

Thematic Funding Impact and Learning Report (2024-25)



**COMMUNITY
SOLUTIONS**
Building Community Capacity
and Carer Support





Community Solutions

Thematic Funding - Impact and Learning Report 2024-25



Background

Community Solutions Thematic Funding is awarded to a range of community and voluntary sector organisations, to provide local services and supports to North Lanarkshire residents on selected, priority 'thematic' issues. This funding is provided by the University Health and Social Care Partnership North Lanarkshire.



Many thanks to the funded projects which provided information and to the VANL staff who prepared this report.



In 2024-25, the following themes were funded:

- Anticipatory Care
- Home Visiting and Befriending
- Hospital Discharge Support
- Carer Capacity Building
- Community Transport
- Community Food
- Physical Activity

Thematic Funding Review

In late 2024-25, a review of the Community Solutions Thematic Funding was undertaken, consulting key stakeholders, to make the fund more dynamic and responsive to changing themes and priorities on an annual basis, including the priorities of the Community Solutions Strategy and Investment Plan, the UHSCP-NL Strategic Commissioning Plan and Programme of Work, and public health priorities. A new funding model will be trialed in 2025-26. (see page 10 for further details)



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Anticipatory Care

Community Solutions funded Equals Advocacy to employ advocacy workers to connect older, frail adults to services and support at an early stage, supported by a Primary Care Frailty Multidisciplinary Team and an advocacy worker, in liaison with health and social care staff

£40k
of funding
awarded

Case Study

'M was referred to our service as she wished to plan for her future, M had moved several times over the last decade between various NLC properties. Through discussion with M she requested support to submit a new housing application as she felt the relationship with her neighbour had broken down.'

M was provided practical support to complete a housing application, and to explore what kind of housing she would benefit from as she had specific needs which had not been previously included in applications. M was provided with details for Breathing Space and

the Samaritans for her mental health. M was also provided info about Anticipatory Care plans, wills, and power of attorney. Since M's application, she has had two housing offers from NLC.

“M has benefited from having her views heard, a reduction in stress and anxiety, greater access to services and increased participation in the decision-making process. M has also benefited from greater access to accurate information in order to make informed decisions in the future.”

Outcomes

- 405 service users reported against the **Community Solutions outcomes:**
- 405 people feel more informed and aware
- 4 carers feel more informed and aware
- 405 people's health and wellbeing improved
- 4 carers' health and wellbeing improved
- 405 people feel more connected, included and safe
- 4 carers were more able to have a life outside of caring

People Supported

405 people supported in total	63 new referrals for 1-to-1 advocacy
326 people provided information through info stands	16 referrals carried forward for 1-to-1 advocacy

Next Steps for Equals Advocacy

Equals Advocacy is winding down as a charity as a result of a new advocacy re-tendering process. There will be one advocacy organisation leading for all adults: Equal Say. Equals Advocacy was left with a Legacy Fund which will be used to continue this preventative work, which Equal Say will hold as a restricted fund.



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Home Visiting and Befriending

Befriending provides support to people who are lonely and isolated to increase their social support and connections, to improve their quality of life and wellbeing. Since 2012, Community Solutions has provided funding to the following nine CVS organisations to deliver befriending support:

- Befriend Motherwell
- CACE (Cumbernauld Action on Care of the Elderly)
- Elim Befriending
- Getting Better Together
- Glenboig Development Trust
- Home-Start
- Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre
- Volunteering Matters
- YMCA Bellshill and Mossend

Reach and Activity

1347
people supported in total

7552
sessions delivered

50
activities delivered

£195k
of funding awarded

Learning showed...

“We have been able to link many of our service users into key partners in the local area that can help them with their specific needs. Feedback suggested that the benefit talks, lawyers talks and leg care has been the most valuable, followed by access to information around digital support and care around things like scams.”

- CACE

“We have also been working closely with NLC housing department and now have a weekly presence within Getting Better Together to help with housing and financial issues within an environment that people feel comfortable and confident to attend. This compliments the work that our financial wellbeing advisor is already able to offer.”

