



# Supporting Communities Fund: evaluation



**PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES**

# Contents

<b>Contents</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Aims .....	5
Findings .....	5
Key Learning .....	7
Emerging needs .....	7
Effective communications .....	7
Partnership working between Scottish Government, IFPs and CAOs .....	8
Pace, simplicity and the light touch approach to funding .....	8
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>10</b>
1.1 Background .....	10
1.2 Terminology .....	10
1.3 Overview of the Supporting Communities Fund .....	10
1.3.1 Application process .....	11
1.3.2 Funding criteria .....	12
1.3.3 Activities for funding .....	13
1.4 Evaluation aims .....	14
1.5 Methodology .....	14
1.5.1 Quantitative Methods .....	15
1.5.2 Qualitative methods .....	18
1.6 Study limitations .....	18
<b>2. Distribution of funding</b> .....	<b>20</b>
2.1 Overview of applications .....	20
2.2 Geographical distribution .....	20
<b>3. Funding activities</b> .....	<b>23</b>
3.1 Activities delivered .....	23
3.2 People supported .....	24
3.3 Specific groups supported .....	24
3.4 Equality characteristics .....	25
<b>4. Outputs</b> .....	<b>27</b>
4.1 Activities delivered .....	27
4.1.1 Support with food and basic provisions .....	28
Case study: Food support .....	29

4.1.2	Operating and volunteer management costs .....	30
4.2	Social outreach .....	31
	Case study: Social outreach .....	32
4.3	Health and wellbeing .....	32
4.4	Digital access.....	34
	Case study: Digital access.....	36
4.5	Home and family life support .....	36
	Case study: Home and family life .....	38
4.6	Financial assistance .....	38
4.7	Advice services.....	39
	Case study: Advice services.....	41
4.8	Community resilience .....	41
4.9	Benefits delivered for the community.....	42
<b>5.</b>	<b>Challenges affecting project delivery .....</b>	<b>44</b>
5.1	Low uptake.....	44
5.2	Pride and stigma.....	45
5.3	Resources.....	46
5.4	Challenges supporting specific groups .....	47
5.5	Other challenges.....	49
<b>6.</b>	<b>Partnership working .....</b>	<b>50</b>
6.1	Positive partnerships .....	50
6.1.1	Funded organisations.....	50
6.1.2	Intermediary funding partners .....	51
6.2	Challenges .....	51
6.3	Future of partnerships.....	52
6.4.1	Partnership continuing .....	53
6.4.2	Partnership not continuing .....	54
6.4.3	Help to maintain the partnership .....	54
<b>7.</b>	<b>Looking forward.....</b>	<b>57</b>
7.1	Gaps in provision .....	57
7.1.1	Health and wellbeing.....	58
7.1.2	Poverty and unemployment .....	59
7.1.3	Digital exclusion .....	61
7.1.4	Geographic coverage.....	61
7.1.5	Other .....	61
7.2	Emerging needs and priorities.....	62

7.2.1	Poverty and unemployment .....	63
7.2.2	Health and wellbeing.....	63
7.2.3	Support for community organisations.....	63
7.2.4	Digital exclusion .....	64
7.2.5	Community recovery .....	64
7.2.6	Staffing/volunteer capacity .....	64
7.2.7	Other .....	64
7.3	Key learning.....	65
7.3.1	Approach to service delivery .....	66
7.3.2	Strong partnerships .....	68
7.3.3	Community .....	68
7.3.4	Effective communications .....	69
<b>8.</b>	<b>Perspectives on the funding process.....</b>	<b>71</b>
8.1	Perspectives from the intermediary funding partners .....	71
8.1.1	Application process .....	71
8.1.2	Unsuccessful applications.....	72
8.1.3	Perceptions of the fund .....	72
8.1.4	Challenges .....	73
8.1.5	Lessons learned from the funding process .....	73
8.2	Perspectives from the community anchor organisations .....	74
8.3	IFP perspectives on partnership working.....	75
<b>9.</b>	<b>Communities Recovery Fund .....</b>	<b>76</b>
9.1	Lessons learned from the SCF .....	76
9.2	Challenges with the CRF .....	77
9.3	Differences between the SCF and CRF .....	78
<b>10.</b>	<b>Conclusions .....</b>	<b>80</b>
10.1	Outputs .....	80
10.1.1	People supported .....	80
10.1.2	Activities delivered.....	80
10.1.3	Experiences of the fund .....	82
10.2	Key learning.....	82
10.2.1	Emerging needs .....	82
10.2.2	Effective communications .....	83
10.2.3	Partnership working between Scottish Government, IFPs and CAOs	
	84	

10.2.4 Pace, simplicity and the light touch approach to funding ..... 84

**Appendix 1 ..... 86**

    Acronyms ..... 86

**Appendix 2 ..... 87**

    Partner organisations..... 87

# Executive Summary

This report provides an analysis of the data on applications and awards made through the Supporting Communities Fund (SCF) funding process. This fund was part of the Scottish Government's initial £350 million overall package of Communities Funding support. The SCF was established with an initial £20 million investment to provide funding to community anchor organisations (CAOs) to help support local responses to the pandemic. The fund was designed to provide financial support in the short term, initially over a 4-6 month period, and closed in September 2020. In total, £17,056,890 to 373 organisations was approved for funding.

## Aims

This evaluation aims to examine where and how the Supporting Communities Fund funding was spent; what the outputs of the funding were and from the perspective of the CAOs and the intermediary funding partners (IFPs); and what were their experiences of the funding process. It also seeks to generate learning about the funding process that can be used to inform similar approaches to funding in the future, identify new and emerging priorities in our recovery from the pandemic and gain insight into CAOs' experiences of partnership working. To determine if CAOs and IFPs were able to apply any learning from their experience of the SCF to the subsequent Communities Recovery Fund (CRF), those involved in both funds were also asked to compare their experiences.

Due to the light touch approach taken, the nature of the interventions and the limitations of the environment groups were working in, the quality of the available data was in some cases limited. Therefore, this report is not able to measure or comment on the fund's overall effectiveness in reducing the impact of the pandemic on local communities and beneficiaries as direct conclusions on the impact of the fund were not able to be drawn from the data available.

## Findings

The SCF supported 373 organisations working across all 32 local authority areas in Scotland and distributed grants totaling £17,056,890. The average amount of funding requested was £37,027 and most applications requested less than £30,000 funding. Grants awarded ranged from £1,500 to £329,720.

The number of people supported by the SCF was not fully possible to measure as not every project recorded the number of people they supported. Many organisations chose to give a general account of the range of people supported rather than attempting to quantify their reach. Where information is available, some organisations chose to report the number of households supported while others reported the number of individuals. Organisations estimated supporting 11,267 households and 173,676 individuals, although this is likely to be a significant underestimation.

The overall fund was not targeted at any specific groups, allowing organisations to identify needs in their own communities. Many individual projects focused on supporting people with particular needs, characteristics or vulnerabilities which made them more vulnerable to the specific social, health and impacts of the pandemic and the accompanying restrictions. Most commonly, organisations reported supporting vulnerable people; people with low or no income; people who were socially isolated; people shielding; people self-isolating; and people with existing mental health conditions. Alongside supporting specific groups, many organisations also reported supporting people from an equality group as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

Grants from the fund supported a broad range of projects, many of them delivering multiple activities and providing a wide range of support to their service users. The most common activities delivered by the various projects focused on food support; basic provisions; support for volunteer management/operating costs; medical prescription delivery; social outreach; digital inclusion; and health and wellbeing support.

A large majority of projects focused on food support in some form, either using funding to help a specific group to access food or taking a broader focus to support anyone in the local area with food and basic provisions. Projects focusing on food support used funding to establish or expand food provision through food banks in the community; to set up community fridges; or put in place systems to distribute surplus food to those in need.

Findings suggest that the Covid-19 pandemic took a significant financial toll on the third sector, with many of the funded organisations requesting funding for operating costs or to support volunteer management. These organisations focused on paying for staffing costs; supplementing core funding for the organisation; covering volunteer expenses and general management; and to paying for enhanced hygiene measures.

Due to the specific circumstances of the pandemic, many people were confined to their homes, either through lockdown conditions, shielding or self-isolation, resulting in increased social isolation and impacting on physical and mental health, as well as general wellbeing. Using SCF funding, projects delivered a range of activities designed to address these issues including support with social interaction; medical prescription delivery; befriending calls; and wellbeing packs.

Findings also suggested that there exists a level of digital exclusion within communities, which has been both highlighted and compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, many projects focused on improving digital access, either through adapting their existing service to allow service users to access the service remotely or providing families and individuals with a range of digital devices to allow them to stay connected.

Reflecting the broad range of activities delivered, organisations also funded projects focusing on home and family life, financial assistance and advice services.

These projects delivered activities such as educational and home-schooling support; parenting support; utilities assistance or direct financial support in the form of hardship funds or small grants; as well as funded projects that offered a range of advice services relating to welfare, debt and housing. A small number of organisations also delivered projects which aimed to improve community resilience to support communities to adapt to the realities of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Overall, data suggests that the experience for those involved in administering the SCF was positive. In particular, those involved in the administration and distribution of the fund felt it had been successful in its aim to distribute funding quickly to organisations at a local level and to support people who had been adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

## **Key Learning**

### **Emerging needs**

Many of the organisations involved in the SCF identified additional needs that emerged through the course of their projects and reported that they were already taking action to respond. It is possible that these needs could be used as potential areas of focus for future funding initiatives as third sector organisations move into the recovery phase.

Most commonly, organisations highlighted emerging needs relating to poverty and unemployment, reflecting the severe financial impact the pandemic has had on communities in terms of unemployment, loss of earnings and increased financial insecurity. After poverty and unemployment, needs relating to health and wellbeing were also seen to be a priority going forward. Organisations reported that the pandemic has had a considerable impact on the mental health of individuals.

There was a recognition throughout the data that the third sector had played a key role in the response to the pandemic and therefore, greater support for community organisations should be a priority going forward in terms of sustained support and investment.

### **Effective communications**

Communications between those involved in the fund were generally seen as successful. In particular, organisations highlighted that communication between CAOs and IFPs and the support provided throughout the funding process had been invaluable and that these relationships were key to the delivery of their projects. Positive communications between the various IFPs were also reported, where partners highlighted that effective communication and the strength of the relationships between the IFPs had been key to the speed of the initial application process.

Although communication between those involved in the fund was viewed as positive overall, in a few specific instances communication could have been improved. IFPs highlighted a need to improve the communication of the funding



criteria to CAOs during the application and assessment process, including the nature, scope and timing of the fund as there was some confusion around eligibility in a few cases.

A need for better communication and coordination between CAOs and the funded organisations working in the same local area was also highlighted, to allow organisations to effectively identify unmet need and reduce the possibility of duplication.

Most of the partners involved in the set-up and management of the SCF felt that the initial application process worked well due to effective communication and the strong relationships between the IFPs and the Scottish Government, and reported that these relationships were central to distributing funding quickly to third sector organisations.

### **Partnership working between Scottish Government, IFPs and CAOs**

The evaluation highlighted the importance and effectiveness of establishing and building on strong relationships to successfully deliver funding efficiently and at pace. It was highlighted that all those involved in delivering the fund brought their own skills and expertise, allowing them to deliver a fast-paced, coordinated and joined-up response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Future funding initiatives may benefit from continuing to build on the relationships established during the course of delivering the SCF as well as those partnerships formed under other emergency funds. In particular, the local knowledge and expertise of community and third sector organisations were seen to have the potential to inform the initial direction of future funding initiatives. The findings suggest that continued prioritisation of structures and partnerships that enhance community resilience would help support the fragile community and voluntary sector. In particular, there is a need to maintain these networks to prevent the loss of the partnership gains made through the SCF funding process so that these partnerships can be mobilised again if required.

### **Pace, simplicity and the light touch approach to funding**

Those involved in the administration and delivery of the SCF generally felt that the pace, simplicity and light approach to the funding process had been successful. In particular, the light touch approach to funding had been central to the agility of the fund, reduced the burden on the funded organisations and allowed grants to reach those most in need in communities throughout Scotland. There were some reservations around aspects of the light touch approach, in terms of measuring direct impact and the clarity of the funding criteria. However, the overall positive reception of the fund does raise questions around whether future funding initiatives could be simpler and faster while minimising the burden placed on third sector organisations.

The evaluation suggests that several steps could be taken to improve future funding initiatives:

- review the amount and format of information requested in both application and monitoring forms, to identify ways to provide focus and direction to organisations without being overly onerous;
- review funding criteria to improve the clarity of information provided to those involved in administering the fund and to CAOs to ensure that the eligibility criteria, timing and scope of the fund to applicants;
- consider ways in which some aspects of the light touch approach could be taken forward to improve future funding initiatives, with the aim of striking a balance between speed, flexibility and risk; and
- if a full evaluation is required, consider ways to strike a balance between agility and responsiveness in an incredibly time sensitive situation, with the need to evidence outcomes for public spend.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

On 18 March 2020, in response to the emerging Covid-19 pandemic, the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government announced a £350 million package of Communities Funding support. This rapid response to the pandemic reflected Ministers' concerns around the seriousness of the situation, and their recognition of the need to support neighbourhoods and communities through the crisis.

The Supporting Communities Fund (SCF) was established with an initial £20 million investment to provide funding to community anchor organisations (CAOs), such as charities, voluntary controlled housing associations and social enterprises to help support local responses to the pandemic. Community anchor organisations were expected to work with public services, grassroots organisations and small community-based groups to disburse funds to where they were needed. The fund was designed to provide financial support in the short term, initially over a 4-6 month period, and closed in September 2020. In total, £17,056,890 to 373 organisations was approved for funding.

## 1.2 Terminology

Throughout this report, the terms intermediary funding partners (IFPs), community anchor organisations (CAOs) and funded organisations are used to refer to those involved in the delivery of the SCF (the structure of the SCF is discussed in more detail in section 1.3). Where intermediary funding partners are referenced, they are described as either "IFPs" or "partners", whereas community anchor organisations are described as "CAOs" or "organisations"<sup>1</sup>. Funded organisations are exclusively referred to as "funded organisations". A full list of acronyms is included in Appendix 1.

