

To: Forum for Empower Communities Group

On: Tuesday 15 November 2022

Report by: Chief Executive, Engage Renfrewshire

TITLE: COMMUNITIES MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING FUND

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report updates the Forum on the Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the members note the contents of the report.

3 Overview

- 3.1 From the £120 million Recovery and Renewal Fund, Scottish Government agreed £15 million for a Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund. On 14th October, 2021 Engage Renfrewshire was awarded £509,542 from the Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund to be distributed locally by 31st March 2022. The intended outcome of this Fund was to *“develop a culture of mental wellbeing and prevention within local communities and across Scotland with improved awareness of how we can all stay well and help ourselves and others”*.

The overarching aim of the Fund is to support community based initiatives that promote and develop good mental health and wellbeing and/or mitigate and protect against the impact of distress and mental ill health within the adult population, with a particular focus in 2021/22 on:

- Tackling priority issues within the Transition and Recovery Plan

such as suicide prevention, social isolation and loneliness, prevention and early intervention

- Addressing the mental health inequalities exacerbated by the pandemic and the needs of a range of 'at risk' groups locally.
- Supporting small 'grass roots' community groups and organisations to deliver such activities
- Providing opportunities for people to connect with each other, build trusted relationships and revitalise communities
- Supporting recovery and creativity locally by building on what is already there, what was achieved through the pandemic, and by investing in creative solutions

Applications were accepted from a range of voluntary, 'not for profit' organisations, associations, groups and clubs or consortiums/partnerships which have a strong community focus for their activities. The range of organisations that can apply are:

- Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisations (SCIO)
- Unincorporated Associations
- Companies Limited by Guarantee
- Trusts
- Not-for-profit company or asset locked company or Community Interest Companies (CIC)
- Cooperative and Community Benefit Societies
- Community councils

The attached PDF report provides an oversight of the funding awarded so far and the plans for 2022/23

Renfrewshire Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund



Engage Renfrewshire
2022

Background

As part of the Recovery and Renewal Fund, the Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care announced a new Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for adults on 15 October 2021, with £15 million being made available in 2021- 22.

Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) were selected as the means for distributing funds locally and Engage Renfrewshire initially received £509,542.91 to allocate to third sector organisations and community groups in Renfrewshire.

TSIs were selected to distribute funds partly in response to their efforts during the pandemic; the Scottish Government's Third Sector Unit recognised the swift response of the TSIs in coordinating community efforts during lockdowns.



The intended outcome of the Fund is to “develop a culture of mental wellbeing and prevention within local communities and across Scotland with improved awareness of how we can all stay well and help ourselves and others”.

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The numbers

our process and how many groups we were able to support

Our application period was open from 15th November 2021 to January 7th 2022. We received **72** applications in total which corresponded to over **£1.2 million** in requested funding. Our application was consciously light-touch and accessible, as we recognised that several groups applying would likely not be used to long application processes.

Our decision-making panel was made up by cross-sector partners from Renfrewshire Council, the HSCP Health Improvement Team and Engage Renfrewshire.

The panel met **five** times and used their expertise, as well as information gathered during November's information sessions, to allocate all monies across **47** projects.

In late February 2022 we were given an additional **£49,950.00** to distribute as a result of consultation regarding high quality bids that had missed out due to funding restrictions. With these additional funds we were able to support an additional five organisations, taking our total to **52** projects

The impact

what groups and community members say about the work of the fund

Thanks to Get Active Coaching for allowing me the opportunity to not only learn new skills but also provide the experience for me to lead during their holiday camp programme. Since completing these courses, I have been able to find regular part time work alongside my coaching.

Get Active Coaching coach training feedback

79% stated they feel less isolated, and 90% said they felt their emotional health has improved, since receiving our dedicated wellbeing support.

I will be forever grateful for all the help and support I received.

HomeStart 'Wellbeing Project' feedback

Women+ tell us that the spaces give them an opportunity to meet other women+ in a safe, relaxed environment, and they feel less lonely.

