



FUNDING COMMUNITIES IN A CRISIS

TESCO BAGS OF HELP COVID-19
COMMUNITIES FUND



We are so grateful that our continued work with Groundwork quickly enabled many people, charities and community groups to find a lifeline of vital support throughout the Covid19 crisis. To see how our support was received in such a positive way by so many thousands of individuals is incredible. The insight from this report will help to shape our thinking around how we can continue to really benefit local communities in the future.

- Claire de Silva, Head of Local Community and Media, Tesco

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What is clear from the findings of this report is the importance of timely support and funding for local communities. The Covid pandemic has meant many local community groups have lost funding at precisely the time when their services have been most needed. We've seen how small amounts of money distributed quickly can play a vital role in ensuring local projects thrive and can continue to support those who are most vulnerable in the most challenging of times.

- Graham Duxbury, Chief Executive, Groundwork UK

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About the Tesco Bags of Help COVID-19 Communities Fund

Following the coronavirus lockdown, Tesco Bags of Help responded to the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic by setting up a new short-term fund to support local communities: the Tesco Bags of Help COVID-19 Communities Fund.

The fund provides a single payment award of £500 to organisations which are supporting vulnerable groups.

The fund was designed to support organisations that have experienced one of the following:

- **Increased demand** e.g. a holiday hunger club needing more resources to support children through the summer months, or a food bank needing an immediate donation to restock.
- **Disrupted services** e.g. a local charity adapting its local lunch club into a delivery service, or a charity needing to set up a telephone service to support beneficiaries.
- **Need for new services** e.g. a health focused charity requiring new IT equipment to set up a new online patient service, or a mental health charity developing a new service in response to new need.

Applications to the programme were welcomed from a wide range of organisations, including voluntary/community organisations, registered charities, schools, health bodies, Parish/Town councils, social enterprises, Community Interest Companies, local authorities and housing associations. Business and 'for profit' organisations were not eligible.

While the business-as-usual Tesco Bags of Help fund includes in store voting, this was not possible during the pandemic. Applications for the Tesco Bags of Help COVID-19 Communities Fund were assessed by Groundwork UK staff and put forward to panels which made the final decisions on which projects would be funded.

What has been funded?

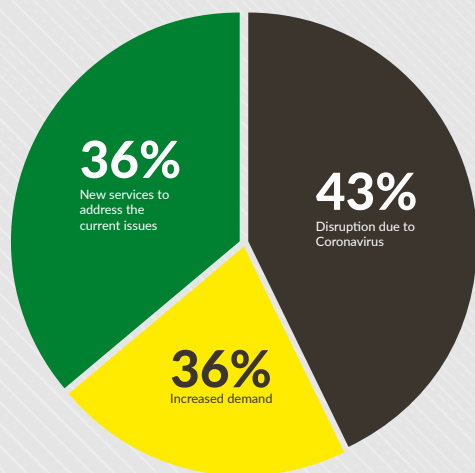
The fund was launched on 1 April and to date¹ 7,425 applications have been received. As of 15 July, 4,864 community groups have been approved for funding at panels.

Most applications (63%) have been from registered charities. The next most common types of organisation applying were community or voluntary organisations (20%) and Community Interest Companies (8%). 3% of applications were from sports clubs, 2% from hospices, 2% from parish, town or community councils, 1% from community day centres and 1% from social enterprises.

Just under half (43%) of applications were a result of disruption due to coronavirus, while around a third (36%) were to fund new services in response to the pandemic. A smaller, but still significant, proportion (21%) were in response to increased demand on existing services.

The group most likely to benefit from applications was children and young people, with 22% of applications addressing the needs of this beneficiary group. Other groups benefitting from significant proportions of applications included older people (13%), socially isolated people (12%), people or households on a low income (10%), people with health conditions (9%) and people with disabilities (9%). Homeless people or rough sleepers were the beneficiaries of 6% of applications, a significant proportion given that this a relatively small demographic group.