## 1.3 Overview of the Supporting Communities Fund

The SCF application process was set up in partnership between the Scottish Government and national third sector organisations, who are known throughout this report as intermediary funding partners (IFPs). The structure of the SCF was organised with the IFPs and CAOs as intermediary layers between the Scottish Government and people in communities (see Figure 1). Various IFPs (see Appendix 2) along with the Scottish Government made up the Supporting Communities Fund Partnership (SCFP). The partnership was responsible for identifying CAOs to fund, and for developing and overseeing the management of the fund, including budget spend and sign off of funding application approvals. The SCFP was also responsible for coordinating fund delivery capacity/resource across IFPs, and for supporting contributions to maximise the impact of the SCF alongside other funding streams and with other funding bodies/structures. The SCFP was

---

<sup>1</sup> Examples of community anchor organisations include housing associations, development trusts, charitable societies and community associations.

also responsible for identifying and addressing gaps in delivery and worked closely with the Community Wellbeing Fund (CWF) coalition.

**Figure 1: Supporting Communities Fund funding structure**



The IFPs acted as lead funding partners on behalf of the Scottish Government to manage SCF applications. These were largely the same partners that comprised the SCFP and were responsible for supporting the development of successful bids; assessing bids and making approval recommendations; supporting /advising CAOs; acting as grantor to CAOs including holding administering, distributing funds; and gathering monitoring and reporting information on expenditure and outputs/outcomes. The IFPs liaised with the SCFP members and provided the partnership with progress updates, application approval reports and activity reports.

CAOs were responsible for the coordination and planning of local activity (in partnership with public services and other community organisations) and provided a local conduit for accessing the SCF. They provided local budget management to meet accounting and audit requirements and compiled project reports for their IFP (the grantor).

Following the announcement of the funds, rapid work was undertaken with stakeholders to develop an approach through which the SCF could be delivered. This was agreed by Ministers on 26 March 2021. Detailed work began to fully establish the funding delivery partnership, and then with the SCFP to co-produce the necessary processes for managing the fund, including the development of the fund's criteria, supporting documents and decision making structure.

By 29 March 2021, the SCFP had begun contacting potential applicants through the partners; reaching out to over 800 community organisations inviting expressions of interest; and developing those received into full applications. On 16 April the panel approved the first set of applications awarding over £2.7 million to 45 community anchor organisations.

### **1.3.1 Application process**

The application process took place in two rounds between April and September 2020.

The SCF was open to organisations across all 32 local authorities and funding could be disbursed in one or two instalments. Funding was generally disbursed in one instalment if the funding requested was below £25,000. Where the funding requested was £25,000 or above, the activity was delivered over a longer period or the activity was in development, funding was disbursed in two instalments.

## **Phase 1**

To meet the developing needs of communities in the face of the pandemic, the application process was designed to be rapid and flexible to allow organisations to respond effectively to local priorities. In the initial stage of the SCF application process, expression of interest forms (EOIs) were used by IFPs to invite local organisations to apply. In completing an EOI, CAOs were asked to confirm whether they were able to act in the role of a local coordinator for their community and whether they could support other organisations by distributing funding to them. Applicants were encouraged to provide information about any Covid-19 activity they were already delivering or to identify activity in the community which could benefit from SCF funding, giving an indication of the amount of funding needed. To reduce duplication and to target funding towards needs as effectively as possible, applicants were expected to demonstrate that they were engaged in local coordination with other organisations delivering similar or related projects in order to create a single request for support. During the specified funding period, applicants were unable to apply to another Covid-19 emergency fund for the same activity.

Completed EOIs were returned to the lead funding partner (LFP) (either the IFP or Scottish Government) who determined whether the eligibility criteria was met (see section 1.3.2). LFPs were provided with guidance to allow them to consistently assess the applications and determine if applicants met the criteria for support.

## **Phase 2**

In phase 2 of the application process, LFPs were able to forego the expression of interest stage and invite applicants to apply directly. This direct invitation was based on collective work by the IFPs to 'map' the initial distribution of the fund, in terms of geographic coverage, to identify communities (of place) where there were potential gaps in support.

### **1.3.2 Funding criteria**

CAOs were expected to work in partnership with grassroots and small community-based groups to disburse funds to where they were needed, and to provide a local point of contact. The application criteria for the SCF required applications to:

- Demonstrate that funding would be used for new or extended activity in the community that was being delivered solely in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and supported any members of the community experiencing

challenges as a result of the pandemic (the fund did not target any particular group, although many individual projects chose to support those areas of the community where local need was greatest).

- Demonstrate that the new or extended activity started no earlier than 16 March 2020 and the project could be delivered over the short-term, initially over a 4-6 month period.
- Funding was flexible but CAOs were expected to propose a project to respond to what they considered to be local priorities - this could cover costs such as staff/volunteer costs, travel costs and other related and unforeseen expenditure. Organisations were also able to include costs associated with coordinating the activity and keeping staff / volunteers safe i.e. personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Propose a project costing between £3,000 and £100,000 (higher value applications over £100,000 were considered where they were supported by a strong case of need).

### **1.3.3 Activities for funding**

As previously discussed (see section 1.3.2), CAOs could distribute funding for new or extended activity in the community that was being delivered solely in response to Covid-19 to support members of the community experiencing challenges as a result of the pandemic. This activity was considered as having started no earlier than 16 March 2020 i.e. the start of the first national lockdown.

Whilst SCF was flexible so that it could be used to respond to local priorities, funding could, for example, be used for the following:

- Providing and delivering food to those who could not buy it for themselves or were unable to access it due to self-isolation;
- Providing advice for people to access benefits and emergency funds for fuel, accommodation etc.;
- Connecting services and volunteers to where they were needed;
- Financial support for community organisations to increase or deliver new activity to meet demand e.g. fuel cards;
- Funding to support community organisations to deliver services in new ways in response to Covid-19 e.g. digital tools to enable people to remain connected;
- Funding to support and maintain organisational cashflow and staff/volunteer costs while dealing with the pandemic, e.g. due to loss of other income sources;
- Travel costs and equipment;
- Costs of supporting personal safety; and/or
- Costs for CAO for coordinating the activity.

## 1.4 Evaluation aims

This evaluation aims to examine where and how the Supporting Communities Fund funding was spent, what the outputs of the funding were and from the perspective of the CAOs and the IFPs, what were their experiences of the funding process. It also seeks to generate learning about the funding process that can be used to inform similar approaches to funding in the future, identify new and emerging priorities in our recovery from the pandemic and gain insight into CAOs' experiences of partnership working. To determine if those involved in the administration of the fund were able to apply any learning from their experience of the SCF to the subsequent Communities Recovery Fund (CRF), those involved in both funds were also asked to compare their experiences.

Due to the light touch approach taken, the nature of the interventions and the limitations of the environment groups were working in, the quality of the available data was in some cases limited (see section 1.6 for study limitations). Therefore, this report is not able to measure or comment on the fund's overall effectiveness in reducing the impact of the pandemic on local communities and beneficiaries as direct conclusions were not able to be drawn from the data available. Instead, it focuses on what the funding was used for, where it was distributed and highlights lessons from the funding process. Therefore, the main research aim was to generate learning about the funding process that can be used to inform approaches to funding in future.

## 1.5 Methodology

Analysis for this report was conducted by Scottish Government analysts, bringing together analysis from four main data sources: application and awards data for all SCF applicants; monitoring returns data submitted by CAOs; a follow-up survey carried out with CAOs; and an additional survey carried out with the IFPs. Several short case studies have also been included to illustrate a range of activities, recipients and outcomes.

Application and awards data from all 465 applications were used in the analysis. There were very few expressions of interest that were not progressed to the full application stage. Where applications were not progressed, this could be to prevent duplication (where similar activity was already being delivered in an area), because the size, scale or focus of the project did not match community needs, or because the organisation was asking for funding for activities that were not in direct response to the pandemic. The data on application and awards included organisational and location information, details of the proposed projects, target groups and intended outcomes. This data was collected by the CAOs and supplied to Scottish Government analysts by the IFPs. This data also forms the basis of the published mapping tool.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> [Communities Funding - Overview \(arcgis.com\)](https://www.arcgis.com)



Monitoring returns data was collected by the IFPs, with all successful applicant organisations asked to complete an end of project monitoring form. Of the 373 grant awardees, 320 completed the monitoring form in time to be included in the analysis. The monitoring form asked for a brief report on the expected and actual activities, and evidence of expenditure. The monitoring forms included no further guidance on what details should be included and as a result there is a large variation in the quality of these reports, making comparison challenging and direct outcomes difficult to determine.

An online survey was designed to gather information from the monitoring forms in a standardised way. To limit the burden placed on the CAOs, Scottish Government analysts initially pre-populated the survey using information found within the application and monitoring forms. A follow-up survey was then designed around the topics where information was missing and the refined survey was then distributed to the CAOs for completion.

The follow-up survey included both closed and open-ended questions requesting information on:

- initial thoughts on the funding process
- reflections on the funding process now that the funding period has ended
- what worked well/ less well
- any reflections on their experiences of partnership working
- key learning from organisations' experience of the SCF process

A similar survey was designed and distributed to the IFPs involved in the funding process.

### **1.5.1 Quantitative Methods**

Data was provided by CAOs and compiled by Scottish Government policy colleagues. This data was then reviewed and duplicate cases and those with missing data flagged and filtered prior to analysis. A flag was also added to mark those applications that were recorded as funding uplifts. Flags were created in either Excel or SPSS. Data on Local Authority (LA) area and EOIs were cleaned and standardised to remove misspellings and typos. Missing data for LAs was located and matched using available organisational information provided.

Each of the following categories were assigned by SG analysts to the planned activities laid out in the application and monitoring forms, and used to categorise data in the pre-populated survey. Due to variation in the ways activities were described and carried out, there was overlap between categories and they were not coded as mutually exclusive – therefore a degree of interpretation was involved in assigning coding activities. Below what each category encompasses is set out and explained:



**Welfare advice:** provision of welfare advice via various methods – helplines, online etc. with a particular focus on benefits advice to those who have lost jobs/income due to Covid-19. Also included in this category are instances where services regularly offered by Citizens Advice Scotland are supported.

**Debt Advice:** often provided in tandem with welfare advice via the same methods. Again services offered by Citizens Advice Scotland are supported.

**Financial assistance (not fuel):** the assessment of need and distribution of hardship grants and vouchers for various necessities to those who were in financial hardship and those who have fallen into financial hardship due to Covid-19. This included direct financial assistance for specific services or items such as transport costs, tablets, phones top-ups, food vouchers or other items but excluded support for fuel and utilities.

**Food support and associated costs:** the supply of hot meals to those who are:

- vulnerable;
- shielding;
- self-isolating.

Provision of foodbank or food parcel services to those in need, shopping and delivery services for self-isolating and shielding individuals and food growing initiatives where seeds/produce or similar are provided from local community gardens were also included in this category.

**Basic provisions (not food):** provision of toiletries, sanitary products etc. Either via food parcels or shopping delivery services.

**Health and wellbeing support:** includes a wide range of physical and mental health services such as the provision of helplines offering general health and wellbeing advice; specialised mental health advice or counselling helplines/online activities; and bicycle rental for key workers.

**Utilities assistance (e.g. energy bills):** includes the provision of vouchers/top-ups to cover fuel/phone costs or similar.

**Medical prescription delivery:** pickup and delivery of medical prescriptions.

**Home and family support resources:** includes a range of activities aimed at reducing social isolation, loneliness and boredom due to long periods spent at home such as activity packs and quizzes for children in lockdown, support with school work, rental or provision of puzzles/board games and memory packs for older residents containing CD's of old music and photographs.

**Domestic abuse support:** various services were provided including helplines providing support and advice and initiatives providing access to counselling.

**Housing support:** includes a range of activities related to housing including emergency repairs, provision of white goods, support accessing housing and paying for housing costs.

**Social outreach (e.g. befriending calls):** includes support with providing distanced activities and volunteers costs in coordination and carrying out regular befriending phone calls.

**Support with social interaction and associated costs:** includes the provision of phones, phone top-ups etc. to enable people to keep connected with services/family.

**Signposting to other support services:** includes activities where referrals were made to other services as well as advice lines, websites or community newsletters.

**Community resilience:** includes activities which provided support for community hubs or delivered support via community councils. Some projects also created welcoming safe spaces for distanced activities or coordinated rural transport for remote communities, as restrictions allowed.

**Supporting self-help:** includes support to those setting up support or self-help networks.

**Digital access to services and associated costs:** includes activities aimed at supporting or improving access to digital services or activities such as the provision or rental of laptops/tablets/broadband dongles to allow individuals/families to access online services or to contact relatives online via video call.

**Online activities:** includes activities focusing on the provision of online classes, social activities, counselling and wellbeing groups, and community websites and Facebook pages.

**Operating costs:** includes support for staffing costs, volunteer management, rent/utility costs for premises used in food prep and cost of fuel for local minibus/delivery van schemes.

It is important to note that in many cases activities were interlinked and targeted multiple areas of need. Therefore, in some cases certain planned activities could fall into a number of categories and they are not mutually exclusive. As previously mentioned, an element of subjective judgement has therefore been employed in assigning activities to each category.

The descriptive statistics and cross tabulations that amount to the quantitative analysis were produced using SPSS.

### **1.5.2 Qualitative methods**

Due to time constraints, a sample of 20% of the monitoring forms provided in time was selected for in-depth analysis. An additional 5 monitoring forms were also purposively selected at random to ensure at least one organisation was drawn from each local authority area. The data from the monitoring forms was coded using a process of manual thematic coding to analyse qualitative information. A manual approach was chosen in order to better interpret any complexities in the qualitative data.

Using a combination of codes emergent from the data and imposed from an existing coding framework, 10% of the randomised sample was coded by a group of SG analysts to allow for comparison and to check for consistency. The monitoring forms were sorted into a coding matrix in Word, with each form being given a specific source tag to allow for easy identification. The text from each monitoring form was then broken down into meaningful fragments of text and a close reading carried out of each sentence. Emergent key themes and sub-themes were identified and the data was coded according to these themes. Following initial coding, SG analysts agreed on final codes and the rest of the sample was coded accordingly.