- Home Start

- Getting Better Together

“Many families are restricted as to how far they can travel for support. To address this, our two group workers have expanded group support across North Lanarkshire and are scoping for more. In addition to the existing family group (former Nurture Group) in Bellshill, we now have Café Stork in Cumbernauld (for pregnant/new parents and babies 0-12 months); Family Group at the Phoenix, Easterhouse (capturing families living close to the NL/Glasgow boundary) and Family Group, Shotts.”

Outcomes

433 service users reported against the **Community Solutions outcomes:**

- 1034** people feel more informed and aware
- 94** carers feel more informed and aware
- 1099** people’s health and wellbeing improved
- 107** carers’ health and wellbeing improved
- 317** people feel more connected, included and safe
- 598** carers were more able to have a life outside of caring

*please note, outcomes are based on unique individuals



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Carer Capacity Building

North Lanarkshire Carers Together (NLCT) provides Carer Capacity Building by:

- Supporting the Carer Support Network, which brings carers together to share information, provide peer support and develop collective views to inform policy and practice
- Supporting development of the Carer Breather fund
- Influence carers policy and services through participation in the North Lanarkshire Carers Strategy Group and other forums

£40k
of funding
awarded

Carer Breather Fund

NLCT served as the Carer Support Network Lead since 2014, and supported two Phases of the Carer Breather Fund, providing carers access to breaks from their caring role. In 2024-25, they supported the Carer Breather projects throughout the year, including delivering funding workshops and facilitating the funding panel for 2025-26.

Following the Community Solutions Thematic Funding Review, NLCT were successful in securing the tender for the Carer Breather Fund in 2025-26 from the University Health & Social Care Partnership.

- Carer Support Network Lead

In 2024-25, the project has...

- Presented at Shared Care Scotland's online Learning Event on the collaborative work on Carer Breather services in North Lanarkshire
- Participated in the Growth Pot Funding Panel
- Presented on Carer Breather at the Coalition of Carers in Scotland Managers Network Meeting
- Hosted multiple meetings of the Carer Support Network (CSN), regularly welcoming around 30 attendees
- Contributed to the Value Based Reflective Practice Community of Practice with 12 other carers organisations

“Our members are at the heart of the Carer Support Network, we have a co-produced approach - the CSN are a sustainable force, supporting Carers in North Lanarkshire. Our quarterly meetings are well attended and everyone advises that they especially like the Networking aspect and learning about what everyone does and how carers can be supported in so many different ways. Our members want to influence decisions and policy that affect carers locally by involving carers directly and this is something we are actively working on.”

Training

North Lanarkshire Carers Together provided bespoke **training** to Carer Breather projects:

- Carer Pathway Toolkit
- Data Collection
- Carer Aware
- Appreciative Inquiry



This training was intended to support these organisations to **better identify** carers unknown to services, support them to **access services**, and **signpost** them to other supports.



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Hospital Discharge Support

The aim of the HDSP hosted by Getting Better Together's Community Liaison Service, is to provide community-based support to patients and their carers following hospital discharge. This support can be provided both pre and post discharge and can include:

- Information and advice on CVS and wider supports
- Referrals into community supports to promote social opportunities, wellbeing and self-management
- Various practical supports to help make discharge more manageable

£77.5k
of funding
awarded

People Supported

1078

total people supported,
including

463 unpaid carers

788

direct referrals/direct
supports provided

405

on behalf of carers

393

patients provided with
tailored discharge
information packs

328

carers provided with
tailored discharge
information packs



Case Study

'I have been looking after my mum who has dementia and my husband who recently suffered a stroke. My mum had recently been discharged from hospital and we were given the phone number for the local social work department if we decided to try and access home support.

