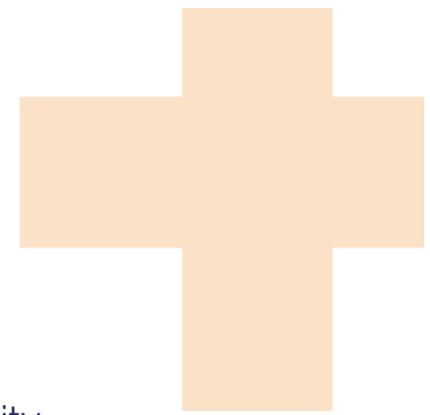




# Community Empowerment Fund Impact Report 2025

## **Our Vision**

**A society where all people can live with dignity, lead fulfilled lives and realise their full potential.**



# Community Empowerment Fund Impact Report

At Local Solutions our mission is to Empower Individuals and Support Communities, the Community Empowerment Fund is one of the clearest ways we are bringing that to life.

Launched as part of our 50th Anniversary celebrations, the Fund has continued to grow, backing brilliant people and groups with ideas that improve lives and strengthen communities across the Liverpool City Region and beyond.

From safe spaces for young people and grassroots mental health support to neighbourhood projects that brighten up local streets, the Fund is all about removing barriers, building confidence and making good things happen close to home.

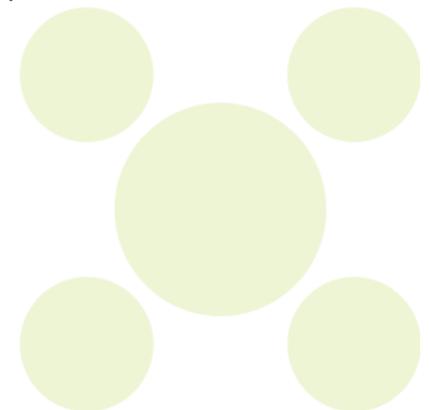
What makes it special is the people. The individuals and groups who have turned small grants into something meaningful, filled with care, energy and lasting impact.

Through our regular network events, we have seen ideas shared and new partnerships begin. All of it rooted in a belief in community-led change.

In this year's Impact Report, we are proud to share just some of the inspiring projects we have supported and the difference they are making every day.



**Tom Harrison**  
Chief Executive, Local Solutions





## Anthony Davies Bereavement Café

Liverpool | Grant awarded: £1,500 | People supported: 100+

The Anthony Davies Bereavement Café was born from love, loss and a desire to help others find hope after heartbreak.

After the sudden loss of her husband, Lisa realised there was nowhere offline for parents to turn when supporting young children through grief - particularly those under 5. With a two-year-old daughter of her own, she saw the gap first-hand.

Thanks to funding from the Community Empowerment Fund, Lisa created a safe and welcoming space for families to come together - setting up four monthly bereavement cafés where children and parents can connect, share, and support one another.

Crafts and creative activities give little ones ways to express emotions they might not have words for yet, and parents are supported with carefully chosen books to help guide age-appropriate conversations about loss.

***"It's about creating a space where people feel seen, heard and valued, especially those who've slipped through the cracks."***

The impact includes:

- ✓ A safe, welcoming environment for people with additional needs
- ✓ Free, local access to mental health-focused activities
- ✓ A growing sense of connection, confidence and community



# St Helens Shed

*St Helens | Grant awarded: £2,000 | People supported: 25*

In a quiet corner of St Helens, what started as a patch of wasteland beside an allotment has grown into something far greater than a workshop - it's become a lifeline.

Thanks to funding from the Community Empowerment Fund, St Helens Shed has been able to purchase rechargeable batteries to power their woodworking tools - a game-changer for a site with no electricity. The tools allow members to craft wooden items that are sold to help sustain the project.

But the true power of the Shed lies in its people. Each week, 25 men come together not just to build, but to bond. For many, it's the one place they feel connected, useful and heard.

*"If I didn't come here, I'd just be sitting at home watching TV. It's great to get out with the lads."*

The Shed offers more than skills - it provides purpose, friendship, and a space to open up. With a simple investment, the project has sparked deep and lasting impact.