Data from the open-ended questions from the follow-up survey and the survey carried out with the IFPs were also coded and analysed in NVivo. Themes and emerging findings were then recorded in a framework matrix in Excel, where the data was linked with the monitoring form analysis to compare key themes across the multiple data sources. This ensured that the analysis of the data was as rigorous, balanced and accurate as possible and that key cross-cutting messages or concepts could be identified.

## **1.6 Study limitations**

As discussed in the aims (see section 1.4), due to the nature and limitations of the available data, it is beyond the scope of this project to make any definitive claims regarding the overall impact of the SCF. In particular, it was not possible to conduct a direct evaluation with the individuals, groups or communities supported by the funded organisations. In order to disburse the funds as quickly as possible and to reduce the burden on the CAOs and funded organisations, the monitoring process for the SCF was comparatively light touch when balanced against the monitoring process for some of the other Covid-19 emergency funds. This approach also reflected Ministers' wishes for a light touch application and monitoring process to respond quickly, minimise the burden on applicants and avoid delaying funding with a complicated application process. Aside from financial information, many organisations provided very little feedback in their monitoring forms. Financial information assisted in understanding how the funds were used, however, in some cases tangible benefits delivered to communities were still unclear.

It was also not possible to compare funded areas/organisations with those that did not receive this funding, or make any assessment of whether the funding could

have been used more effectively in a different manner. Therefore, rather than seeking to make claims about the impact or efficacy of the fund, the parts of this report focusing on outcomes instead present a picture of what the funding was used for, and a flavour of who was supported by the fund, where possible, with reference to the self-reported benefits delivered by CAOs.

By relying on CAOs' and funded organisations' own reporting about how they used the funds and how effective the projects were, the report cannot provide an entirely impartial, objective picture of the use of the funding, but it nevertheless provides important and useful insight into the successes and challenges of the funded projects.

It is also important to note that the SCF existed within the wider context of numerous Scottish Government and other emergency funds to support third sector organisations. This report is therefore limited by its focus on a single fund which represents a single aspect of a much wider funding landscape.

Analysis of the geographical data relating to applications and awards was limited by the fact that many applicant organisations were often working across several areas and more than one local authority. This made it challenging to undertake a full analysis of how funding was spent in different local authorities or, for example, in areas of higher vs lower deprivation. Several organisations also indicated that they received funding from multiple sources and reported these projects in their monitoring forms, meaning that determining attribution to the various funding sources was challenging.

Due to the lack of specific questions in the monitoring forms, it is also difficult to draw any firm conclusions around the number of people supported by the fund as organisations described their reach in a number of different ways. For example, some organisations estimated the number of beneficiaries, while others measured their reach in how many food parcels they had delivered over the course of a month.

## 2. Distribution of funding

### 2.1 Overview of applications

A total of 536 applications, including for uplift funding, were received. At the time of writing 465 were approved and 71 EOIs were received but were not progressed to a full application (with 373 organisations receiving funding), meaning 86.8% of applications were successful. The average amount of funding requested by successful applications was £37,027 and most applications requested <£30,000 funding. Data on the amount of funding requested by unsuccessful applications was unavailable. Larger amounts of funding, of £100,000 or over, were requested by 34 organisations. The amount of funding requested ranged from £1,500 to £329,720.

The total value of funding requested was £17,254,363 and the total value of funding approved was £17,056,890. Within the 465 approved applications, there were 92 requests for uplift<sup>3</sup> funding. The extended period was supported in recognition of the ongoing challenge posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, where the majority of requests were to continue services beyond the initial time period or because of an expected increase in demand. Organisations also sought uplift funding when it became apparent they needed to employ a coordinator to help organise their activities. The total value of uplift funding requested was £2,073,427 and the total value of uplift applications funding approved was £2,039,647.

To prevent applications from being rejected, the SCFP and IFPs engaged with CAOs throughout the application process to amend those applications which didn't initially meet the criteria. The key issues for the panel to consider were eligible costs or to consider the possibility of duplication that was not picked up at the EOI stage. A small number of EOIs were not progressed to the application stage because the organisation did not want to proceed or the project did not meet the criteria. For example, if the project did not directly relate to the Covid-19 pandemic or funding was requested to replace lost income alone.

### 2.2 Geographical distribution

The table below shows how many applications were made by local authority, the funding requested and the funding awarded. The per head of population values are based on the National Records of Scotland mid-2019 population estimates<sup>4</sup>. As noted above, analysis of the geographical data relating to applications and awards was limited by the fact that many applicant organisations were often working across several areas and more than one local authority. This made it challenging to undertake a full analysis of how funding was spent in different local authorities. As such, the analysis presented below is based on the location of the CAO.

---

<sup>3</sup> Applications for uplift funding related to organisations who had already applied and had an initial application approved and either needed additional funding to continue the project or address additional need.

<sup>4</sup> [Mid-2019 Population Estimates Scotland | National Records of Scotland \(nrscotland.gov.uk\)](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk)

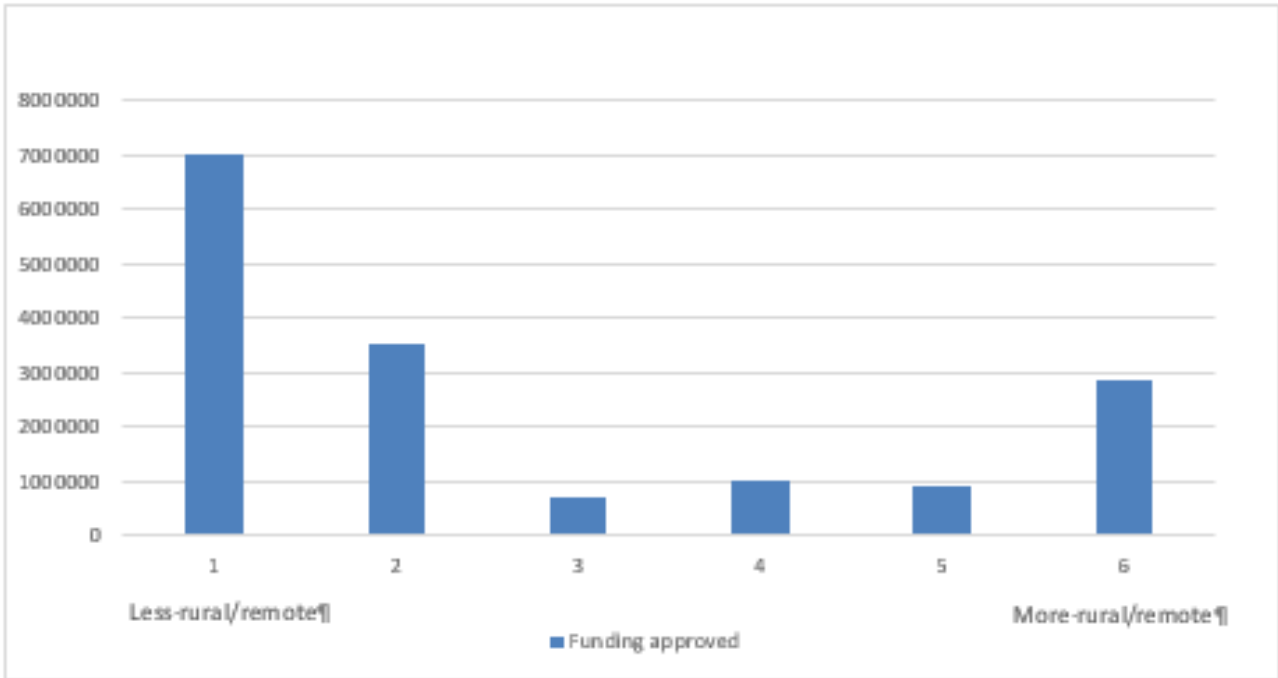
**Table 1: Geographical distribution of funding and spend by head of population**

Local Authority	Number of applications	Total funding requested	Total Funding awarded	Per head of Pop - 2019 Estimates
Aberdeen	5(0.9%)	£310,441	£310,441 (2%)	£1.36
Aberdeenshire	17(3.2%)	£313,313	£313,313 (2%)	£1.20
Angus	3(0.6%)	£150,000	£125,000 (1%)	£1.08
Argyll and Bute	34(6.3%)	£565,850	£565,850 (3%)	£6.59
Clackmannanshire	8(1.5%)	£121,303	£121,303 (1%)	£2.35
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	18(3.4%)	£343,881	£343,881 (2%)	£12.87
Dumfries and Galloway	19(3.5%)	£389,930	£388,647 (2%)	£2.61
Dundee	5(0.9%)	£249,600	£249,600 (1%)	£1.67
East Ayrshire	14(2.6%)	£264,264	£264,264 (2%)	£2.17
East Dunbartonshire	6(1.1%)	£74,250	£74,250 (<1%)	£0.68
East Lothian	4(0.7%)	£187,614	£187,614 (1%)	£1.75
East Renfrewshire	4(0.7%)	£154,016	£154,016 (1%)	£1.61
Edinburgh	24(4.5%)	£1,217,635	£1,162,920 (7%)	£2.22
Falkirk	4(0.7%)	£155,600	£155,600 (1%)	£0.97
Fife	19(3.5%)	£689,671	£689,671 (4%)	£1.85
Glasgow	66(12.3%)	£4,420,825	£4,387,045 (26%)	£6.93
Highland	99(18.5%)	£1,934,710	£1,934,710 (11%)	£8.20
Inverclyde	7(1.3%)	£315,780	£315,780 (2%)	£4.06
Midlothian	7(1.3%)	£309,791	£309,791 (2%)	£3.35
Moray	21(3.9%)	£429,039	£429,039 (3%)	£4.48
Multiple	7(1.3%)	£568,207	£529,784 (3%)	n/a
North Ayrshire	13(2.4%)	£387,865	£387,865 (2%)	£2.88
North Lanarkshire	10(1.9%)	£502,719	£492,719 (3%)	£1.44
Orkney	14(2.6%)	£224,373	£224,373 (1%)	£10.08
Perth and Kinross	16(3.0%)	£434,726	£434,726 (3%)	£2.86
Renfrewshire	9(1.7%)	£591,012	£591,012 (3%)	£3.30
Scottish Borders	12(2.2%)	£463,335	£463,335 (3%)	£4.01
Shetland	24(4.5%)	£260,665	£260,665 (2%)	£11.37
South Ayrshire	8(1.5%)	£368,436	£334,164 (2%)	£2.97
South Lanarkshire	12(2.2%)	£332,472	£332,472 (2%)	£1.04
Stirling	10(1.9%)	£108,253	£108,253 (1%)	£1.15
West Dunbartonshire	7(1.3%)	£123,550	£123,550 (1%)	£1.39
West Lothian	10(1.9%)	£291,237	£291,237 (2%)	£1.59
<b>Total</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>£17,254,363</b>	<b>£17,056,890</b>	<b>£3.12</b>

When analysed by Urban/Rural classification, using the Scottish Government's 2016 six-fold classification, most funding was distributed to Large Urban Areas Settlements of over 125,000 people and Other Urban Areas Settlements of 10,000 to 125,000 people. Just over a quarter of funding was distributed to projects in the Glasgow City Council area.

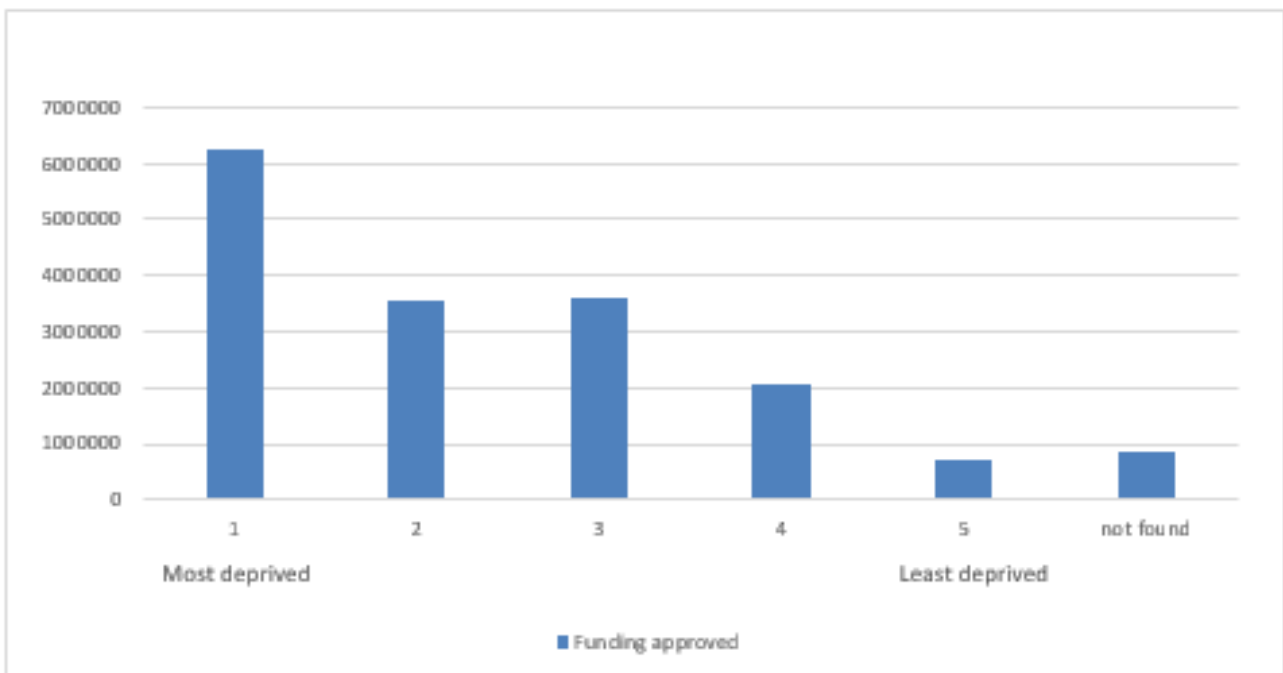
A substantial amount of funding was also delivered to Remote Rural Settlements of less than 3,000 people and with a drive time of over 30 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more. Island communities in particular received higher amounts per head of population than other local authority areas.