¹As of 17 July 2020



BETWEEN 1 APRIL AND 17 JULY 2020

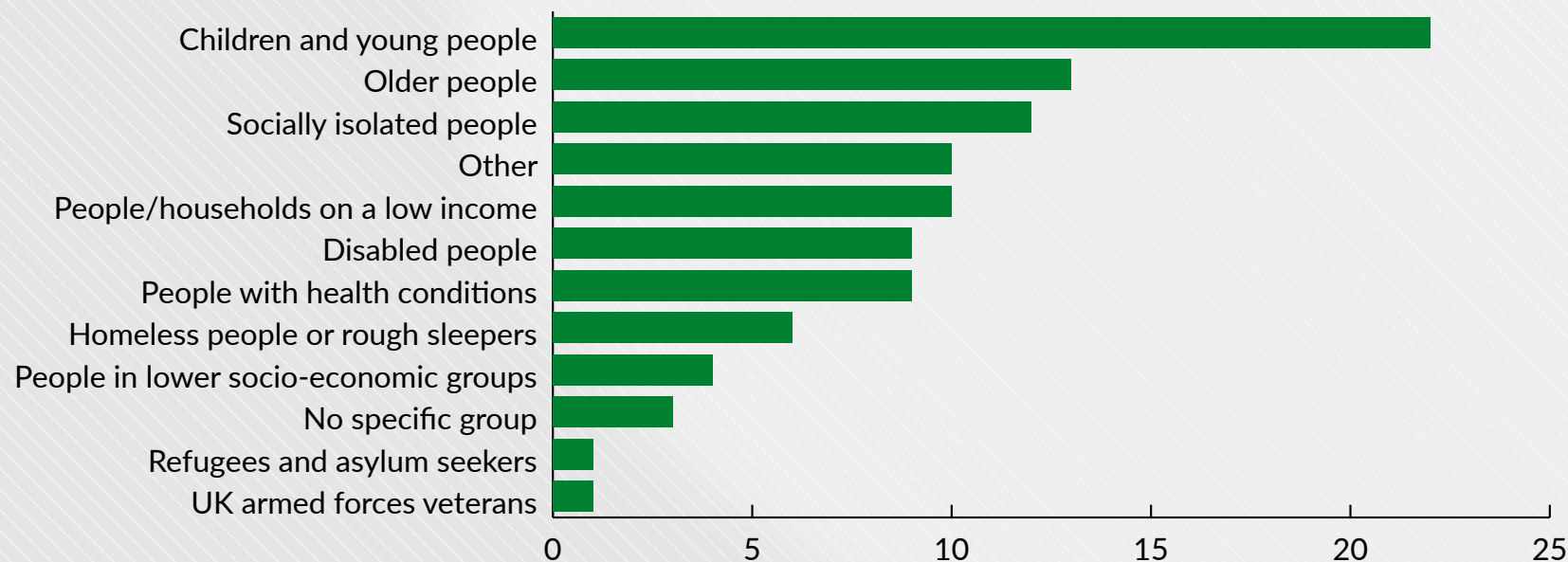
7425

APPLICATIONS
RECEIVED

4864

APPLICATIONS
APPROVED

Main beneficiary of applications to the fund (%)



Where were projects funded?



The Tesco Bags of Help COVID-19 Communities Fund has funded projects in each of the four nations of the UK. The relative level of deprivation in the communities in which projects were based was not part of the assessment criteria. However, by analysing the relative level of deprivation of the locations of organisations awarded grants it is possible to get an indication of whether the funding is reaching the areas of greatest need.

There is no UK-wide deprivation metric and therefore separate analysis was carried out for each of the four nations. The charts below are based on data from the English Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019², the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020³, the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019⁴, and the Northern Ireland Index of Multiple Deprivation 2017⁵. In each case this is the most up-to-date data available.

The data on project location is based on the postcode provided with the application and it is important to note that projects may be being delivered over a much wider area or in a different location to the one in which the organisation is based.

Although the Indices of Multiple Deprivation provide an indication of the general level of deprivation in an area, here will be households experiencing different challenges in each area; projects based in an area which ranks among the least deprived by this measure may be working with extremely vulnerable people.