The impact includes:

- ✓ Improved mental health
- ✓ Reduced social isolation
- ✓ A more vibrant, inclusive community space



# Select Training - Mini Medics

*Sefton | Grant awarded: £1,827 | People supported: 80*

In the heart of Netherton, children aged 7–10 and their parents are learning to look after their mental health — together.

Thanks to funding from the Community Empowerment Fund, Select Training is delivering Mini Medics Mental Health Training at L30 Community Centre - a free, family-focused programme that's building resilience, confidence, and conversation around emotional wellbeing.

Through fun, age-appropriate sessions, families take part in activities like mindfulness painting, breathing techniques, and self-care planning.

With sessions held in a welcoming community space, families not only gain tools to manage worries but also feel more connected and supported.

***“This training has helped me and my son talk more about feelings — and how to deal with them.”***

The impact includes:

- ✓ Increased awareness of mental health from an early age
- ✓ Stronger family communication
- ✓ Accessible support in a trusted local space



## Fishing the Mind

*Liverpool | Grant awarded: £1,000 | People supported: 50*

Sometimes, the most powerful support comes in the simplest form - a quiet spot by the water, good company, and space to breathe.

With funding from the Community Empowerment Fund, Fishing the Mind is bringing people together through inclusive, low-pressure fishing sessions that support mental health and wellbeing.

Open to people of all ages and backgrounds, the group uses angling as a gentle way to reduce isolation, encourage connection, and promote time in nature. There's no expectation to talk - but always the space to be heard.

The grant has helped cover the cost of equipment and bait, removing financial barriers and ensuring that anyone can take part, whether they're picking up a rod for the first time or returning to a long-lost hobby.

*"It's peaceful - I come away feeling lighter."*

The impact includes:

- ✓ Improved mental wellbeing
- ✓ Reduced social isolation
- ✓ A calm, inclusive space for connection



# Bold Bhaile

*St Helens | Grant awarded: £1000 | People supported: 50+*

At Bold Bhaile, everyone is welcomed with open arms. Based in St Helens, this friendly, inclusive group is creating space for people to look after their mental health, connect with others, and feel part of something positive.

Led by a former Registered Mental Health Nurse, Bold Bhaile offers opportunities and social inclusion to people aged 16+ with additional needs - and thanks to funding from the Community Empowerment Fund, they're now opening up that support to the wider community.

The grant is helping deliver regular wellbeing workshops and creative sessions, giving local people the chance to build confidence, try something new, and focus on their mental health in a supportive setting.

Funding has gone towards materials, venue costs and local promotion - helping to spread the word and grow the reach of this much-needed project.

The impact includes:

- ✓ A safe, welcoming environment for people with additional needs
- ✓ Free, local access to mental health-focused activities
- ✓ A growing sense of connection, confidence and community



## Merseyside Live Steam & Model Engineers

*Liverpool | Grant awarded: £750 | People supported: 100+*

For over 80 years, Merseyside Live Steam & Model Engineers have brought joy, curiosity and connection to Calderstones Park.

Every weekend, families hop aboard their miniature steam trains - but behind the scenes, the club is doing so much more. By teaching young people about engineering, offering hands-on learning, and preserving skills that span generations, they're inspiring the next wave of makers and builders.

With support from the Community Empowerment Fund, the club purchased essential equipment to continue delivering safe and inclusive experiences for the public.

The improvements are helping them welcome more people, run activities smoothly, and expand their community outreach.

Funding has gone towards materials, venue costs and local promotion - helping to spread the word and grow the reach of this much-needed project.

The impact includes:

- ✓ Inclusive, intergenerational learning experiences
- ✓ Opportunities for young people to explore engineering
- ✓ A vibrant, welcoming space that brings the community together



L I F E B O A T  
C O M M U N I T Y R E C O V E R Y H U B

LEARN  
AND  
GROW

AT THE LIFEBOAT

## The Lifeboat Project

*Liverpool | Grant awarded: £2,000 | People supported: 100+*

Across the UK, ketamine misuse is rising - particularly among young people. But while the headlines focus on the crisis, few organisations are offering hands-on, peer-led support for the people and families caught in the middle of it. That's where The Lifeboat Project steps in.

Run entirely by volunteers with lived experience, the project is a safe space for those affected by ketamine misuse to find understanding, practical advice and real connection. In just a short time, they've become a lifeline for families who feel overwhelmed, isolated and unsure where to turn.