I didn't know what services were available to us and Michelle talked me through some different options that might be of benefit to us. She told me about carer and patient specific services.' - AL, Carer

GBT signposted the mother for befriending support from CACE, and referred her to the dementia link nurses to discuss specific services. GBT provided information about local men's sheds whose aim is to get men together to improve wellbeing, reduce loneliness and combat social isolation in a supportive environment, and Parkinson's Self Help Group for support and advice. AL was referred to Lanarkshire Carers for their short breaks bureau.

Outcomes

1078 service users reported against the
Community Solutions outcomes:

483 people feel more informed and aware

345 carers feel more informed and aware

411 people's health and wellbeing improved

310 carers' health and wellbeing improved

“Overall, I felt listened to and I now know that there are supports in the community that we can access as a family or individually if we need them. We were unaware of some of these supports and how to access them until we were put in touch with the community liaison service. I feel more able to cope with my caring role knowing that there are services specific to my needs and the needs of my family members who I look after.” - AL



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Community Transport

Community Transport, delivered by Getting Better Together, supports vulnerable residents to travel to essential appointments and key activities, supporting their health, wellbeing and inclusion. Community Transport services are demand-responsive and therefore determined by service users' requirements.

£72k
of funding
awarded

Learning

The service has provided transport for over 26,000 passenger journeys to and from medical appointments in Lanarkshire, Glasgow and Edinburgh and has seen over 20 regular Volunteers contributing over 34,500 hours of participation during the last 13 years.

Community Transport is a demand responsive service, and all services are client led. The services offered are the transport solutions that clients want.

The Volunteer Driver service has saved NHSL an estimated £999,825.00 in cost avoidance since 2012.

People Supported

5956

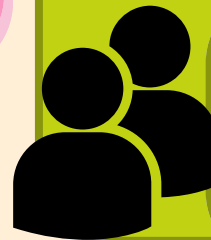
passenger journeys
completed

1615

volunteer hours
contributed

70k +

miles driven



£56k

probable cost for NHS
avoided

9

volunteer drivers





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Community Food

Lanarkshire Community Food and Health Partnership received £40k to provide cookery classes and nutritional advice for groups within North Lanarkshire, to contribute to a positive change in eating behaviour and a healthier diet. During this period, it was identified that LCFHP were providing emergency food parcels with limited funding. VANL worked with LCFHP and in line with remaining budget provided **£23,334** for the original preventative work and **£29,260** for emergency food parcels due to acute need. A full rationale was provided for both amounts.

£40k
of funding awarded

Impact

- "The course has helped my child tackle food sensory issues"
- "The course gave me confidence to cook more from scratch for my family"
- "I now cook with my children now and we eat together as a family"

Emergency Food Parcels

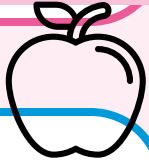
Since August 2024, LCFHP have been providing emergency food parcels funded by CS to extremely vulnerable people - e.g. people with connectivity issues, housebound, with no one to shop for them - often within the hour of receiving the referral. There is no other service which does this locally.

- Total funding amount: **£29,260**
- Total parcels delivered across 8 months: **1859**
- Average **232** parcels per month
- December was the highest month

Month	No. of Parcels
August	226
September	189
October	214
November	221
December	286
January	264
February	243
March	216
TOTAL	1859



Nutrition Workshops



LCFHP provided cookery classes and nutritional workshops for groups within North Lanarkshire. The training was carried out by fully qualified nutritionists and primarily helped people to eat more healthily on a budget and provided support to those with identified health issues, such as those at risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes.

