**Section A: Funding Guidance**

**A.1.1 Purpose**

To build the capacity of the Community Voluntary Sector (CVS) and to inform service change by year on year aiming to meet the identified needs of North Lanarkshire residents.

**A.1.2 Priority Activities**

The available funding will be separated into three strands:

**A.1.2.1 The Innovation Strand**

This strand will aim to fund projects with new approaches to prevention and early intervention.

Innovation can be defined in this regard as a project that is piloting an approach or aiming to extend its reach and/or focus. This can build on previous ideas. For example, an innovative project can build on a past project that had demonstrable impact with a specific approach, in a specific area or with a specific age group, by exploring how the approach can be applied to a new topic, or how it would work in a wider area, or with a new age group that has not been supported before.

Often an innovation looks to improve the wellbeing of people in North Lanarkshire by filling a gap, address a key local priority or challenge.

Under this strand the following priority areas have been identified:

* Proactive engagement with vulnerable people- This priority was identified through the [LENS Ideas into Action programme](https://www.communitysolutionsnl.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/LENNS-Evaluation-Report-19-July-24.pdf), but was also separately suggested at a recent NL Wide consortium consultation
* Tackling loneliness and isolation- A recent NL-Wide Consortium consultation included project that would identify practical support for individuals isolated int community
* Food support plus- A recent NL-Wide Consortium consultation included partnership working between food banks and using food activities to achieve other outcomes such as tackling isolation, befriending, and skills development

**A.1.2.2 The Volunteering Strand**

Given the importance of volunteering to the sector, this strand will aim to fund projects with a focus on different approaches to volunteering.

Similarly, volunteering based projects can be defined as time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain involving the free use of the time and skills of individuals to help other people directly; their wider community or society; and/or the natural environment. Volunteering is not a substitute for a paid role but can complement paid roles.

Under this strand the following priority areas have been identified:

* Localised community driver services- This priority was identified through the [LENS Ideas into Action programme](https://www.communitysolutionsnl.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/LENNS-Evaluation-Report-19-July-24.pdf) recognising the need for localised community driver supports but was also separately suggested and expanded upon during NL-Wide Consortium activity.

Examples from the Consortium included not just transport to and from hospital but also to and from community services to support people who have previously struggled to attend befriending activities, and a service of female drivers for women only.

* New forms of befriending- Befriending in this sense can be seen as a relationship supported by an organisation to enable meaningful connections. Befriending can be diverse in its delivery but shares a common goal of enabling meaningful connections which are outcome centred, aiming to support those effected by social isolation and/or loneliness to support themselves by enhancing social mobility. Befriending has always been a cornerstone of the community solutions thematic fund and the intention is this will continue with this year's funding. Examples from the Consortium included digital befriending, intergenerational befriending and telephone befriending

**A.1.2.3** **North Lanarkshire Wide Strand**

This strand will aim to fund organisations delivering across three or more of the six NL localities. This could include projects that are condition specific, or projects focussed on communities of interest or identity rather than geography. Funding for projects being delivered for two or less can still be applied for through LAF.

**A.1.3 Community Solutions Programme Outcomes**

Projects supported through this fund must support one or more of the Community Solutions programme outcomes, these include:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **No.** | **Outcome** |
| Adults | 1 | People feel more connected, included and safe |
| 2 | Improved health and wellbeing |
| 3 | People feel more informed and aware |
| Carers | 4 | Carers feel more informed and aware |
| 5 | Carers health and wellbeing are improved |
| 6 | Carers are more able to have a life outside of caring |
| Children, Young People & Families | 7 | Health and wellbeing improved |
| 8 | Family relationships are strengthened |
| 9 | Children, young people and families become more resilient |

**A.2 Applicant Guidance**

**A.2.1** **Who Can Apply**

Any community and voluntary organisation serving the people of North Lanarkshire can apply for this fund as long as they demonstrate in their application how their project would comply with the purpose, beneficiaries and priorities of the fund.