Thanks to a grant from the Community Empowerment Fund, the team has been able to scale up their outreach work – producing leaflets and awareness materials, covering volunteer expenses, and increasing their ability to respond to a growing number of referrals across the Liverpool City Region.

The impact includes:

- ✓ Peer-led support for people and families affected by ketamine misuse
- ✓ Breaking the silence and stigma around addiction
- ✓ Building bridges to recovery through compassion and connection



# No Duff UK

*St Helens | Grant awarded: £1,000 | People supported: 50+*

Through its Veteran Aid Detachment (VAD) Project, No Duff UK is empowering people across St Helens with the skills to respond confidently in times of crisis.

With funding from the Community Empowerment Fund, the organisation is delivering 150 hours of free training over 12 months - covering classroom-based learning, interactive exercises, First Aid and Mental Health First Aid certification.

The training equips veterans, volunteers and local residents with life-saving skills they can use to support neighbours during emergencies and local incidents - creating stronger, safer, and more resilient communities.

But the impact extends further, helping many participants to grow in confidence, find renewed purpose, and feel more deeply connected to their community.

***"It's not just about being prepared, it's about being there for each other when it matters most."***

The impact includes:

- ✓ Increased community resilience and crisis readiness
- ✓ Life-saving skills in First Aid and mental health
- ✓ Greater confidence, connection and purpose for participants



## Halewood Apollo JFC

*Liverpool | Grant awarded: £500 | People supported: 200*

Across South Liverpool, Halewood Apollo JFC is creating more than just football teams - it's building confidence, friendships and community for over 200 children.

With more and more families struggling to find affordable opportunities for their children to take part in sport, Apollo JFC has stepped up. Since launching, the club has created 17 teams and now runs weekly development sessions that welcome over 60 children from across the area.

A grant from the Community Empowerment Fund helped the club purchase new training equipment - essential to support growing numbers and keep sessions inclusive, safe and high-quality.

By removing financial pressure from families and ensuring children can continue to play, learn and grow, the club is making grassroots football more accessible to all.

***“We’re proud to welcome children from all over South Liverpool and we want to make sure cost is never a barrier.”***

The impact includes:

- ✓ Accessible football for children aged 5+
- ✓ New equipment to support high-quality training
- ✓ Reduced financial burden for families



# Blossoming Butterflies

*Knowsley | Grant awarded: £1,985.40 | People supported: 20*

Every Sunday morning in Stockbridge Village, 20 children aged 5–11 come together to dance, play and start the day with positivity — thanks to Blossoming Butterflies.

Led by a passionate local facilitator, the sessions focus on more than just fitness. Children build confidence, develop social skills and learn how to think positively about themselves. The sessions are especially valuable for those with limited access to activities and for children with additional needs, who feel safe, included and able to join in.

Thanks to a grant from the Community Empowerment Fund, the project was extended for another 7 weeks and provided uniforms for new joiners - ensuring that no child feels left out or limited by what they can afford to wear.

***“The children feel good about themselves and it’s showing in the choices they make.”***

The impact includes:

- ✓ Improved confidence, fitness and self-esteem
- ✓ Inclusive and supportive for children with SEND
- ✓ A positive, screen-free space for connection and play



## Rainbow Books Collective

*Liverpool | Grant awarded: £2,000 | People supported: 20*

Rainbow Books Collective creates beautifully designed activity books to help children navigate some of life's toughest experiences - from bereavement to adoption.

Funding from the Community Empowerment Fund helped Paul bring two powerful new titles to life.

- Finding My Rainbow Family – supporting children experiencing adoption
- Rainbow After the Rain – designed for children facing bereavement

Each book includes activities, prompts and gentle guidance to help children process difficult feelings and open up with trusted adults.

The funding enabled Paul to register ISBNs, produce barcoded copies, and distribute the books to those who need them most.

Paul is working closely with bereavement and adoption services to get the books into children's hands – including Liverpool University Hospitals, primary schools, adoption agencies and the Anthony Davies Bereavement Café.