The overall trends shown on each of the four graphs below, however, shows that more grants are being awarded to organisations based in more deprived areas than to organisations based in less deprived areas. This suggests that the grants awarded through the fund are likely to be reaching areas of need. The trends are clearer in the data for England and Northern Ireland than for Scotland and Wales.

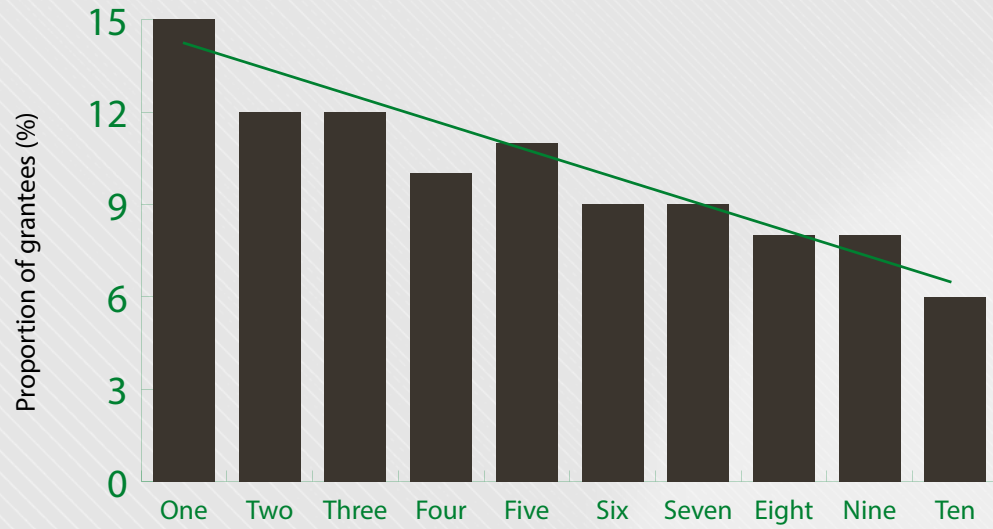
²Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Data obtained via: <http://imd-by-postcode.opendatacommunities.org/imd/2019>

³Scottish Government. Data obtained via: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-index-of-multiple-deprivation-2020v2-postcode-look-up/>

⁴Welsh Government. Data obtained via: <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Community-Safety-and-Social-Inclusion/Welsh-Index-of-Multiple-Deprivation>

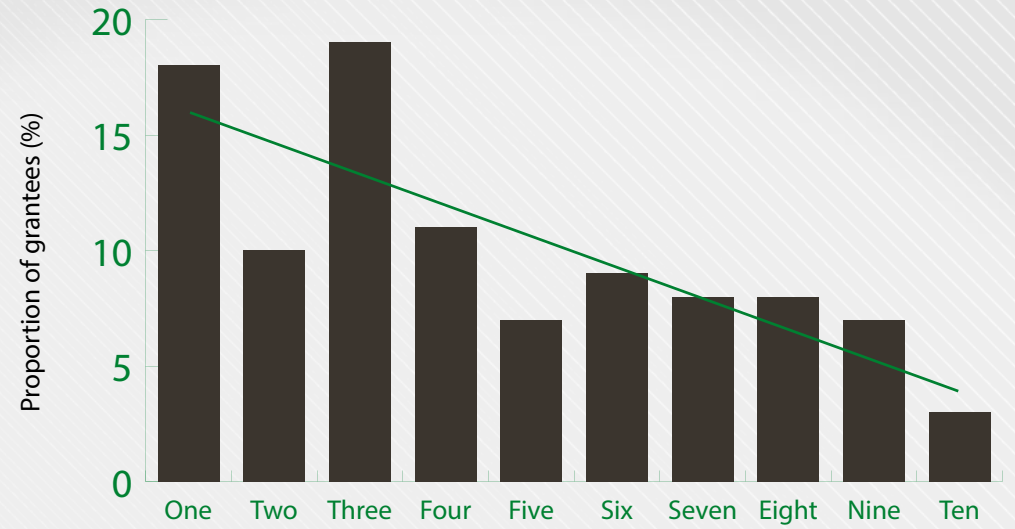
⁵Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. Data obtained via: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/deprivation/northern-ireland-multiple-deprivation-measure-2017-nimdm2017>