Class was relaxing and comforting. Today I was able to say I was proud of myself for once and that was a really big achievement.

Kairos Women+ 'Mental Wellness Group' feedback

Coming to the group has made me feel like I am NOT worthless and has made me feel more confident about myself.

I am excited about having a better understanding of my mental health.

New Beginnings personal development course feedback

I love it! It gets me out, because it's too long a day sitting in. And it's lovely meeting others.

Brick Lane Studios 'Music Cafe' feedback

Examples of activity



ReMode

Paisley

ReMode were given £2,740 to support the Volunteer Mental Health & Wellbeing programme which was devised to help ease people back into face-to-face contact after long periods of isolation.

The programme included the implementation of a Wellness Action Plan which took the form of a questionnaire for all volunteers. The confidential questionnaire encouraged volunteers to identify any supports ReMode could put in place to ensure healthy participation for all.

Volunteers have reported that they feel a greater sense of confidence in volunteering with Remode, that they feel looked after knowing that they have these procedures in place to safeguard those who need it.



Pachedu

Based in Ferguslie Park, connecting ethnically diverse people across Renfrewshire

Pachedu were given £20,000 for a variety of activities based around improving their community members' mental health

Activities ranged from advocacy work, cooking, gardening, focus groups exploring the development of a Mental Health Toolkit, community wellbeing map, and social events for men and women. One participant from such an event shared the below:

"This is such an amazing experience to participate. As people from the minority group, we always need opportunities to socialise and eventually be in the position to support each other through our daily hassles. Please keep the ball rolling".



Renfrew YMCA

Renfrew

Renfrew YMCA were given £22,620 to employ support workers to develop programmes of support for Renfrew parents. Programmes so far include fitness and social activities for new parents.

Both of these activities seek to create a safe space for parents, encouraging them to find time for themselves while also bonding with other parents and sharing their experiences. One participant shared the impact the work is having for them:

"This groups is the best thing that has happened to me since I've had my baby. I am new to the area and the country, so this group has helped me meet so many mums and I am very grateful."

When you find a place to Gather
A place you feel safe
All you need to do
Is sit and embrace

It can be somewhere
With many or few
As long as you are happy
And can be the real you

Gather with others
Or be somewhere yourself
What ever it takes
To lift your mental health

Be surrounded by love
Health, healing and protection
And take moments
To have self reflection

It's time to find a place to gather
That place you really need
And when you feel planted
You can sow your seed

No gathering to big
No gathering to small
Just remain strong
And continue to stand tall

Michaela Burns
20 April 2022

This poem was submitted as part of RASA's 'Poems with Purpose 2' poetry collection, the printing of which was funded by CMHWB. Our thanks to Michaela and RASA for allowing us to share here.

Challenges and next year's fund

Some common challenges faced by our groups are noted below. We note these so we may learn and understand groups' needs going in to second year.

- Hesitancy to re-engage in person - this was particularly true for those who were deemed most at risk during the pandemic.
- Staff and volunteer recruitment and retention post lockdown.
- Cost of living crisis - both for organisations' costs and the impact this is having on individuals' mental health.



We were allocated £504,837.13 to distribute in our second year and opened our application process in September 2022.

Activities will take place throughout 2023, with monies to be distributed to groups in January 2023 and all activity finished up by the end of December. New and previously funded groups are eligible to apply and we look forward to being able to develop work already undertaken this year.

Guidance from Scottish Government regarding the second year did not change dramatically from the first year, and the fund priorities and outcomes remain the same. There were however some additions made, partly in response to what we at TSI level had noted and fed back. The second year of funding will, for example, be able to support projects and activity supporting emerging crises such as the cost of living crisis.

Updates on the fund will be shared to partners and any interested stakeholders may also use our website and dedicated instagram to find out more information.

www.engagerenfrewshire.org

[instagram.com/renmhwb](https://www.instagram.com/renmhwb)

RENFREWSHIRE



COMMUNITY
MENTAL HEALTH &
WELLBEING FUND