The impact includes:

- ✓ Age-appropriate tools for children facing grief, loss and change
- ✓ Shared with schools, hospitals, and specialist charities
- ✓ Created from lived experience, with empathy at their heart



# Sew What Sandra

**Knowsley | Grant awarded: £1,000 | People supported: 40**

What started as a pilot has grown into a movement — empowering local people to reconnect with their creativity, build friendships, and stitch new life into old materials.

Led by volunteer Sandra Scott, 'Sew What Sandra' offers free, friendly sewing workshops where participants learn how to repair, repurpose and reinvent textiles - helping reduce landfill waste and promote sustainability.

Thanks to a grant from the Community Empowerment Fund, the group can now run 40 workshops across the year, covering delivery costs while using fully donated materials.

The project goes beyond sewing; it's about self-reliance, dignity and wellbeing.

The sessions are designed to be warm, inclusive and informal — a place where people can chat, create, and learn valuable life skills in a cost-of-living crisis.

***"It's a space to learn, share, and feel good while doing something good for the planet too."***

The impact includes:

- ✓ Reduced isolation through creative connection
- ✓ Skills in repair, reuse and sustainable living
- ✓ Local access to free, empowering learning opportunities



## Fazakerley Wombles

Liverpool | Grant awarded: £600 | People supported: 20+

Fazakerley Wombles are on a mission to brighten up their neighbourhood - one planter at a time.

Thanks to support from the Community Empowerment Fund, the group has been able to purchase planters, compost and plants to transform a previously neglected stretch of Longmoor Lane into a vibrant, welcoming space.

More than just flowers, the project is about pride of place. It encourages local residents to get involved, make new connections and take care of their shared environment.

The planters will also contribute to a more inviting high street, helping attract footfall and boost confidence in the area.

Fazakerley Wombles are proving that small changes really can make a big difference - and that community care begins right outside your door.

***"It's amazing what a few plants and people can do – the difference already shows."***

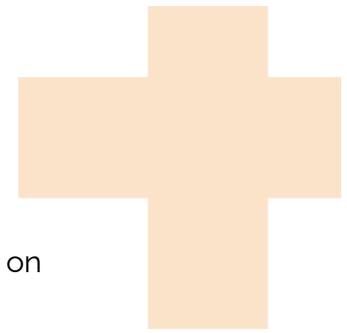
The impact includes:

- ✓ Improved public space and local pride
- ✓ Increased volunteer involvement and social connection
- ✓ A more attractive environment that supports local investment



## Who can apply for a Community Empowerment Fund Grant?

- Individuals and groups living within the Liverpool City Region.
- Individuals and groups that have an idea for a project that will empower their community and have a positive impact on local people.
- Applicants over 18-year-olds.



## What do we look for in applications?

Projects that aligns with our vision of *'a society where all people can live with dignity, lead fulfilled lives and realise their full potential'*.

Projects that will have a positive impact on individuals and groups in our communities.

Projects and activities that encourage empowerment and inclusivity.

## What can you apply for?

The maximum amount that you can apply for is £2,000. There is no minimum amount.

Alongside funding you can ask for help and support with developing or delivering your idea if needed.

## What we do not fund

- Groups, clubs, societies, communities and charities with an annual income of over £20,000.
- Activities that are illegal - debts, gambling, political etc.
- Applications for projects we have previously funded.

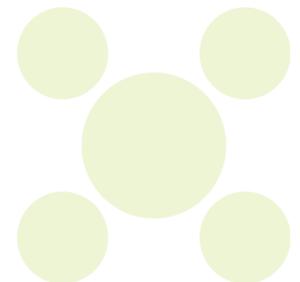
## How to apply

You can apply on our website, on paper, on the phone or in person.  
Website: [www.localsolutions.org.uk/community-empowerment-fund](http://www.localsolutions.org.uk/community-empowerment-fund)  
Telephone: 0151 709 0990

We will ask you to tell us about your idea and how it will impact the community that you live in.

Our grants panel meet every 8 weeks, and they will discuss and score each application considering the need, impact and reach.

You will be contacted and told if you have been successful.



**If you, or the organisation that you work for, would like to support people and groups to make an impact in their own communities then we would love to hear from you.**

**Together we can make a real difference.**

**Contact:**

**Jenny Snell**

**07311 351 565**

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**[www.localsolutions.org.uk/community-empowerment-fund](http://www.localsolutions.org.uk/community-empowerment-fund)**



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