

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 16 January 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director of Adults Services

PORTFOLIO: Employment, Learning and Skills, Leisure and Community

SUBJECT: Voluntary Sector Funding – Grant Allocations 2024/25

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To report on the Voluntary Sector Grant Funding Awards for 2024/25.

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.

In January 2023 the available grant was reduced as part of the efficiency programme

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 mid-year 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 table below outlines the original application amount, along with the proposed allocation based on the budget available.

These recommendations are for an annual allocation for the financial year 2024/25.

The budget available is **£27,000**

Application Amount	Proposed Allocation	Organisation Name
£143,350	£3,802	Halton Citizens Advice Bureau
£21,285	£3,802	Halton & St Helens VCA
£11,500	£3,802	Halton Cancer Support Group
£5,000	£3,802	Cheshire Asbestos Victims Support
£5,000	£3,802	Halton Child Contact Centre
£4,000	£3,802	Samaritans
£4,000	£3,802	Cheshire Race & Equality Council (CHAWREC)
£770	£385	Greenfingers Gardening Group
£194,905	£26,999	TOTALS

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.

6.1 **Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence**

Halton 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.

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

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

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.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

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

Halton 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.

6.4 **Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need**
CHAWREC will actively work with local hard to reach groups to support access to services.

6.5 **Working Towards a Greener Future**

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

6.6 **Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community**

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.

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 Voluntary and charitable organisations can have positive impacts on local communities and support people and the wider community in a diverse way.

Organisations were requested for information on how the work they undertake reflects the diversity of the local community during the application stage

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None identified.

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

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.