ENGLAND



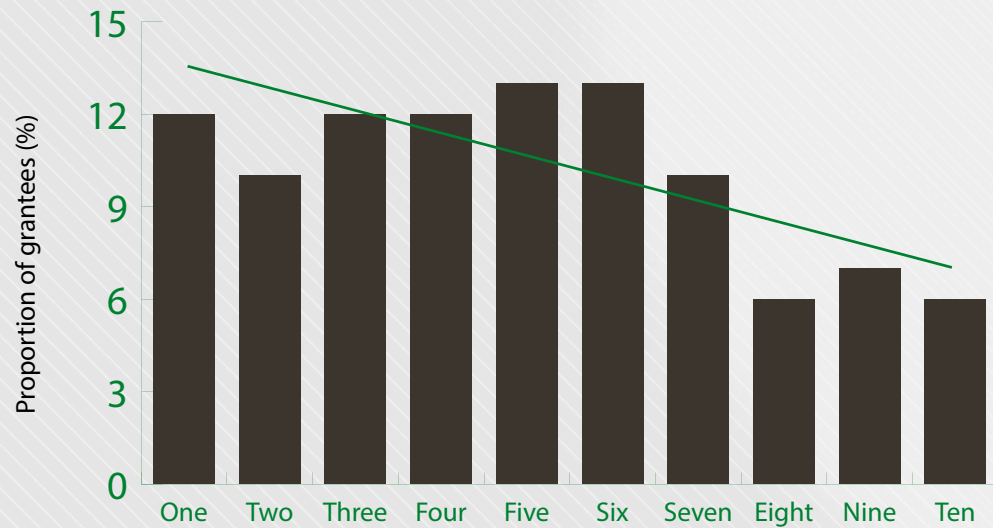
England Index of Multiple Deprivation Decile
(1 = most deprived, 10 = least deprived)

WALES



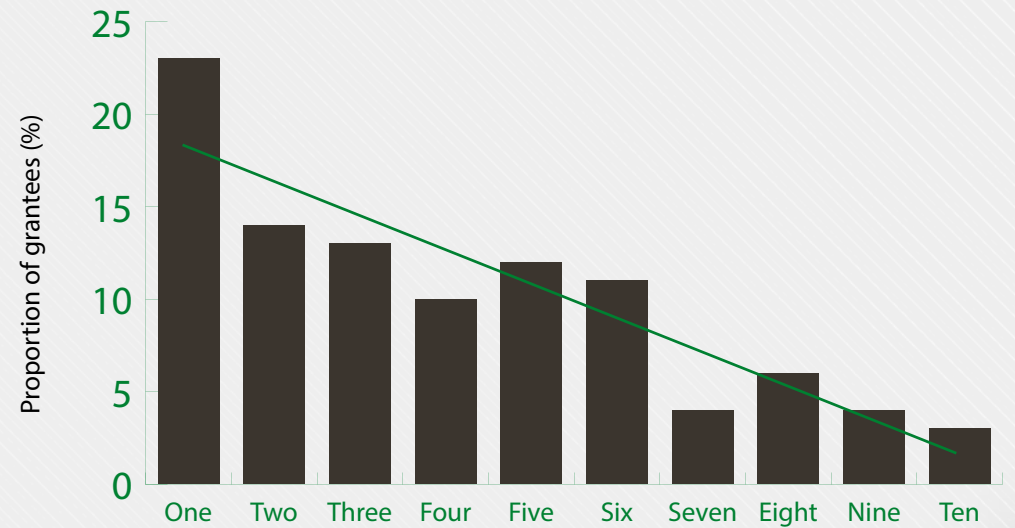
Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation Decile
(1 = most deprived, 10 = least deprived)