**Chart 1: Funding by Urban/Rural six-fold classification**



The majority of the funding was delivered to projects operating within the two lowest SIMD quintiles (see Chart 2). With least deprived quintiles requesting and receiving the least amount of funding. However, as noted in section 2.2, as many projects were operating over several areas, and this analysis is based on local authority areas, a full analysis of deprivation is challenging.

**Chart 2: Funding approved by SIMD quintile**



## 3. Funding activities

### 3.1 Activities delivered

The data in the following table is based on monitoring data submitted by CAOs. This was categorised and entered into the initial survey to record the data in a standardised way. Of those organisations involved in the fund, 320 submitted monitoring data in time to be included in the analysis sample. All projects engaged in at least two activities and as such the total number of activities is not the same as the total number of funded projects.

**Table 2: Number of times each activity delivered where explicitly reported**

Activity	Number of times delivered
Food support and associated costs	286
Volunteer management and associated costs	188
Operating costs	188
Basic provisions (not food)	169
Social outreach (e.g. befriending calls)	154
Digital access to services and associated costs	129
Medical prescription delivery	125
Health and wellbeing support	119
Home and family support	109
Utilities assistance	105
Online activities	102
Community resilience	101
Support with social interaction	75
Signposting to other services	72
Financial assistance (not fuel)	47
Welfare advice	31
Debt advice	26
Domestic abuse support	16
Supporting self-help	14
Housing support	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,067</b>



## 3.2 People supported

Not every project recorded the number of people they supported. Those who did provided estimates and reported the number of people supported in a number of different ways. For example, some reported the number of meals delivered (where some duplication of families/individuals will be included) and others reported numbers of times digital content was shared or viewed online.

Of the 320 groups who submitted monitoring information, 152 did not provide specific or detailed information on the numbers of people helped by their project. A lack of reporting requirements also meant that the way in which groups classified how many households or people they helped is not standardised. For example, some organisations reported the number of households supported, while others reported the number of individuals. Numbers are therefore not comparable across projects, anchor organisations or geographically.

Where information is available, a reported 11,267 households and 173,676 individuals were estimated to be assisted by projects. However, due to the above data constraints, this is likely to be a significant underestimation.

## 3.3 Specific groups supported

The table below shows the number of projects that reported supporting a specific group of people with the funding they received. This data was self-reported by the CAOs in their end of project monitoring forms and, as previously mentioned, 320 forms were submitted in time for analysis. Where the CAO reported they had supported a specific group, SG analysts pre-populated the initial survey with this information. The results are presented in Table 3. A number of projects supported more than one specific group so the total number of projects in the table below is greater than the total number of projects funded.

Not all projects reported supporting specific groups and a project not mentioning specific support does not imply it did not provide support to members of that group over the course of their project. It is also important to note that although SCF funding was offered as a whole community response many individual projects chose to support those areas of the community where local need was greatest. However, in many cases it is unlikely that beneficiaries were asked if they were part of the following groups.

**Table 3: Number of projects reporting support for specific groups**

Group supported	Number of projects supporting
Vulnerable people	180
People with low/no income	133
People who are socially isolated	115
People shielding	90

<b>Group supported</b>	<b>Number of projects supporting</b>
People self-Isolating	87
People with existing mental health issues	59
People who are rurally isolated	48
Children and Families	46
Older people	35
Keyworkers	24
People with learning disabilities	19
Care service users	17
People experiencing domestic abuse	16
People with disabilities/existing health conditions	16
People with substance dependencies	15
Unpaid carers	14
People experiencing homelessness	12
Vulnerable migrants	9
People with dementia	9
People with special diets	7
Students	4
People in fuel poverty	4
People who are non-shielding at risk	3
Care leavers	3
Early release prisoners	2
Gypsy/Travellers	2
People who are digitally excluded	2
Crofters	2
People who have symptoms or live with someone with symptoms	1
People who are self-employed/furloughed	1
No specific group supported	78

### **3.4 Equality characteristics**

The table below shows the numbers of projects who reported supporting a specific group of people from one of the equality groups as defined by the Equality Act 2010. This analysis is based on the 320 organisations that submitted monitoring data in time to be included for analysis. A number of projects targeted more than

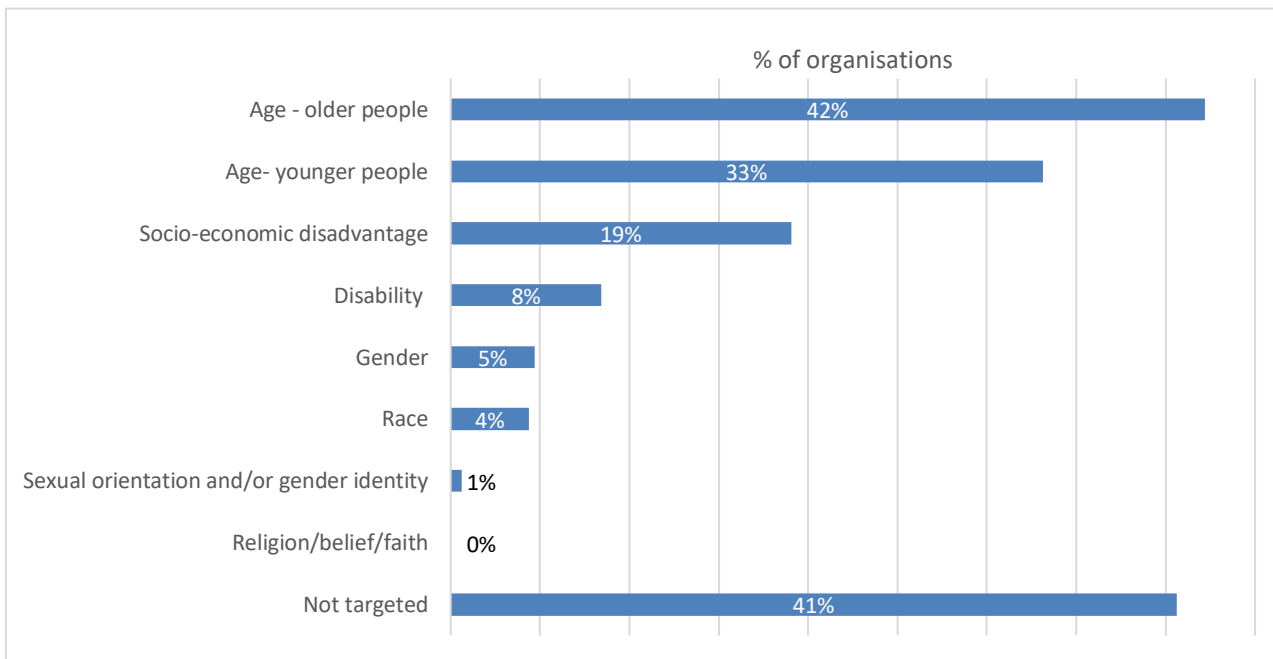
one specific group and as such, the total number of projects in the table below is greater than the total number of projects included in the analysis.

Not all projects reported targeting one of the equality groups and a project not mentioning specific support does not imply it did not provide support to members of that group over the course of their project. As discussed in section 3.3, this data is self-reported by the CAOs and beneficiaries may not have chosen to identify as part of these groups.

**Table 4: Number of projects reporting support for those with an equality characteristic**

Equality characteristic	Number of projects supporting
Age - older people	135
Age- younger people	106
Socio-economic disadvantage	61
Disability	27
Gender	15
Race	14
Sexual orientation and/or gender identity	2
Religion/belief/faith	0
Not supported	130

**Chart 3: Percentage of projects reporting support for people with an equality characteristic**

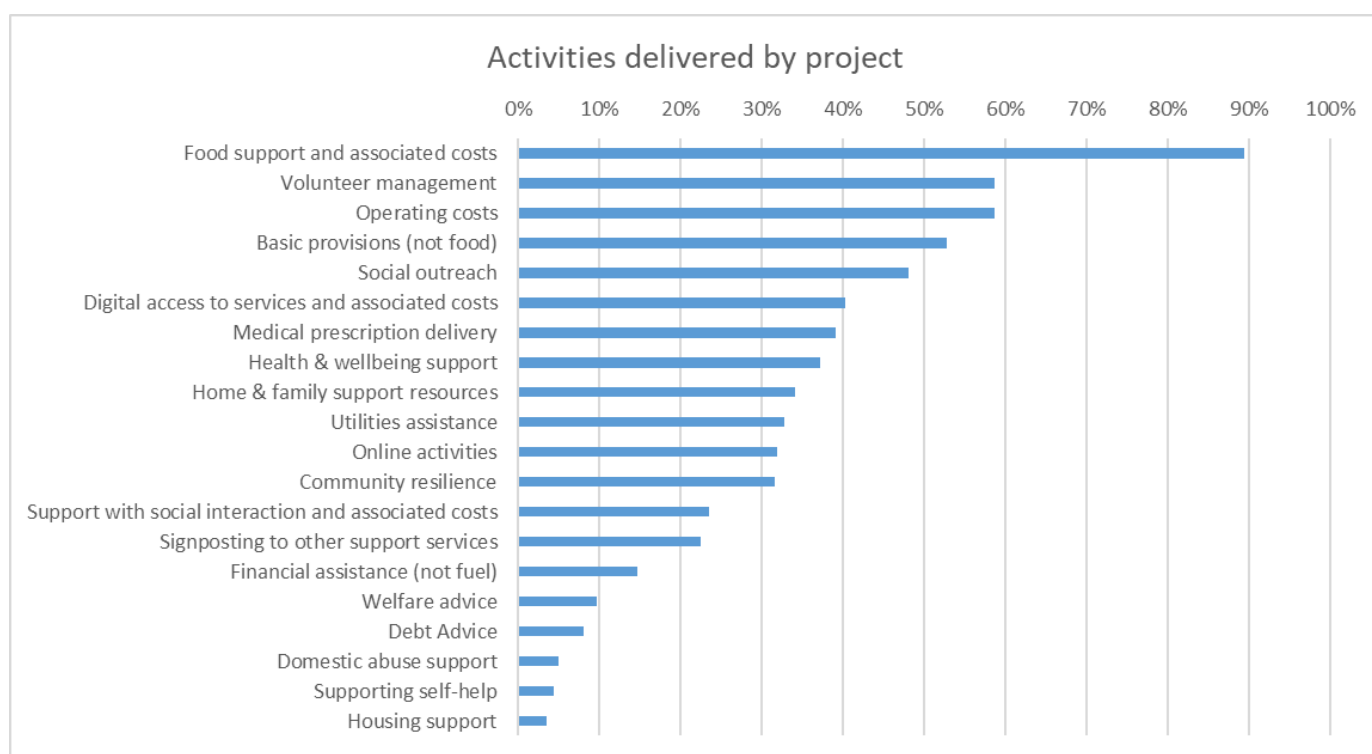


## 4. Outputs

### 4.1 Activities delivered

The analysis in the following section is based on both application and monitoring data submitted by CAOs. This was categorised and entered into the initial survey to record the data in a standardised way. Of those organisations involved in the fund, 320 submitted monitoring data in time to be included in the analysis sample. Organisations who provided information on activities delivered indicated they provided a wide range of services or support. The full breakdown of these activities using data from the 320 projects where monitoring information was available is shown in Chart 3. All of the projects delivered more than one activity. In many cases activities were interlinked and targeted multiple areas of need. Therefore, in some cases, certain planned activities could fall into a number of categories and they are not mutually exclusive. Coding was undertaken by a number of analysts and as such, these codes are considered interpretive. Projects that focused in some way on social isolation and loneliness often delivered multiple activities.

**Chart 4: Activities delivered by project (%)**



As Chart 4 shows, the large majority of projects (89%) for which monitoring data is available focused on food support in some form. The second most common request for funding related to volunteer management (59%), reflecting the key role that volunteers have played in supporting the third sector throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, and operating costs (59%). Basic provisions (53%), social outreach (48%) and digital access (40%) were also a common focus of projects. For the purposes of this report, these categories were combined into the broad categories:

food and basic provisions; operating costs; social outreach; health and wellbeing; digital access; housing and family support; financial assistance; advice services and community resilience. These are discussed in more detail below.

#### **4.1.1 Support with food and basic provisions**

The large majority of projects for which we have monitoring data involved supporting people to access food and basic provisions, with 286 (89%) of the 320 projects in the analysis sample providing support around food and 169 (53%) supporting people with basic provisions. Most of these projects did not focus exclusively on these activities but tended to deliver them alongside other areas of support. Projects focusing on these activities delivered free meals, food items, supermarket vouchers, toiletries, sanitary products and other items that could be considered essential.

Some organisations focused on helping a specific target group to access food, such as asylum seekers; people on low or no income; people who were homeless; families with vulnerable children; or people with specific health conditions. In a small number of cases, organisations recognised a need to ensure that the food they provided was culturally and religiously appropriate.

Many other organisations took a broader focus, choosing to support anyone in the local area with food and basic provisions, recognising the likelihood that families and individuals who had not previously needed support may need it as a result of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, due to the risk of unemployment, reduced incomes or the need to self-isolate or shield.

Several organisations established or expanded food provision through food banks in the community, while others set up community fridges or put in place systems to distribute surplus food to those in need. For some organisations operating in rural areas, projects operating a community pantry or supporting the local shop were common. Organisations providing support around basic provisions often delivered this alongside food provision in the form of emergency care packages containing toiletries, sanitary products and household essentials. For many organisations, these activities were entirely new areas of work, which they identified as important in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

For example, one organisation in East Dunbartonshire, where a range of groups had been adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, used the grant to supplement supplies in their local shop and to set up a meal delivery service:

“We were able to pick up supplies from neighbouring towns which aren’t accessible in our small village shop such as baby formula, nappies, fresh fruit, butcher meat items and other groceries and toiletries to our vulnerable people including those with substance misuse issues, poor mental health, single parents, low income families, the elderly and disabled and those residents who don’t have access to a car. We were also able to transform our café and kitchen area to operate a hot food delivery service preparing meals to vulnerable people

and in particular families with children who would usually be accessing free school meals and breakfast club and elderly residents who would usually receive hot meals from family and or neighbours that could no longer do this during this lockdown period. The grant allowed us to buy ingredients and equipment for bulk cooking of soups, pastas and other hot meals, fresh fruit and veg for all the families with young children to ensure no one was facing hunger or poor nutrition during this time with limited access to supermarkets.” (Community anchor organisation, East Dunbartonshire)

While most food and basic provision related projects focused on direct provision, others supported people in other ways. For example, by signposting people to other food and basic provision initiatives; supporting people to grow their own food by providing seeds, tools or funding community garden projects; and dropping off shopping to people who could not get to the shops themselves (for example for those that were shielding or self-isolating).