**A. 2.2 Types of organisations that can apply for this fund:**

* Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisations (SCIO)
* Companies Limited by Guarantee
* Trusts
* Not-for-profit company or asset locked company or Community Interest Companies (CIC)
* Cooperative and Community Benefit Societies
* Community councils

**A.2.3 Funding Options for Applicants**

Through Thematic Funding, there are three separate but complementary funding streams. Individual supporting guidance for each of these streams can be found on the Community Solutions website. Applications can be for full or part year funding.

**A.2.4.1 Innovation Projects (Application A.)**

Applicants to the Innovation Strand can apply for between £10K-£50K and should aim to meet a priority innovation activity identified in Section A.1.2, delivering the project within twelve months between **1st July 2025 and June 31st 2026**. This strand will have £126,400 available for applications.

**A.2.4.2 Volunteering Projects (Application B.)**

Applicants to the Innovation Strand can apply for between £10K-£50K and should aim to meet a priority Volunteering activity identified in Section A.1.2, delivering the project within twelve months between **1st July 2025 and June 31st 2026**. This strand will have £126,400 available.

**A.2.4.3 North Lanarkshire Wide projects (Application C.)**

CVS organisations can apply for between £5k-£15k to deliver North Lanarkshire wide projects they would have previously applied to [Locality Activity Funding](https://www.communitysolutionsnl.org.uk/local-activity-fund/) in three or more localities.

Applications can be made to support condition specific or community focussed projects with proposed activities delivered within twelve months between **1st July 2025 and June 31st 2026**.

This will be split over two calls for applications, with each call having £31,000 to distribute. The first call will be in line with the launch of the fund and a second application window being open from **30th September and closing 24th October 2025.**

**A.2.5 Eligible Expenditure**

* You can apply for funding to cover the following types of expenditure:
* staff and volunteer costs, including pay, training and travel expenses
* office costs
* equipment and safety provision
* events
* capital spend of up to £5,000
* You cannot apply for funding to cover expenditure on the following:
  + alcohol
  + contingency costs, loans, endowments or interest
  + electricity generation and feed-in tariff payment
  + political or religious campaigning
  + profit-making/fundraising activities
  + any Value Added Tax (VAT) reclaimable by the Grantee
  + statutory activities
  + overseas travel

**A.2.6 Fair Work Requirements**

Applicants must:

* pay the [real living wage](https://www.livingwage.org.uk/what-real-living-wage) to all staff they employ and any sub-contractors they use
* state their commitment to other Fair Work practices and that provide information about current or planned measures to support these (for more information see the [Scottish Government’s Fair Work First Guidance](https://www.gov.scot/publications/fair-work-first-guidance-2/pages/2/))

**A.2.7 Funding Application**

Organisations must apply using the fund’s application forms available online [here.](https://www.communitysolutionsnl.org.uk/community-solutions-thematic-fund-application-and-guidance/) There are separate forms for the three funding streams described above so please ensure that you submit the correct form.

**A.2.8 Word Count**

It is important to note that if you do not include a sufficient word count, you will likely get scored down. Likewise, if you exceed the word count by too much, then the purpose of the application may be lost. Applicants can also add supporting information through the submission of supporting documents as an appendix.

**A.2.9 Sustainability**

Applications should demonstrate sustainability beyond their requested funding.

Examples of sustainability can include:

* Adding charges to services
* Encouraging donations
* Negotiating with statutory partners for mainstream funding using the impact of the initial project
* Securing sponsorship

If you have any queries regarding your application, please contact Gordon Watson on [gordon.watson@vanl.co.uk](mailto:gordon.watson@vanl.co.uk) or Marta Szczepanska on [marta.szczepanska@vanl.co.uk](mailto:marta.szczepanska@vanl.co.uk) at Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire (VANL).

