Hackney Neighbourhoods programme worked together to pilot the Community Chest approach.

## Community Chest approach

- Initial discussions were held between Hackney CVS and NHS colleagues. It was agreed that Hackney Giving would be the ideal mechanism for distributing funds.
- Hackney Giving worked with colleagues from NHS North East London to establish programme priorities, funding levels, eligibility criteria and timelines for programme delivery.
- Hackney Giving produced application guidance giving details of the funding and an application form, aiming to keep these as simple as possible.
- Three 'How to Apply' workshops were held online to provide potential applicants with additional guidance.
- Applications were assessed by Hackney Giving before being presented to a grant panel for approval - the panel consisted of representatives from NEL ICB, Hackney CVS and VCFSE organisations.

## Impact

- Residents were supported to access health and financial services. A few examples of the impact of this support includes improved confidence, empowerment to self-advocate, and supporting with loneliness.
- The VCFSE demonstrated its effectiveness in increasing access to health and financial information.
- The value of working in partnership across statutory and non-statutory sectors was highlighted with many success stories and examples of how these projects made a difference to local residents.

## Funding & Governance

- £25,000 was available for distribution to not-for-profit organisations in Hackney and/or the City of London.
- £3,750 was allocated to Hackney CVS for the administration of the programme.
- A decision was taken to commission Hackney Giving, a local giving programme run by Hackney CVS, to distribute the fund due to their existing role in supporting grassroots community projects.
- Hackney Giving's role included: processing payments, acting as a point of contact for grantees, visiting projects during delivery and processing monitoring forms.

## Funding criteria

- Grants of £2,500 would be awarded for work towards the following outcome: "Increasing access to health services and financial support for people living in Hackney and the City who experience barriers to provision."
- This wording was chosen over "reducing barriers to access" due to the size of the grant available as it wouldn't be able to make a significant difference to reducing the barriers that people experience but more realistically would help people to get past those barriers.

*"Participants were able to avail themselves of technology in the modern world given the increasing need to use technology post Covid 19 pandemic in accessing GP services and engaging with the outside world... Many who have had negative experiences with learning new skills and technology were able to overcome their fears and anxiety in accessing online services."*

**Feedback from grantee**

## Find out more!

[City and Hackney Community Chest case study](#)

## Contact Information

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# Reflections

We were committed to seeking feedback from all those involved throughout the course of the Community Chest pilots. We've heard inspiring reflections from residents, VCFSE organisations and wider stakeholders interested in the approach.

## Feedback from participants of Community Chest funded activities

*"I look forward to attending musical rehearsals and performances. I'm a family carer to my adult son. It offers me respite, mindfulness when learning and performing, relaxation and social interaction."*

*"It's a warm and cosy space and different to other groups available as there is also a focus on the wellbeing of parents attending"*

*"It brought the community together - I met and chatted with people that I would not normally speak with. I also got to learn about Bengali culture and its rich history"*

*"I'm able to speak more at school without feeling too shy. have learnt to make friends with children I don't know. Lots of new skills through drama, dance, musical theatre, art workshops. It's amazing attending and I never want leave."*

*"What I learn here, I am sharing with others like home gardening projects or bird houses. It's already started on a small scale, I talk about it to my family and friends. It's nice to be in a garden...I feel healed when I come here. Even though I am supervised, I feel the support and I feel the benefit"*

# Reflections

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## Feedback from Community Chest grantees:

"The fund enabled us to invite in professionals who run workshops to tackle issues that were discussed and requested like wellbeing, mindfulness, Health, Dance and we were able to take them to other activities."

"My understanding of how important and pivotal social prescribing is for the community has greatly increased after this Community Chest grant. I can see how important this pot of funding is in order to help organisations and individuals in the community and to serve the community."

"This effort has meant being able to build connections with community members, service providers and health professionals and gain a deeper understanding of how working collaboratively and creating clear signposting can benefit the residents attending the hub and it has allowed me to tailor my programming to better serve the community and create more impactful experiences for the women involved."

"By addressing language, cultural, and digital barriers, our ongoing project is empowering individuals with IBD to access crucial health services and financial support, and is enhancing their well-being and quality of life."

"I have gained so many life experiences that I will never forget, and it has helped me grow into a person of dedication, integrity, determination and compassion."

"We have engaged with representatives from NHS Social Prescribing across the borough and attended a Social Prescribing team meeting. We are actively working with the team to explore opportunities for shared projects to benefit service users in the future. The project has helped to connect NHS Social Prescribing with homeless people in our borough."



# More information?

[Visit our website!](#)