

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 16th March 2023

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director – Adult Services

PORTFOLIO: Employment, Learning and Skills and Community

SUBJECT: Voluntary Sector Funding – Grant Allocations 2023/24

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To report on the Voluntary Sector Grant Funding Awards for 2023/24.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board approve the grant allocations as outlined in this report at Section 3.3.**

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 Halton Borough Council has been awarding direct grants to local voluntary and charitable organisations for a number of years. The opportunity is advertised on the Council website and applications invited. Applications are assessed against key criteria including: impact on and outcomes for local people; demonstrable wider social impact such as volunteering and training and development opportunities for local people; the impact on reducing the need for statutory services.

Applications are assessed and recommendations agreed by a panel consisting of the Executive Board Member with portfolio responsibility for the Voluntary Sector and Officers from the People Directorate.

3.2 **Monitoring Arrangements**

1) All grants must agree a Service Level Agreement and provide quarterly monitoring reports. Grants under £5,000 provide midyear and end of year reports.

2) Review meetings are held with the organisations in receipt of core grant on an annual basis.

3) Voluntary sector grant performance monitoring information contributes to corporate assessments.

3.3 Voluntary Sector Core Funding Grants

The grants are listed below; the report is in the context of the budget allocation and the panel's assessment. These recommendations are for an annual allocation for the financial year 2023/24.

The budget available is **£226,640**

2023/24

Amount	Organisation Name
£143,350	Halton Citizens Advice Bureau
£38,700	Halton & St Helens VCA
£11,500	Widnes & Runcorn Cancer Support Group
£9,000	Relate
£5,000	Cheshire Asbestos Victims Support
£5,000	Halton Child Contact Centre
£4,000	Samaritans
£4,000	Vision Support
£3,000	Cheshire Race & Equality Council (CHAWREC)
£900	Greenfingers Gardening Group

TOTAL £224,450

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None at this stage.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The recommended grants do not exceed the current budget allocations.

5.2 The work of the voluntary sector organisations receiving grants impacts greatly on health improvements, social inclusion, community involvement, anti-poverty and diversity issues.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

The service delivery from organisations receiving core grants in many cases is cross cutting in the context of the Council's strategic priorities.

There are significant levels of welfare rights and debt handling support provided which impacts on anti-poverty issues for the Borough.

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

The work delivered by Relate in preventing family breakdown has a direct impact on those children and young people in the Borough.

The Samaritans works with local schools on suicide prevention and following a suicide, supporting school staff, students and their families.

Widnes & Runcorn Cancer support group offer support to all members of families affected by the disease, encompassing young members of families.

Halton Citizens Advice attends local schools and provide training to support young children prepare for adulthood e.g. financial capability training, interview skills

Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Race and Equality Centre (CHAWREC) immigration work provides support around keeping families together.

Halton Child Contact Centre aims to build healthy relationships with families in the event of family breakdown.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

Halton Citizens Advice offers a nationally recognised volunteer training programme to local people to help them gain skills and increase confidence whilst volunteering and completing training.

Halton and St Helens VCA's volunteering opportunities are often accessed by people on disability allowances or long term unemployed. The confidence and new skills learnt through volunteering can lead to them gaining employment.

Relate's counselling has a direct positive effect on people's self confidence and communication skills and on their ability to concentrate and cope and succeed in the workplace.

Vision Support provide individuals with support to access employment and other support agencies such as Jobcentre Plus or training agencies that can help people to access training or other services to help retain or seek employment opportunities.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Widnes & Runcorn Cancer Support Group supports individuals and families from first diagnosis to living beyond cancer – including coping with grief and loss caused by cancer.

Cheshire, Halton & Warrington Race & Equality Centre (CHAWREC) will actively work with local Gypsy and Traveller communities regarding the increase in suicide levels amongst Traveller men.

Cheshire Asbestos Victims Support Group seeks to maximise clients' income to relieve stress resulting in less visits to hospitals, The group also provide contact for clients and their families, which decreases their feelings of isolation.

Vision Support provides a resource centre for visually impaired and offers home visits and welfare rights support via dedicated Rehabilitation Assistants.

Greenfingers Gardening Group sell their produce to the community, which helps people obtain fresh produce at reasonable prices.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Halton Citizens Advice works closely with Trading Standards and the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline to try and combat scams and help prevent people falling victim to scammers.

Cheshire, Halton & Warrington Race & Equality Centre (CHAWREC) is a hate crime reporting centre and provides advice and practical support to victims of hate crime.

Cheshire Asbestos Victims Support Group generates awareness of the dangers of asbestos at home, at work and in the environment. Samaritans work with Network Rail and local railway stations to reduce suicide activity at Runcorn and Widnes stations. Samaritans have also worked with the Council in relation to the new and existing Bridge crossings to ensure suicide opportunities are minimised.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

Halton & St Helens VCA has enabled an increase in voluntary and community groups using the venue for meetings, conferences and events for the public.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The Quality Assurance Team will monitor the grants and ensure the Council and Halton residents receive value for money.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 To receive a grant, organisations have to demonstrate that acceptable equality and diversity policies are in place.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The implementation of the grant funding allocations at section 3.3. will have no effect on the environment.

10.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None under the meaning of the Act.