Please submit your application to [thematics@vanl.co.uk](mailto:thematics@vanl.co.uk). **Applications may be submitted at any time before 5pm 4th April 2025 No applications can be accepted after this point.**

Applicants will receive an auto-response email confirming receipt of their application. If you don’t receive this, please contact [marta.szczepanska@vanl.co.uk](mailto:marta.szczepanska@vanl.co.uk) immediately

**A.2.10 Assessment and Decision**

An Assessment Panel involving representatives from NHS Lanarkshire; North Lanarkshire Council; University Health and Social Care North Lanarkshire; the community voluntary sector (CVS), specifically members of the NL east and west sector consortiums as well as the NL Wide consortium, and VANL will assess all applications and agree the projects to be awarded funding. You will be advised of the outcome week beginning 26th May 2025, with funding award letters and payments issued to successful applicant's week commencing 2nd June 2025.

**If you don’t receive this information by the dates above, please contact gordon.watson@vanl.co.uk.**

**A.2.11 Evaluation and Reporting Requirements for Successful Applicants**

**A.2.11.1** Successful applicants will be provided with guidance and support to evaluate and report on their project’s progress, successes, challenges and learning through a mid- point and at the end of the project. These requirements will be proportionate to the funding amount received.

**A.2.11.2** It is important that evaluation and learning is undertaken and shared to help our sector evidence our contribution to prevention, early intervention and recovery of people's health and wellbeing and improve our sector’s capacity to contribute more in the future and secure further funding more readily. VANL will be actively supporting learning with funded projects and the wider North Lanarkshire CVS. VANL will also feed our learning into collaborative work with the senior leadership team of university health and social care North Lanarkshire.

**A.2.11.3** Please find below links for the resources listed in the applications question surrounding what evidence the organisation will collect to demonstrate the difference the project will make:

The following resources can be used by funded projects to support the evaluation of their project.

**Service Users Feedback Survey**

Funded projects can give the Service Users Feedback Survey to service users to gather feedback about the support they received. The feedback from this survey will support funded projects to complete their evaluation forms returned to VANL. The survey is available as a word document or as a JotForm link. VANL will summarise responses to the Jotform link and share the feedback with each project.

* [Service Users' Feedback Survey (Word Copy)](https://www.communitysolutionsnl.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Service-Users-Feedback-Survey-for-Funded-Projects.docx)
* [Service Users' Feedback Survey (Online Survey)](https://form.jotform.com/232543369589066)

**Guidance for Funded Projects**

VANL provides guidance on preparing case studies and personal stories which can be shared with VANL via evaluation forms.

* [Guidance for Funded Projects on Preparing Case Studies](https://www.communitysolutionsnl.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/VANL-Guidance-for-Funded-Projects-on-Preparing-Case-Studies.docx)
* [Guidance for Funded Projects on Preparing Personal Stories](https://www.communitysolutionsnl.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/VANL-Guidance-for-Funded-Projects-on-Preparing-Personal-Stories.docx)

**Section B: Background**

**B.1.1.** The CS Governance Group agreed to consult on a new funding model to allocate the thematic funds to CVS organisations on 23rd July 2024. The intention of the new funding model is to ensure the funding is 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 University Health & Social Care North Lanarkshire (UHSCP-NL) Strategic Commissioning Plan and Programme of Work, and public health priorities.

**B.1.2.** Following the consultation that took place during August and September 2024, involving over 80 people, the CS Governance Group agreed to progress with the new funding model at the meeting on 29th January 2025.

**B.1.3.** The intention is to maintain the existing funding envelop of £512,000 that is ringfenced to fund the Thematic Programme for the first year of the new funding model. This could be reviewed in future years if the approach proves to be successful.

**B.1.4.** Building on the initial planning to remodel the thematic funding, the learning from managing the Scottish Government Community Mental Health (MH) & Wellbeing Fund and the work undertaken as part of the LENs Ideas into Action Programme (please see the LENs Evaluation Report). Between October and December 2024 Community Solutions team and Community Solutions Governance Group has developed and refined the thematic funding model for implementation from the coming financial year beginning 1st April 2025.

(Document ends)