A small number of organisations delivering food and basic provision related projects reported direct benefits around reduced food insecurity. Indirect benefits relating to reduced isolation and loneliness were also reported where volunteers were able to connect with people in the course of their activities, mitigating the effect of loneliness and isolation on service users.

## Case study: Food support

Organisations recognised that due to the specific circumstances of the pandemic many people faced financial hardship and even for some that could afford food, they were unable to leave the house to get to the shops. As a result, many people found food difficult to access, resulting in an increase in food insecurity.

One funded organisation operating in Highland recognised the particular difficulties facing those in financial hardship or who were shielding or self-isolating. This organisation felt that there was a particular need to ensure people were still able to access food.

This organisation launched a weekly lunch club to deliver meals once a week to people’s homes and started a voucher scheme to provide assistance with food purchases. The voucher scheme was made as anonymous as possible and individuals were only known by their voucher number, with the intention of reducing barriers to take-up. Alongside this, the organisation opened and operated a local food hub to make basic foodstuffs available to people who were facing financial hardship as a result of Covid-19.

The organisation reported that the demand for food vouchers levelled off as the pandemic progressed. However, they expected demand to increase again as financial measures, such as furlough, were removed and redundancies increased.

### 4.1.2 Operating and volunteer management costs

After support with food and basic provisions, organisations most commonly requested funding to cover operating costs (59%) or some form of volunteer management (59%), with 188 out of the 320 projects focusing some of the funding on each of these areas. Organisations that used some of the funding for this area focused on paying for staffing costs, supplementing core funding for the organisation, covering volunteer expenses and general management, and to pay for enhanced hygiene measures. Many of the organisations using funding for this reason highlighted the financial toll that the Covid-19 pandemic had taken on the third sector due to reduced income from fundraising and a lack of opportunities for income generation. Alongside this, organisations also reported additional financial pressure due to the breadth of services they were now expected to provide and the resultant need for more staff and volunteers. The increased health risk of working under pandemic conditions had also led to high and unanticipated costs relating to hygiene measures and sanitising stations, as well as the need to provide substantial amounts of PPE. A small number of organisations used the funding to develop their terms of governance or to put in place systems to formalise volunteer recruitment.

The majority of funding used for operating costs related to volunteer management and associated costs (67%) and tended to be sought to pay volunteer expenses or to ensure volunteer safety in terms of providing PPE. For example, one organisation working with vulnerable people, people with disabilities and long-term illnesses in Glasgow recognised the financial impact the specific circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic had taken on many volunteers. Therefore, reimbursing expenses, incurred in the course of delivering project activities, was an important part of supporting their volunteer staff:

“Volunteers from [the local area] who were assisting with shopping for neighbours, dropping off items and calling neighbours etc. to get their out of pocket expenses returned e.g. fuel costs, mobile phone costs, buying small items for people and taxi’s to drop off items for people. Some of these volunteers were furloughed and receiving less income or self-employed with little to no income.”  
(Community anchor organisation, Glasgow)

As well as applying for funding to help with volunteer management and associated costs, many organisations applied for funding to cover staffing and core running costs to enable them to continue operating throughout the pandemic. Organisations that applied for costs relating to this theme focused on buying PPE and hygiene supplies; funding to cover staffing and transport costs for the project; and to hire venue and storage space.

Those organisations that applied for funding to cover the cost of PPE tended to submit requests in the context of delivering food parcels, to ensure the safety of staff, volunteers and the recipients of the meals, or to cover the cost of PPE as organisations and the community moved into the recovery phase. For example, one



CAO received several requests from funded organisations to help them buy PPE and additional equipment such as waste bins, screens and sanitiser. When local businesses were able to re-open the CAO was able to provide assistance to these organisations and fund the required cleaning materials, sanitiser units and PPE to ensure they were Covid safe and reduce the risk to the community.

Another organisation working with the elderly and shielding used the funding to recruit a Community Support Worker to support the delivery of the project during a critical time:

“With approval from [intermediary funding partner], we appointed a Community Support Worker for ten weeks on [a] 20 hour a week basis. Without this appointment, we would have struggled to keep services going and the post-holder supported a range of other activities including the Food Bank, local liaison, desk research and a survey of anticipated winter needs.” (Community anchor organisation, Highland)

## **4.2 Social outreach**

Recognising the specific circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic, where people were confined to their homes, either through lockdown conditions, shielding or self-isolation, many organisations applying to the SCF funded projects focusing on some form of social outreach, including medical prescription delivery and support with social interaction. For those projects where we have monitoring data, 154 (48%) engaged in social outreach activities, 125 (39%) involved medical prescription delivery and 75 (23%) provided support with social interaction. Projects focusing on social outreach also carried out befriending calls, checked in on people, and adapted their services to phone or online delivery. In most cases, projects were designed to provide a specific form of support to those who were confined to their homes or were spending long periods of time at home without a support network, with befriending calls and medical prescription delivery being the most common activities delivered.

One organisation, for example, delivered befriending calls to people who were socially isolated. The organisation reported in feedback from beneficiaries that the calls reduced social isolation and made people feel like they were less alone during a challenging time. Most organisations funded projects that delivered social outreach as part of a broad range of services. For example, some organisations used weekly phone calls to offer other services the person might need or as an opportunity to carry out a general welfare check:

“Locally almost all recipients of meals have received a weekly befriending/check-in call, some do not wish this and some have several more. This takes the form of either just a re[-]register/order for the next week, a chat, arranging extra support or volunteer or staff “errand run”. This has been varied – from new Blue Badge parking permits to picking up a new kettle! People have also been



signposted to other agencies where appropriate.” (Community anchor organisation, West Lothian)

“Being patient I think worked wonders as some we would give weekly phone calls as a welfare check and eventually we built up a mutual trust and they then engaged fully in receiving daily meals and prescription pick ups and dog walking.” (Community anchor organisation, North Ayrshire)

In recognition of the fact that people who were vulnerable, elderly, shielding or self-isolating were unable to collect their prescriptions without putting themselves at risk, many organisations delivering projects focusing on social outreach and food support reported also providing medical prescription delivery as part of their activities.

## Case study: Social outreach

A community anchor organisation in East Ayrshire recognised the loneliness and isolation facing some people who were shielding or self-isolating during the pandemic. With the funding from the SCF, the CAO worked in collaboration with their third sector partners to increase the reach of their confidential telephone service. The service offered a regular friendly telephone call at least once a week to people in the area who may have been living alone, were lonely or experiencing isolation.

One resident was referred to the organisation through their local community hub: J had been shielding and was receiving a friendly call once a week from the hub. The telephone befriender was returning to work and was unable to continue offering calls to J and the local hub planned to stop calls once shielding had come to an end. At first J was reluctant to speak to someone else and the organisation had difficulty connecting with them. Prior to lockdown J had been widowed and was already finding it very difficult to carry on with normal life. The organisation persevered and reported that J became the first to admit that they look forward to the weekly call and catch up with the volunteers.

The organisation reported that J was hoping to join the face to face meetings once it was safe to meet as a group. The volunteers commented that J seems to have a zest for life and tried to get out walking first thing in the morning when it is less busy.

## 4.3 Health and wellbeing

Around a third of the organisations where we have monitoring data delivered projects focusing on health and wellbeing, representing 119 (37%) of the 320 organisations in the analysis sample. A small number, 14 out of the 320 projects (4%), provided support with self-help.

Health and wellbeing projects took a variety of forms and delivered a wide range of services focusing on different aspects of physical and mental health, along with more general wellbeing. Many organisations used the SCF grant to move their pre-

existing mental health and wellbeing services online and to adapt to their service users' changing needs as the Covid-19 pandemic continued. One organisation working with people living with dementia highlighted that the move to offering online support had allowed them to continue to provide consistent support to service users:

“[Organisation] reached out to people living with dementia in the community, and their family care givers, providing one to one emotional support via phone calls and video chats using the Alzheimer Scotland Near Me and Attend Anywhere platforms. The local dementia advisor to East Renfrewshire helped people living with dementia, and their care givers have been provided with consistent one to one emotional support via phone calls and video chats using online platforms.”  
(Community anchor organisation, East Renfrewshire)

Another organisation working with young people reported that the funding had allowed them to adapt their services to offer remote support and develop activities to bring people back to support groups safely, when they were most needed:

“This grant allowed us to bring back the much needed support...at a crucial time, allowing time for young people and families to come and participate in small group activities at a safe distance, carry out 1:1 family support work through arts, outdoor sports, at the community gardens, through cycling club and through activities at our outdoor classroom. Young people were also able to access the youth workers online or by telephone to discuss any concerns issues regarding home learning, mental health, relationships, bereavement – whatever was concerning them with a familiar youth worker they knew and trusted.”  
(Community anchor organisation, East Dunbartonshire)

Similarly to projects focusing on social outreach, many of the projects focusing on improving wellbeing focused on mitigating feelings of loneliness and isolation, recognising that many people were struggling with the impact of the lockdown on social interaction. As one organisation focusing on vulnerable and older people noted:

“The...project is a means of delivering activities to people's homes to continue to support their mental health and physical wellbeing. Currently we are distributing 45 packs per week to people's homes, these packs are themed around areas such as food, physical activity, stress and relaxation, craft, mental health and wellbeing, growing and generic health and wellbeing (We have provided a Vitamin D pack and Hydration pack within this theme). The packs are aimed at older and more vulnerable people within our communities. One of the key successes of this project has been to enable us to connect with people on a 1-1 basis weekly, this contact with another person has been reported as being really important to those we deliver to. (Community anchor organisation, Edinburgh)

Recognising that many people were spending more time at home, many organisations developed wellbeing toolkits or activity packs for individuals and families to complete at home. These packs contained a wide range of resources and activities aimed at reducing the impact of the lockdown and supporting positive mental and physical health, including art supplies, mindfulness activities, fitness activities and videos, self-care products, motivational cards and mental health first-aid resources. For example, after delivering one round of wellbeing packs, one organisation in Edinburgh received such positive feedback that they decided to consult on delivering a second round of packs, with the aim of tailoring these to the needs of the community:

“We put together the first round of wellbeing packs based on our own ideas and assumptions about what might help people who were struggling to maintain positive wellbeing. We wanted to know what aspects had been successful, what not so successful and what other things people would like in a wellbeing pack. We designed a short questionnaire and paid our freelance artists to call people who had received a wellbeing pack and collect their feedback. Based on this, we commissioned one of our freelancers, a local volunteer, a yoga practitioner and a member [of] Mums into Business to develop a series of additional resources which are included in our second round of wellbeing packs. These resources include: a yoga booklet of simple poses and instructions that anyone can do at home; a do it yourself reflexology booklet, a pampering booklet, a series of motivational ‘When I feel...’ cards which list simple ideas of what you can do when you feel happy, sad, anxious, lonely, frustrated, unmotivated, and links to other online resources that support positive health and wellbeing.” (Community anchor organisation, Edinburgh)

Often, loneliness and isolation among service users was identified by organisations whose main focus was not on mental health, or by those that did not typically focus on mental health. Most commonly these additional needs were identified by organisations focusing on food distribution. For example, these organisations recognised that loneliness and social isolation were a major issue for their service users, and either set up additional services or expanded their existing service to address these needs.

#### **4.4 Digital access**

Reflecting the impact the Covid-19 pandemic had on face-to-face services and the rapid move to remote support, 129 (40%) out of the 320 organisations for which we have monitoring data available focused on improving digital access, and 102 (32%) focused on online activities.

Organisations delivering projects relating to digital access focused on adapting their existing service to allow service users to access the service remotely, setting up their staff to enable them to deliver the service while working from home and

providing families and individuals with digital devices, such as laptops, tablets and WiFi, to enable them to access services and stay in contact with family and friends.

Many organisations highlighted that they had been surprised by how many people in their community were digitally excluded, meaning that with so many services delivering support online these individuals and families now faced new and additional barriers to getting the help they need.

Several organisations used the SCF grant to pay for digital devices and equipment to enable their staff to deliver services from home. For example, one CAO highlighted a funded organisation who recognised importance of setting their staff up with the right equipment, noting the significant role this played in allowing employees to continue to work effectively while delivering services remotely:

“The [funded organisation] purchased up to date IT equipment for all staff, this allowed them to carry out our important role in the community within Health and Social Care, providing important information and advice to their clients and the wider community within East Renfrewshire. Having the right equipment at home has supported them hugely to operate as normal. They were able to keep up their Information sessions, meaning they had a live videos session with their clients to discuss concerns they have with their care and were able to feed this back to the local authority and work on solutions.” (Community anchor organisation, East Renfrewshire)

Other organisations who delivered projects focusing on digital access recognised the importance of providing digital equipment to allow service users to stay in touch with friends and family. One organisation, for example, provided training and support to individuals and families who had limited or no access to IT equipment. Not only was this approach seen to be important to maintain social interactions but, given the move to online delivery, IT literacy was an opportunity for people to improve their employability:

“[The IFP and the CAO] have been providing Digital Equipment, Support and Training to North Ayrshire residents (individuals and families) who have limited or no access to IT equipment and the support needed to operate it. We have been able to create opportunities for individuals to remain connected with friends and family whilst also participating in pre-employment and training opportunities using digital platforms thus preventing them from being excluded in provision they would have been able to access pre-COVID. To date we have identified and supplied a number of individuals with a device and / or MiFi to allow them to get online. We have also started to recruit a number of individuals interested in becoming an IT Buddy Volunteer. These Volunteers will to work with individuals where needed to offer additional support with the device. All devices are preloaded with information on local support available to them.” (Community anchor organisation, North Ayrshire)

Closely related to projects focused on improving digital access were projects delivering some form of online provision, such as fitness and wellbeing classes; music classes; up-skilling courses; virtual drop-in sessions; and online meet-ups. Organisations tended to identify the continuity of these services as important in the absence of face-to-face contact; to maintain relationships; reduce social isolation and improve health and wellbeing. For example, one organisation moved their weekly friendship group online to help people maintain contact with each other when they couldn't meet face-to-face:

“[S]et up an online Brew and a Blether, individuals joining for a chat and all having a cuppa tea together over a online meeting, this was a great platform for people to still be in touch with each other, they actively encouraged everyone to join the zoom and offered a lending service we have for tablets to help out joining the group. Due to the success and interest in this group and recognising the demographic differences in East Ayrshire a member of our team will begin piloting virtual Brew and a Blether in the [local] area. When this group is established it will connect with the existing group therefore affording people more avenues to explore and enhancing our approach to improving individual and Community well-being whilst tackling social isolation and loneliness.”  
(Community anchor organisation, East Ayrshire)

## Case study: Digital access

A funded organisation operating in East Renfrewshire identified through their usual support, advice and information services that having good digital skills was becoming increasingly important, with the majority of public services expecting people to apply on-line for support, whether that was applying for benefits, paying your rent or council tax or simply looking to access local support information.