SCOTLAND



Scotland Index of Multiple Deprivation Decile
(1 = most deprived, 10 = least deprived)

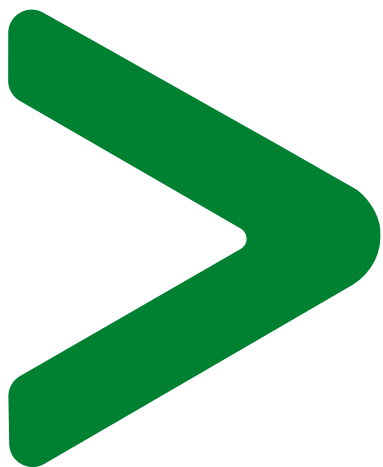
NORTHERN IRELAND



Northern Ireland Index of Multiple Deprivation Decile
(1 = most deprived, 10 = least deprived)

What impact has the fund had?

While it is early days, the stories told by grantees about the difference the funding is making helps to paint a picture of the impact the funding has had on communities.



Timeliness of support

The Tesco Bags of Help COVID-19 Communities Fund launched a week after the official start of 'lockdown' and was designed to get money into the accounts of community groups quickly so that they could respond to urgent need.

This testimonial from Caithness Community Connections illustrates the importance of this timeliness:

The [funding] we received allowed us to respond quickly and effectively within our local community. It's important when people are stressed about their situation that they can get help as soon as they need it so they feel supported, and we are able to do that. The application was an easy and straightforward process which was important at a time when we were all trying to get our heads round what was happening and how we could best help our communities.

- **Caithness Community Connections**



Putting food on the table

Many of the grantees were applying for money to meet the immediate needs of households in crisis. Of the 4,864 grants approved by 15 July, 40% (1,927) mentioned food in their project description.

Some of the organisations applying for food related grants were doing so to expand their existing activities and meet rising demand in their communities. For example, Ludlow Food Bank has seen a rise in reasons for requesting food linked to Covid-19, including problems with benefits, financial difficulties, health issues and homelessness. Both April and May broke their previous record for the number of food parcels distributed in a single month. The food bank is expecting high demand to continue as the negative economic impact of the crisis continues.

Another such case is Action for Refugees Lewisham, which applied for funding for its remodelled virtual foodbank. The service ensures that 70 refugee families do not go hungry and are able to stay safe and well. They needed the grant to meet increased demand for food, toiletries, household and baby goods by new families facing hardship due to COVID 19, anticipating two additional families needing their services each week.

These stories are typical of many food poverty organisations which have benefitted from the fund, often making deliveries for the first time. However, other organisations were applying to

start offering support with food when they had previously been supporting community members in other ways.

For example, Re:Minds is a parent-led support group for families who have children with autism or mental health issues in Southampton. They applied for funding to deliver food parcels to the families they work with as many parents had lost their jobs or seen a reduction in income as a result of the pandemic, and many of the children have specific dietary needs that families were finding it hard to meet.

As a result of the funding they received, Boston Women's Aid were able to ensure that stocks of food and toiletries in their refuge were sustained while people were unable to bring in donations. This has helped the group to meet the needs of women and their children in desperate situations:

One family who has come into our refuge in Boston is a Mum who has physical disability and is also intolerant of both lactose and gluten. Her young daughter has learning and physical disabilities and is also lactose and gluten intolerant. Through the Tesco grant we have been able to make sure they can have foods that fit in with their special dietary needs, something which they were unable to do prior to coming into refuge as the perpetrator would not permit it. This family is now thriving, starting to recover, the young girl is engaging more with home learning supported by our Child Support team.

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- Boston Women's Aid



Supporting mental health and wellbeing

In addition to meeting the practical needs of the community, many grantees used the funds to support the mental health and wellbeing of their communities. 407 of the grantees referred to wellbeing in their project description, while 853 described activities to support mental health.

For example, KIP Education CIC applied for funds to run mental health and wellbeing sessions for families attending a primary school in a disadvantaged area. Many of the children had experienced adverse childhood traumas prior to the pandemic and the group identified a risk to wellbeing while the school was closed. The funding allowed them to run online workshops for parents, helping them to support their child through a challenging period.