- Total funding amount: **£23,334**
- Total sessions delivered across 8 months: **36**
- Total people supported through sessions: **774**
- Average of **21.5** people supported per session

Locality	No. of sessions	No. of people in attendance
Airdrie	12	98
Bellshill	2	72
Coatbridge	22	167
Motherwell	12	171
The North	9	74
Wishaw and Shotts	9	192
TOTAL	36	774



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Physical Activity

Community Solutions manage funding for the North Lanarkshire Council to support provision of physical activities for people across North Lanarkshire with a range of health conditions to enhance their physical and mental wellbeing: Active Health NHS Partnership Programme. Referrals to the service were received from a variety of organisations, including health and social care. The Programme is split into:

- General Active Health Programme (Gym, Swim, Group Fitness classes)
- Specialist Health Classes (Strength & Balance Cardio, Cancer, Parkinson's, Escape Pain, Back Care Weigh To Go)

£40k
of funding awarded

People Supported

8400
total new referrals into the Active & Creative Communities Programme, including..



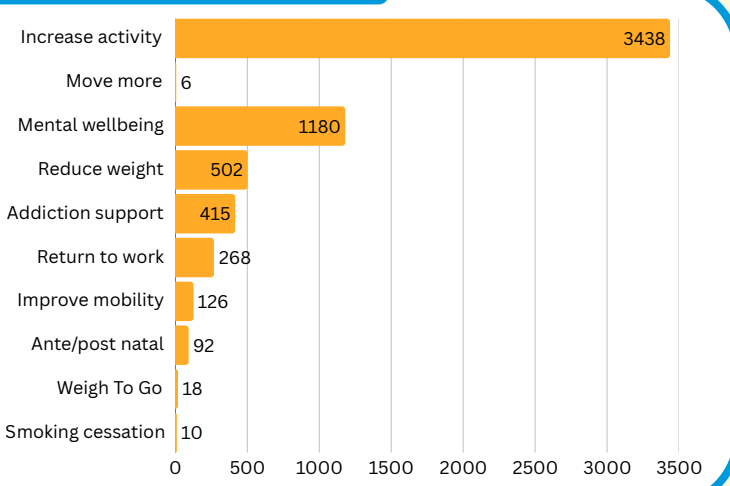
6055 new referrals to the General Active Health Programme

2345 new referrals to the range of Specialist Health Classes on offer

33.4k attendances at these classes from April 2024-March 2025

Reason for Referral

The most common reason for referral to the Programme was 'to increase physical activity', with the greatest number of referrals being to the Specialist Health class for Strength and Balance (**1052**).



Case Study

“ I was referred to the class by the Practice Nurse at my Doctors Surgery, mainly because my diabetes was getting worse and I was struggling to lose any weight.

I have found the classes very helpful and they gave me real motivation to knuckle down, start eating healthier and exercise more. I have just completed the 15 week program and have managed to lose 12 kilos in that time.

I have just had a review at my doctors and my “diabetes number” has dropped by 20, and hopefully I can keep going and I am aiming to get in down enough where I can come off the diabetic medication’



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Thematic Fund Remodelling

In Summer of 2024, a consultation took place to review the future of the Thematic Fund for 2025-26 onward. Through consultation with key stakeholders, a remodelling of the fund was agreed. The new model is comprised of two stages: the second stage being open call for CVS organisations to apply across North Lanarkshire. Priorities for each strand will be set annually through consultation with the sector.

Consultation

We consulted over 80 people, including...

- The Home Visiting and Befriending network
- The steering group, including the CS Governance Group and UHSCP-NL Senior Leadership
- Community Solutions Locality Hosts
- The NL-wide Consortium

The consultation found...

- A new model is necessary. Flexibility is needed to allow for change based on learning from the first Phase of this new model
- Co-production is key for this new model
- Application support should be embedded in the funding timeline

Please see the [Community Solutions website](#) for more information on application, timelines and priorities

Overview of New Model

£512k funding is ringfenced for the Thematic Fund:

- £196k was set aside for strategically important projects
- £316k is available for CVS organisations to apply for, split into 3 strands:
 - Innovation
 - Volunteering
 - North Lanarkshire- wide projects

STAGE 1

Top slice for strategically important projects

	Top slice for strategically important projects		
	Community Weight Management	Hospital Discharge Support	Active Health & Associated Programmes
STAGE 2	Innovation £126,400	Volunteering £126,400	North Lanarkshire-wide £62,000