People were being encouraged to use online services more and everything was increasingly done remotely. This organisation felt that this made accessing services and information almost impossible for those with low digital skills and led to increased stress, anxiety and isolation. Together with a staff member from the local council and a team of volunteers, the organisation developed an on-line course to help improve the participant's digital skills and confidence on-line.

The grant funding was used to cover the costs of designing, developing and delivering a 5-week digital course for 2 groups of 6 learners and 1 group of 7 learners. As a result, not only did 19 learners gain new skills and confidence but the 9 volunteers involved in the programme learned website coding/prototyping, digital training delivery skills and communication skills.

## 4.5 Home and family life support

Of the 320 organisations where monitoring data is available and included in the analysis, 109 (34%) said they had a focus on home and family life support. 16 out of the 320 projects (5%), specifically offered some form of domestic abuse support.

Many organisations described offering support to vulnerable and/or low-income families and children, often providing educational and home-schooling support, activities and parenting support. For example, one organisation working with vulnerable children and families living in North Ayrshire provided tailored activity packs to enable children to maintain contact with their family support worker:

“Provided 30 families with Children 1st activity packs including games/mini kit bags/supermarket vouchers and sourced 14 tablet devices with data allowances for families to help them remain digitally included and connected during lockdown. Children have and continue to receive letters and weekly activity packs that help them to retain their relationship with their Family support worker. Packs are tailored to each family and often linked to online activities that are also offered to children and families.” (Community anchor organisation, North Ayrshire)

One organisation provided small start-up grants to a small number of mothers to set up their own businesses in the area. Whereas another organisation supporting full-time carers of children with severe and complex needs highlighted the freedom providing direct financial assistance gave to families:

“Families have been given a lot of freedom to purchase equipment /items which will help them over the summer as long as receipts are provided. Some [children with additional needs] are already enjoying inflatable hot tubs, sensory gardens, trikes, canoes etc. Some families have been struggling financially and again we have worked closely with them to find ways to help with this, as long as receipts are provided food, clothing and other household items have been approved for purchase to alleviate stress levels during Covid -19 times and allow them to continue in their caring roles.” (Community anchor organisation, North Ayrshire)

## Case study: Home and family life

One community anchor organisation operating in Glasgow used the funding to expand their service supporting women affected by domestic abuse. This organisation recognised that since the beginning of the pandemic, and the subsequent lockdown, women and children had become more vulnerable to abusive relationships and violence. This organisation identified several priority groups of women to target services. These included women shielding, women with mental health problems, women with little or no social support and mothers isolated at home with children. This organisation delivered food parcels, hot meals, mobile phones and top ups and delivered a range of online services.

The organisation also funded dedicated systems within households most vulnerable to domestic abuse. This ensured that individuals were provided with a camera alarm meaning that they could see any threats before opening the door reducing incidents of violence and ensuring there is evidence in place to report. Families were also provided with temporary furnished accommodation to ensure they had a safe, secure place to call home.

With this support, the organisation reported that women felt supported to move on with their lives and expressed increased feelings of security and wellbeing in the home.

### 4.6 Financial assistance

Utilities assistance was offered by 105 (33%) out of the 320 projects for which we have monitoring data, while 47 (15%) of projects provided direct financial assistance. Very few of these projects focused exclusively on providing financial assistance, instead delivering support as part of a much wider range of support offered to individuals and families.

Many of these organisations provided utilities assistance in the form of fuel top-ups, while others offered direct financial assistance in the form of hardship funds for those on low or no incomes or provided small grants to allow people to purchase the items they needed. Other organisations focused on providing financial assistance for specific services or items such as transport costs, tablets, phones top-ups, food vouchers or other items. For example, one organisation provided financial assistance to a vulnerable service user to travel to and from hospital:

“We were able to provide travel money for a vulnerable young service user who had to travel to hospital for medical care and who was released from hospital on the understanding she would return to family outwith [the area] while she was recovering.” (Community anchor organisation, Argyll and Bute)

A small number of the organisations did not specify what form the financial assistance took or what it was used for, reporting only that they had provided direct

financial support in the form of crisis loans for the individual to cover what was most needed, including where they were unable to obtain financial assistance elsewhere.

Other organisations focused on delivering specific housing support, including advice on benefits and entitlements to make their housing situation more secure or the provision of furnishings, white goods or home starter packs. Many of these projects did not focus primarily on delivering housing support but delivered this alongside a broad range of other services. Organisations focused on specific groups such as individuals and families on low or no income, women fleeing domestic abuse or people experiencing or at threat of homelessness. For example, one organisation provided food parcels and new home packs to those facing financial hardship who had lost their accommodation, while another organisation delivered housing support alongside a wide range of support to individuals and households in need:

“Support was also available to individuals and households by way energy costs, white goods replacement, mobile phone top ups etc indeed any request was assessed and if possible supported.” (Community anchor organisation, Highland)

#### **4.7 Advice services**

Advice services relating to welfare and debt were delivered by 31 (10%) and 26 (8%) of the 320 projects respectively, while 11 (3%) projects offered housing support. In addition, 72 (23%) indicated they signposted to other services. Projects focusing on delivering these advice services included provision of legal advice, casework, advocacy, and telephone support services as well as signposting and referring to other services as needed.

As has been discussed elsewhere, many organisations highlighted the financial toll that the Covid-19 pandemic had taken on individuals and families and noted that many people were likely to be accessing benefits for the first time. One organisation for example offered financial fitness classes as a form of early intervention before people ended up in severe financial hardship, reporting direct financial returns for service users:

“[F]unding was provided to support Financial Fitness to meet the immediate demand of local people in relation to welfare benefit and money advice services, to work towards early intervention support before situations get out of hand. Over a three-month period, Financial Fitness has supported 570 clients with welfare benefit and money advice needs and generated £1,087,893 in various welfare benefit and money advice gains. This has helped to ease many of the financial worries caused by the pandemic and a significant amount of benefit claims remain outstanding, which should further assist local households financially.” (Community anchor organisation, Inverclyde)



Organisations providing support to women fleeing domestic abuse provided a range of advice services to address the needs of their service users, highlighting the need for a holistic and wide ranging approach in these cases:

“In April we launched an online support group on Facebook, which allows women to provide peer support to each other as well as directly interacting with the staff. This has been very successful, with 55 active members. We have made more than 40 referrals to other services, have linked people to [a community health project’s] food team, helped secure housing for four women who were homeless, and arranged GP appointments for people who were having trouble getting them. We have also helped people access the [Department for Work and Pensions] DWP and report incidents to the police and other agencies.” (Community anchor organisation, Edinburgh City)

Many organisations signposted to other services if a need was identified that they could not address. These organisations often directed families and individuals to the information or service that they required or made direct referrals to other services to ensure people could access the support that they needed. One of the most common methods of signposting used by organisations focused on distributing information to the community using newsletters, leaflets and posters. For example, one organisation highlighted the importance of distributing information via newsletter during the early days of lockdown to get information out to the community:

“[CAO] created and distributed 2 newsletters within the community to share services available. We ensured all individual councillors’ contact details were included to encourage all individuals to approach any member of [the CAO] for assistance. Ultimately it was agreed that no further newsletters were necessary as there were other well-developed methods of information sharing within the community and information was changing so rapidly. We felt that once the initial information was sent out with regard to the support available people knew that they could approach [the CAO] for support.” (Community anchor organisation, Shetland)

Another organisation distributing newsletters reported that the impact had been wider than expected where the distribution had resulted in more social contact and phone calls with vulnerable community members:

“Newsletters were compiled and circulated to local vulnerable community members. This is an alternative to the social group meetings that they would normally be attending. The impact of this has been wider than expected, with more social contact resulting through more phone calls to chat about articles in the newsletters. We have had calls asking for more and suggesting what we might include in more newsletters.” (Community anchor organisation, Shetland)

## Case study: Advice services

Organisations recognised the importance of advice services, particularly in the initial stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, due to the speed at which circumstances changed following the first national lockdown. One organisation operating in North Ayrshire noted that the amount of information and guidance was often overwhelming for people and that many people faced new challenges they hadn't experienced before, particularly around finances.

This organisation operated a telephone and online advice service, offering advice on housing, welfare rights and debt issues. Alongside this, an online advice service was also facilitated. In total, between 1st July and 30th September, 117 new clients were assisted with housing, welfare rights or debt issues as well as an ongoing caseload of 204 clients.

As a result, clients of the service received £161,117.62 of financial returns via benefits claimed or debts challenged/written off.

### 4.8 Community resilience

A small number of organisations delivered projects where some aspect of the project focused on improving community resilience. For those organisations where we have monitoring data, 101 (32%) out of 320 projects focused on this form of support.

Projects where some aspect focused on this area often delivered several other areas of provision. Projects focusing on community resilience aimed to support the community to adapt to the realities of the Covid-19 pandemic, including the provision of hygiene and sanitising stations in public places, community PPE, and in more rural areas the improvement of infrastructure and supply lines as areas were forced to become more self-reliant due to the specific circumstances of the pandemic.

For example, one CAO funded organisations working with a wide range of families and individuals and provided support in multiple areas to help them and the community to adapt and stay safe as possible:

*"[Funded organisations] supported local businesses, charities and organisation in sourcing PPE, social distancing materials, organising webinars and training related to Covid safety and response, producing lockdown experience videos which is all aimed at supporting people/communities back using the high street / business with confidence that they can be safe as possible. The community face mask initiative was set up to provide reusable, low-cost face coverings for members of the community. Utilising a host of volunteers (over 40) in the production, packaging and delivery process, the service has been well received throughout East Ren." (Community anchor organisation, East Renfrewshire)*

Organisations operating in rural communities and in island communities in particular, recognised that the specific circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic were likely to affect the delivery of supplies for the community and sought to mitigate this. For example, one organisation applied for funding to improve island infrastructure with the aim of clearing a freight backlog created in the initial days of the pandemic. As a result, the backlog was cleared and food and supply lines ran smoothly. Whereas another organisation delivered new infrastructure and storage facilities as a base for food deliveries across several islands, benefiting the community in the long term:

“The project has successfully delivered new infrastructure that will support the delivery of emergency food parcels across the [local area]. The new storage facilities in [the local town] will give a base for a number of organisations to safely and securely store food and supplies for the long term once the current emergency arrangements cease.” (Community anchor organisation, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar)

#### **4.9 Benefits delivered for the community**

The analysis in this section is based on a combined sample of data from the 117 CAOs that responded to the follow-up survey and the 20% sub-sample of monitoring forms. Each organisation completing the end of project monitoring form was asked to describe the benefits their project delivered to the community. The follow-up survey did not include specific questions on benefits delivered. However, where organisations chose to describe the benefits they felt they delivered, these are reported alongside the analysis from the monitoring forms.

It is important to note that in all cases the benefits described were self-reported by organisations, so there may be a risk of bias towards overstating the benefits delivered. However, there will also be benefits that have gone unreported. Many of the organisations only described the activities they delivered and did not provide detail on the impact of the project. Therefore, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions around the specific outcomes for communities.

Due to the light touch approach to administering the fund, the end of project monitoring requirements were designed to be as accessible as possible. Organisations were only asked to report on the overall delivery of the projects in terms of expected impacts and actual results and were not asked to measure impact against a set of more specific measurement questions. As a result, the monitoring forms did not include specific questions to allow us to measure the benefits delivered clearly and consistently across projects. Although this allowed the fund to be disbursed quickly and reduced the burden on applicants, because of the intangibility of some of the benefits delivered, it was often difficult to determine whether projects had delivered the benefits they had set out to achieve. For this reason, community outcomes have not been inferred from the project activities delivered and the analysis in this section is based solely on data where the benefits delivered have been explicitly stated. For example, although many organisations

delivered food support in some form, it is not assumed that the project improved food security unless this was reported by the organisation.

Of the 161 organisations in the analysis sample, 30 organisations specifically identified benefits delivered to the community. Organisations identified 14 individual ways in which the community benefitted, closely reflecting the type of project activities delivered. Benefits for beneficiaries included improvements to finances, housing outcomes, physical health, mental health and wellbeing, digital connectivity and skills, access to services, employment, reduced social isolation and food insecurity. Improved wellbeing and employment opportunities for volunteers were also noted.

## 5. Challenges affecting project delivery

The analysis in the following chapters is based on a combined sample of data from the 117 CAOs that responded to the follow-up survey and the 20% sub-sample of monitoring forms. In addition to the challenges that have been identified and discussed elsewhere in this report, CAOs identified a number of challenges that they believed had an impact on project delivery. Of the 161 organisations included in the analysis sample, 40 (25%) of organisations identified challenges affecting project delivery.

General challenges identified by organisations related to coordination; a lack of capacity; low demand and uptake of services; and issues establishing relationships with other organisations under lockdown conditions. Organisations responding to this question in the follow-up survey also identified further challenges in identifying where there were gaps in provision under lockdown conditions; a lack of volunteer capacity; a lack of cultural understanding within the organisation that limited their reach to certain groups; a lack of demand and uptake for certain services; challenges around digital access; and setting up and delivering the projects. Organisations also reported a range of difficulties in attempting to target specific groups.