Many support services told us that they needed additional funds to meet the level of need in the communities with which they work. For example, the Bone Cancer Research Trust has seen a 64% increase in demand for its support service during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Another grantee, Friendship at Home, used the funding to provide increased telephone welfare calls to over 600 older people via their bank of volunteers:

The funding has made such a difference to our Members as it has enabled them to enjoy chats with our volunteers and take part in activities that they would usually be able to enjoy at our clubs and with their friends. By having these conversations and taking part in these activities it not only passes many solitary minutes but communicates they have not been forgotten in these lonely times.

- **Friendship at Home**

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407

grantees referred to wellbeing in their project description

853

described activities to support mental health

40%

of projects approved mentioned food in their project description

Keeping up connections

Bringing people together and creating social connections is at the core of what many community groups do in normal times. The need to social distance during the Covid-19 lockdown meant that many were unable to continue their activities as they normally would. As a result, many organisations received funding to adapt their delivery and support people in their own homes. 627 of the applications approved at panel referred to providing support to members of the community via telephone and 827 spoke about online support or activities in their project description. Many were using online video call platforms to provide activities, ranging from one-on-one counselling to dance and fitness classes.

Soundabout Inclusive Choir in Oxford received funding to move their singing group for people with disabilities online. Choir members are now meeting to sing together via video conference. Many members of the choir are clinically vulnerable to coronavirus and therefore had to shield at home during lockdown, so this continued interaction played an important role in supporting their wellbeing at a challenging time.

Citizens Advice Tunbridge Wells & District used the funding to buy SIM cards for their volunteers, enabling them to continue to advise members of the community from their own homes. The organisation has seen

a rise in demand for free advice as a result of the financial hardship many households are experiencing and the funding was crucial in enabling them to “prepare to respond to the tsunami of need for advice that we are anticipating”.

Of course, not all households are able to access online activities and these households are at particularly high risk of becoming isolated during lockdown. Some of the community groups used the funding to provide activity packs for individuals and families who would otherwise be cut off from their services. Parent Action for Safe Play in North Lanarkshire used their Tesco Bags of Help COVID-19 Communities Fund grant to put together 50 ‘play@home’ bags with arts and crafts materials and sports equipment which were distributed to families to support children and young people’s physical and mental health. This initiative was a huge success, and they have subsequently secured additional funding to distribute over 700 of the bags to vulnerable families, taking referrals from social services and other organisations.

Making services safe

Some grantees used their funding to buy personal protective equipment, vital to sustaining services and keeping people safe during the pandemic. Kenward Trust, an organisation helping those affected by addiction, homelessness and crime, related the impact their grant had achieved:

“Their donation of £500 has helped us purchase vital PPE to ensure that we can keep both our residents and staff safe and help us keep the virus off our site in Yalding. We have also been able to purchase bedding so that we can utilise more of our accommodation both to be more bedrooms to meet the increase in demand we have been facing and also to set up two isolation areas that can be used when we take in new admissions to ensure that our current residents are safe when they integrate. This money has helped us ensure that we could continue providing our service safely and effectively to those affected by addiction, homelessness and crime.

- Kenward Trust

Summary

The grants provided through the Tesco Bags of Help COVID-19 Communities Fund have had a significant impact on communities across the UK, with a total of £4m being awarded to 8,000 groups when the fund closed in September 2020.

Although the financial value of each grant is small, the difference they have made to small charities and community groups was substantial. The timeliness of the funding

helped many groups to respond to rising demand and adapt their services quickly.

The grants have enhanced the support these organisations are able to offer their communities: helping to meet the immediate needs of households in crisis, supporting the health and wellbeing of vulnerable individuals, keeping people connected, and making services safe.



[tesco plc.com/sustainability/places/
community-grants/bags-of-help/](https://tesco plc.com/sustainability/places/community-grants/bags-of-help/)

www.groundwork.org.uk

tescobagsofhelp.org.uk