### 5.1 Low uptake

Given the specific and unprecedented circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic were so unique, it was difficult for organisations to accurately assess initially what the uptake would be for their projects. Therefore, it is perhaps unsurprising that organisations who identified challenges in delivering their projects most commonly reported lower than expected demand or uptake of services. Organisations highlighted a number of factors affecting uptake of services, including virtual fatigue, issues around publicity and awareness, demand being affected by weather conditions and, in one case where hardship grants were offered, the positive impact of the furlough scheme, which opened to applications after the SCF was commenced.

In relation to virtual fatigue, one organisation delivering an online Life Coaching programme felt this had in part led to low demand as the pandemic progressed and people became increasingly weary of accessing services online:

“Whilst we’ve found that our Life Coaching programme has been very well received for those engaged in our services and many have reported an improvement in their mental health, we are seeing a fatigue across the board for virtual or remote sessions. It’s a limitation, but as long as we’re continuing to offer this option for people, that is making a huge difference to those requiring this specialist, person-centred service based on our evaluations.” (Community anchor organisation, Edinburgh)

Another organisation delivering emergency fuel vouchers found that, alongside a lack of awareness, demand was lower than expected due to higher than average temperatures during the funding period, suggesting demand was likely to increase over the colder months:

“The total demand was lower than expected which has been traced back to issues around publicity and awareness and general lower demand due to higher than average temperatures during the period the scheme was running. Successful applicants were very positive about the impact the short relief would provide.” (Community anchor organisation, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar)

Although low uptake was the most common barrier reported when asked directly about barriers to delivery, elsewhere respondents also described high uptake of services, and in some cases overwhelming need. One organisation reported that they found the high numbers of people requiring their services overwhelming:

“Other barriers included the sheer volume of people needing help, particularly around food provision.” (Community anchor organisation, South Lanarkshire)

## **5.2 Pride and stigma**

Pride and stigma among targeted groups were also noted as a barrier by organisations, particularly in the context of low uptake of services, where these issues limited the willingness of people to engage with services and access support. Most commonly, these barriers were reported by organisations operating in smaller or more rural communities where it was more likely that people knew each other, resulting in a perception that there was a level of embarrassment attached to asking for support.

One organisation working with people on low or no income or who were self-isolating, identified stigma around the provision of food parcels and put in place measures to increase anonymity to try and alleviate this perception:

“[B]eing a small community we had to address the issue of stigma around food parcels. Food provision [became] part of our swap [s]hop initiative and this helped to break down that barrier and increased the use. Made food voucher scheme as anonymous as possible to reduce barriers to take-up. There are no written records of claimant names — they are known only by their voucher number” (Community anchor organisation, Highland)

As a result of these barriers, one organisation felt that the key lesson they had learned was that the likelihood of pride and stigma being a barrier should be the starting point for the development of any scheme providing support to the community:

“The initial difficulty was "Pride", however once the advertising has explained the protection for anonymity, we found members started to join and then word of

mouth from those using it did the rest [...] Pride and stigma for recipients has to be the starting point for any design of a scheme. Thus the greater the protection of anonymity the better” (Community anchor organisation, Aberdeenshire)

### 5.3 Resources

Organisations also identified challenges affecting project delivery relating to resource scarcity and capacity, including a lack of staff and volunteer capacity, a lack of expertise and coordination, a lack of resource management and difficulties sourcing hygiene and sanitising supplies such as PPE and handwash.

One organisation felt that, although resource scarcity had made it difficult for them to deliver everything they aimed to, the key challenge encountered was in relation to coordination. For this organisation, the specific circumstances of operating under lockdown conditions made it difficult to identify gaps, coordinate with other agencies and plan provision without being able to meet face-to-face.

Other organisations identified issues around volunteer capacity where the level of volunteer support had impacted on the services they were able to deliver. For example, one CAO had intended to fund an organisation to deliver food supplies and emergency funding to the most vulnerable people in the community. However, as the funding period progressed it became clear that the organisation did not have the volunteer capacity to take the project forward. Due to the flexibility of the fund they were still able to adapt and repurpose the funds to deliver impact for the community, where instead the CAO and other organisations in the community worked together to set up a foodbank in the local church. Another organisation working with a range of groups highlighted challenges around the continuously changing availability of volunteers as the circumstances of the pandemic changed and volunteers returned to work:

“An added challenge was that we and our IFPs were working with reduced staffing and many from home. Volunteer support was key, and this was also an ever-changing availability as some volunteers were available while furloughed but then returned to work.” (Community anchor organisation, South Ayrshire)

Closely related to a lack of resources, some organisations found the sheer number of people in certain areas needing support and the speed at which the situation was changing overwhelming:

“[T]hings were changing so fast due to the pandemic and the issues arising from it that we had to pay attention to what was changing and what the needs of people were. Sometimes the sheer volume of what was going on became overwhelming at times.” (Community anchor organisation, Aberdeenshire)

## 5.4 Challenges supporting specific groups

Organisations responding to the follow-up survey were asked if they supported any specific groups in delivering their projects, and if so did they experience any challenges or barriers in reaching these groups. As noted earlier in this report (see section 3.3 and 3.4) this analysis is based on self-reported data by the CAOs and may not reflect how people chose to identify themselves. Organisations were not specifically asked to identify challenges relating to supported groups in their monitoring forms but where issues were identified these are reported alongside the responses from the follow-up survey.

Of the 117 organisations that responded to the follow-up survey, 114 provided an answer to the question on supported groups. Of these, 43 (38%) organisations identified specific challenges or barriers, while other organisations responding to the question tended to describe the process through which they supported specific groups and the ways in which this prevented challenges from arising.

Specific challenges encountered by organisations related to a lack of digital access and skills both within the organisation and among beneficiaries, difficulties in identifying beneficiaries and connecting with them during the funding period, issues of pride and stigma, people being unaware of the services and support available and a lack of cultural understanding in trying to reach minority ethnic groups.

Echoing findings that are discussed elsewhere in this report, organisations identifying specific challenges in supporting specific groups often highlighted a lack of digital access as a key barrier affecting the success of project delivery. Most commonly, organisations found it difficult to reach people with no digital access in terms of raising awareness of the services on offer and delivering support to these groups.

Older people in particular seemed to be acutely affected by a lack of digital access. In some cases, older people did have access to the internet but simply did not have the skills and/or confidence to access services online. For example, one organisation reported older people were more difficult to reach because of a lack of digital skills, meaning those involved in the project only became aware of the need for support when the situation became severe:

“Older people, of which there are a high number locally, difficult to reach due to lack of knowledge / use of internet. However, we were only made aware of the need in some households when the situation became severe - due to some people not wishing to ask for help locally.” (Community anchor organisation, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar)



Organisations noted that they were able to overcome digital barriers through various means such as telephone support, newsletters, leaflet drops and direct contact with those who were known to other services:

“Many groups were not keen to set up online sessions and opted to wait to get back to face-to face meetings in the new year. However, some did and their members who did not have digital experience acquired new skills through [...] volunteer support thus enabling them to join online community group sessions.” (Community anchor organisation, Perth and Kinross)

“We found there is no simple way to reach everyone in the community, especially in a rurally isolated one. [N]ot everyone does social media and dropping flyers through doors doesn't necessarily reach everyone because of the isolated nature of many properties. We used both extensively and also word of mouth to try and reach anyone who might have been in need of assistance.” (Community anchor organisation, Scottish Borders)

Digital exclusion more generally was also highlighted as a barrier to accessing support for people living in rural communities. As a result, organisations supporting these groups reported a heavier reliance on telephone support and in-person visits. Organisations reported a perception that these methods of engagement were more time consuming and required more capacity and as a result, made it more difficult to reach those in need.

One organisation working with women who had experienced domestic abuse reported that a lack of digital access made it difficult to get resources out to those women that needed it most:

“Main barriers were due to Covid getting resources out to women who need them most. Our staff were all working from home. Some of the women we support were not able to use technology to enable them to get better information and support. This made it more challenging for our organisation too.” (Community anchor organisation, Glasgow)

As a result of the specific circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic, another organisation working with vulnerable and socially isolated people felt that these groups now faced new and additional barriers, due to the move to remote services and the amount of engagement taking place online. Therefore, this organisation had to develop other activities to connect with people:

“Yes, the groups we support and the individuals are the hardest to reach. They face multiple barriers - especially in terms of digital inclusion which is how many activities and how much engagement was now taking place. Significant proportions of the SCF fund was devoted to getting people connected - training, providing online platforms, devices, data and broadband connection. Even that was not enough and we had to be creative - use the outdoors for one to one in person meetings, use virtual walks (phone based

walking 'together' but in separate places) and we made use of the post and Freepost service we established as part of this funding - we also required huge numbers of volunteers to support and reach these groups.” (Community anchor organisation, Edinburgh)

Organisations supporting minority ethnic groups highlighted a range of challenges and barriers they encountered in delivering their projects, including a lack of confidence in accessing services, a lack of cultural understanding among organisations around the needs of specific groups, and individuals without identification being unable to access statutory services. For example, one organisation targeting online language support at refugees identified language issues and a lack of relationships with targeted communities as barriers limited the number of people signing up to these sessions:

“There were plans to begin the Zoom language support earlier in the project delivery, however this was delayed for different reasons. There was a significant wait for the iPads to be delivered however this was not the principle difficulty. It proved to be a challenge to identify potential participants for this aspect of the project, despite the support of the [community anchor]. It became clear that the aforementioned language barriers and the absence of any significant prior relationship with the community made it difficult to encourage people to sign up.” (Funded organisation, Dundee)

Two organisations responding to the question identified barriers in reaching young people. One organisation targeting young unemployed people found that access to connectivity via phone or broadband was problematic for this group, while the other found it more difficult than expected to engage teenagers in online projects and workshops.

## **5.5 Other challenges**

Finally, organisations identifying challenges also reported issues around the processes they used in setting up and delivering the projects. Most of these challenges are discussed in more detail elsewhere in this report, however, organisations commenting on this theme commonly reported having to adapt the method of delivering the project, such as having to deliver activities on foot, not being able to enter people’s houses and their normal delivery contractors not operating. These challenges often resulted in extensions to the timeline of the project, overspends, monitoring and reporting limitations.

## 6. Partnership working

Given the fact that partnership working played such a key role in administering the SCF, the follow-up survey also asked CAOs about their experience of working in partnership with funded organisations to disburse the funds. Although CAOs were not asked in this question to comment on their experience of working in partnership with the IFPs, many organisations took the opportunity to do so. Further, organisations were not specifically asked to comment on their experiences of partnership working in their monitoring forms. However, as elsewhere in this report, where comments were made on this topic, these responses are reported alongside analysis from the survey.

Of the 161 organisations that made up the analysis sample, 121 organisations provided a response relating to partnership working. Of these, the majority (60%) stated that their experience of partnership working had been positive, while a fifth (20%) identified specific challenges. Thirty-nine percent of the organisations discussed their experiences of the process of setting up and delivering the partnership.

### 6.1 Positive partnerships

#### 6.1.1 Funded organisations

Organisations' experiences of working in partnership to deliver the SCF were generally positive. Although many of the organisations chose to elaborate on the specific factors that contributed to their positive experience of partnership working, several organisations did not and made generally positive comments, as illustrated in the following quotations:

“We have an excellent relationship with partners in our locality.” (Community anchor organisation, North Lanarkshire)

“It was very productive and beneficial to groups, we already had a strong relationship so no challenges.” (Community anchor organisation, Clackmannanshire)

Those organisations that provided more detailed answers felt the support they received through partnership working in terms of coordination, skill sharing and resources had been key to delivering their projects and in reaching the number of people they had. Smaller organisations in particular, highlighted that in working in partnership with other organisations they were able to access skills and resources they would not have been able otherwise and this allowed them to extend their reach. For example, one organisation felt that due to the number of partners involved and the range of services offered, they were able to achieve comprehensive coverage across the community:

“Our partnership was extremely productive. Due to the range of partners around the (virtual) table, we covered the community from cradle to grave. The inclusion of third sector, private and public sectors [...] all working together offered a huge range of support. Our experience of partnership working has been enhanced as result of taking part in the SCF Programme. We believe we have had extremely productive partnerships , with very little in the way of challenges.” (Community anchor organisation, South Lanarkshire)

Some organisations formed new partnerships with funded organisations through the SCF process to help them disburse the funding but many of the organisations used the partnerships and relationships already present in their work and within the community. As a result, these organisations were able to draw on existing relationships to deliver their projects, allowing them to reach as many people as possible in a short amount of time. For example, one organisation working in Perth highlighted the agility of their response as a result of working with organisations already embedded in the community, where they were able to take joint decisions to tackle issues quickly. This organisation described the process of working with local funded organisations as “liberating” after finding it difficult to link in with some authorities within their local area to develop their application.

### **6.1.2 Intermediary funding partners**

Several organisations also commented on their positive relationships with the IFPs, highlighting the support that they had provided and noting that their leadership during the response had been key to delivering their projects. For example, one organisation highlighted the flexibility and quick decision making their IFP had demonstrated in the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic which allowed them to successfully deliver their response.

## **6.2 Challenges**

Although the majority of organisations found partnership working to be a positive experience, a fifth of organisations that commented on this topic encountered specific challenges that made their experience of partnership working more difficult. Challenges experienced by organisations relating to partnership working included difficulties in working with the local authority, working remotely, coordination, local bureaucracy (where organisations found localised systems and processes frustrating) and a lack of support at some stages of the project.

Just under a quarter of the organisations identifying challenges highlighted difficulties in working with their local authority. These challenges related to the speed of the local authority response, difficulties relating to communication and differing approaches to service delivery. For example, one organisation identified a certain level of frustration across the third sector when it came to sharing information and resources with the local authority. This organisation expressed a perception that the systems used by the local authority did not have the flexibility required to recognise or respond quickly enough to need. Another organisation felt

the partnership generally worked well but reported issues around processes and a “top-down approach” when working with the local authority.

However, it was noted by other organisations that a delayed response by local authorities could be due to the additional administrative requirements that they had to meet.

Being able to coordinate and communicate with partners while working virtually were also identified as issues. For one organisation, although they felt the partnership worked well overall, they felt that the organisations involved in the partnership were operating in a reactive manner and the ability to address this, and plan collectively, was limited due to meetings taking place over the phone or by online video conferencing. Similarly, another organisation found changes in staff or volunteer arrangements more difficult to navigate when communication was taking place remotely.

Several organisations mentioned difficulties around different organisations within the partnership seeking recognition. For example, one organisation highlighted a situation where organisations with overlapping remits were ‘grappling’ to be seen as the most significant provider of food parcels. This organisation expressed disappointment that what they perceived to be possessiveness and local politics had distracted from the success of the response. This sentiment was echoed by another organisation who initially found it difficult to reach some groups due to other organisations feeling a sense of ‘ownership’ over service users:

“Our biggest challenge was the age-old issue of 'possession' and 'ownership'. Some organisations were initially suspicious as to why we wanted to help 'their' people, things calmed down when we described a service whereby they would still engage with their own service users and just report back to us on levels of activity, in line with some funding provided via us as the anchor organisation.”  
(Community anchor organisation, Glasgow City)

Other issues were each noted by one organisation in the sample. These related to difficulties in coordinating so many groups at once while supporting less experienced groups; issues around obtaining monitoring information from organisations; and, in one case, the organisation felt the low level of grant awarded was due to the fact that their partner had taken the lead on their application and submitted a poor request for funding.

### **6.3 Future of partnerships**

The 117 organisations that responded to the follow-up survey were also asked if the partnerships established during the SCF funding process were continuing now the project has ended. Of the organisations that responded to the follow-up survey, 111 organisations responded to the question. Of these, the majority of organisations (87%) indicated that the partnership was continuing now that the project had been delivered, while 4% explicitly stated that the partnership was not continuing. The other responses to the questions (9%) did not specifically say

whether the partnership was continuing or the response provided wasn't clear enough to be included in the analysis.

It is also important to note that a number of organisations that participated in the SCF funding process drew on partnerships that were already established.

#### **6.4.1 Partnership continuing**

Organisations that indicated the partnership was continuing tended to fall into two categories, those that were maintaining the partnership in a formal way such as through formal structures or governance and those that maintained the partnership in an informal way through continuing communication or exchange of information. Other organisations did not specify the form in which the partnership was continuing but simply indicated they intended the partnership to continue.

Organisations that formalised the partnerships established during the SCF funding process did so using a number of methods, including partnership frameworks, shared vision documents and continued distribution of funding. In one case, two organisations involved in a partnership were considering merging.

Another organisation highlighted that they were currently working on a framework to allow the partnership to continue long term. They had established a steering group and sub-groups to guide the projects already in place, and were also drafting a memorandum of understanding.

Other organisations indicated that their partnerships were continuing in a less formalised way through the maintenance of communications and continuing to share information. Organisations that commented on this theme noted that their response to the Covid-19 pandemic had been stronger working together and they wanted to maintain these relationships for the benefit of the community going forward.

Many of the organisations were keen to strengthen the partnerships in ways that could make them sustainable over the longer term after the immediate needs arising from the pandemic had been addressed. These responses tended to be linked to instances where organisations had identified learning and insight related to community issues, which are discussed elsewhere in this report (see section 7.3.3). In this respect, the continuation of the partnership was often seen by organisations as important to allow them to address the emergent needs identified over the course of the funding period, such as the sharp increase in people suffering from poor mental health and food insecurity. For example, one organisation sought to strengthen the partnerships they had established by arranging a series of development sessions. This resulted in the production of a locality area plan which provided a focus for the partnership going forward.

A small number of organisations noted that their partnerships had already existed prior to applying to the SCF but their experience of the funding process had strengthened these relationships and they expected them to continue. Other

organisations had applied to the Communities Recovery Fund (CRF) with the same partnership they had developed through the SCF process.

#### **6.4.2 Partnership not continuing**

Only 4 organisations explicitly stated that the partnership established during the SCF process was not continuing. One organisation indicated that they were bringing the partnership to an end but still intended to keep in touch with the organisations involved, while another highlighted that the partnership had developed into a new volunteer network.

One organisation noted that after the CEO of the IFP they worked with changed, the priorities of the partnership shifted, resulting in the relationship becoming one-sided. The organisation felt that the partnership was now more driven by profit rather than by the needs of the community, meaning that there was no urge to allocate staff time to strengthening the partnership. As a result, the partnership had ended. The final organisation indicated the partnership was not continuing but did not provide a specific reason for this decision.

#### **6.4.3 Help to maintain the partnership**

In addition to asking organisations that responded to the follow-up survey whether the partnership was continuing, the survey also asked organisations what would help them maintain the partnership going forward. Of those organisations that responded to the survey, 96 organisations provided a response to this question.

All of the organisations that responded to the question had provided a response to the question on whether the partnership was continuing. Two of the organisations that indicated the partnership was not continuing also provided an answer to this question. One of these organisations indicated that more funding support would have allowed them to continue the partnership, while the other organisation was concerned that the partnership was now being driven by profit, as previously mentioned.

Organisations where the partnership was continuing identified a number of factors that would help them maintain the partnership going forward. These included more funding, more ways to maintain communication and improve engagement, better coordination, increased capacity and further insight into community issues.

The majority of organisations responding to the question of what would help them maintain the partnership felt that further funding would be helpful, be that further funding generally, core funding or funding to provide more support to the community. Many of the organisations felt that although SCF funding had provided them with the support to establish and maintain the partnership, more sustainable funding over the longer term was needed to maintain the partnership going forward. These comments tended to be closely linked to comments relating to emerging priorities, which are discussed in Chapter 6, where organisations felt that although

SCF had addressed immediate and emergency needs within their communities, more sustained solutions were needed. For example, one organisation felt that:

“Multi year funding [is needed] so that Anchor organisations can widen their remit, have other income sources, which will allow them to provide a much more comprehensive package of supports for smaller groups and organisations, so that Covid recovery and economic recovery can be assisted by those orgs which know best what the emerging needs to local people are. This approach aligns well with some of the priorities set in the Scottish Government Social Enterprise National strategy 2016-2026. By supporting/resourcing anchor organisations properly, who are well established, are key service providers and are local people, we have a much more effective mechanism in getting people engaged to support recovery and growth and build community resilience again.” (Community anchor organisation, North Lanarkshire)

Several organisations felt that further funding was needed to continue to effectively develop the relationships and joint working arrangements they had established. While others felt that being given more opportunities to apply for funding jointly would further cement relationships and encourage collaborative working.

A number of CAOs felt that further funding to cover core operating costs was needed to help them maintain their relationships with funded organisations. These comments tended to focus on the fact that anchor organisations could not be expected to maintain the partnerships with smaller organisations without further investment and resources to provide longer term security. One organisation noted that without more investment in core funding they simply did not have the staff capacity to maintain the relationships with partners.

A small number of organisations highlighted the need for further funding support to invest in the community. Organisations that commented on this theme recognised the benefits delivered in the community using SCF funding and wanted further funding to continue their projects or similar funding (for example specialising in small grants) to be made available to address ongoing community need.

Several organisations felt improving communication and better engagement with partner organisations would help them to maintain the partnership going forward. For some, this involved being supported to facilitate people in lead roles, while continuing to meet and discuss common interests and needs. Other organisations expressed the hope that the funded organisations would continue to engage in dialogue with them now the project had ended. Organisations expressing this view wanted to be kept informed of the benefits delivered through the funding and to establish if the funded organisations needed continued support. For example, one organisation was unsure how long contact with funded organisations should be maintained but felt that continued communication was a positive:

“I'm not sure. I would think from the public sector point of view, ongoing contact would be good to ensure that their investment is maximised. Maybe that's



contact every 3-6 months, don't really know.” (Community anchor organisation, Highland)

A number of the organisations felt that they would need to increase organisational capacity to maintain the partnership going forward, either in terms of recruiting more staff or taking on more volunteers. Almost all the organisations identifying a need for further funding to increase capacity wanted to hire additional staff to specifically focus on developing the partnership and build on the relationships established through the SCF funding process. One organisation felt that there was a degree of volunteer fatigue and more funding was needed to support the volunteer effort.

Other ways to maintain the partnership going forward were each noted by two or fewer organisations. These organisations identified training on how to deliver and manage community projects; more guidance around funding and longer-term community strategies; feedback from funded organisations; and establishing common goals as ways that the partnership could be supported.

## 7. Looking forward

### 7.1 Gaps in provision

Anchor organisations that responded to the follow-up survey were asked to identify any gaps in provision that their project was unable to address. Organisations were not asked to report on gaps in provision in their monitoring forms, however, where organisations chose to identify gaps these are reported alongside the results from the survey.

Of the 161 organisations that made up the analysis sample, 96 organisations provided an answer to the question on gaps in provision. Of those that answered the question, the majority of organisations (52) stated that there were no gaps in provision that were left unaddressed, while 44 organisations identified specific gaps.

Specific gaps mentioned by the 44 organisations that identified gaps were coded and aggregated into the broad categories shown in Table 5. As organisations tended to identify multiple gaps in provision that they were unable to address, the proportions shown in the table do not equal 100%.

Although 52 of the organisations that answered the question stated there were no gaps in provision that were left unaddressed, these organisations often identified the reasons why their approach to service provision had been successful. These responses were also analysed with the aim of providing insight into how organisations set out to address gaps in the community.

**Table 5: Organisation identifying gaps in provision**

Gaps in provision	Number of organisations sampled identifying gaps	Gaps identified as a proportion of those that answered the question
Health and wellbeing	13	30%
Poverty and unemployment	10	23%
Digital inclusion	6	14%
Geographic coverage	3	7%
Other	12	27%

When grouped into these broad categories, just under a third of organisations identified gaps relating to health and wellbeing. These included gaps around mental health and wellbeing support, issues around engaging with those who were lonely

and socially isolated and a lack of expertise among staff and volunteers who identified service users with severe mental health issues.

Of those organisations that identified gaps in provision, just under a quarter of these related to poverty and unemployment, including gaps in financial assistance, benefit and welfare advice, and food insecurity. Gaps in provision around digital inclusion were also identified, with 14% of organisations who identified areas of unmet need commenting on this theme. Most commonly gaps in digital inclusion related to issues around access to broadband and devices. Finally, 3 organisations (7%) identified gaps relating to geographic coverage. These organisations identified unmet need in certain areas of the community where if given the chance again, they would have applied for wider geographic coverage. The 20% of needs categorised as “other” were those specified by two or fewer organisations.

### **7.1.1 Health and wellbeing**

The majority of organisations that identified gaps in provision identified unmet need relating to health and wellbeing. In most cases, organisations felt their project was unable to adequately provide for those that were lonely and socially isolated. Organisations identified reasons behind this as a lack of funding; a need for a more structured response; challenges around engagement; and, in one case, simply not having enough time. Most of the comments around loneliness and social isolation were focused on older people, where these gaps tended to be identified in the course of food provision/delivery. For example, one organisation delivering hot meals found there was a lack of uptake linked to a need for social interaction among older people:

“The main gap we identified was the lack of uptake by older people for the delivery of cooked meals. This service was targeted towards isolated older people who had previously attended the lunch club within the centre. [There] was limited uptake for the meal delivery service but this would seem to be due to the fact that the older people targeted were able to prepare meals for themselves. Their attendance previously at the lunch club would seem to be more about the social interaction available. The delivery of cooked meal did not provide the social interaction required.” (Community anchor organisation, East Ayrshire)

Some organisations identifying unaddressed gaps highlighted the severity of mental health issues that service users presented with. One organisation reported that they were simply ill-equipped to deal with the most severe cases and had to signpost these cases elsewhere. Although it was recognised this was the appropriate course of action, the organisation felt that they could have done more with access to professional expertise. Another organisation highlighted the difficult situation their volunteers found themselves in dealing with situations they were unqualified for where they were the only contact people had:

“Our team were placed in difficult situations as we were on the ground seeing people. [...] We included a mental health counsellor on our team to support the team as it became stressful for volunteers. We volunteers were very concerned

that we were able to provide emergency support when paid officers were sitting at home calling us to visit their clients. The service providers should not have reduced their staff to calling clients or providing a service while using unqualified volunteers to do their job. The panic among public services was appalling, proper risk assessments could have been carried out to allow workers to carry on their normal duties safely. We felt like firefighters rushing into the fire to put it out while the qualified people ran away.” (Community anchor organisation, Aberdeenshire)

Other organisations emphasised the toll the Covid-19 pandemic had taken on the mental health of their volunteers as they struggled to respond to an unprecedented situation. One organisation highlighted the need for volunteers to have social interaction and purpose and noted that this had been impacted due to the circumstances of lockdown.

### **7.1.2 Poverty and unemployment**

Gaps in provision relating to poverty and unemployment were also prevalent in the comments provided by organisations, with 23% of organisations identifying gaps on this theme. Where these gaps were reported by organisations, they tended to centre either on food insecurity or gaps in financial support.

In terms of financial support, organisations reported gaps around the level of financial support they were able to provide and the form in which they were able to provide it. Gaps related to benefits and welfare advice were also identified. Although direct cash payments were within the scope of the fund, one organisation felt that delivering financial assistance in this way was not possible. It is unclear if this was due to a miscommunication around what could be delivered or if their own internal processes prevented it. In their response to the follow-up survey, this organisation felt that on some occasions it would have been more appropriate to distribute direct cash payments to allow people to use the payments as they saw fit:

“In terms of provision, there were occasions when it would have been appropriate and best to distribute cash payments to those most in need, for them to make the best choices in what they wanted to do with the funds in terms of food or clothing or heating purposes. But this was not always possible/secure and did not provide a best audit trail.” (Community anchor organisation, Renfrewshire)

Highlighting the way in which needs changed over the course of the pandemic, some organisations felt they had not applied for enough funding initially to cover the financial emergencies people were experiencing and this had delayed their response as they waited for more financial support. For example, one organisation working with people shielding or socially isolated; households on a low income; and those who were digitally disadvantaged reported that due to the nature of the pandemic and the impact on the service, they weren't able to offer financial support as quickly as they would have liked:

“We started by focusing on food insecurity and supporting people in continuity of access to basic services (medicines, shopping etc). We later felt we needed to incorporate more support (wellbeing, access to economic support etc) as these became needs as a result of circumstances. We achieved this in the main but the speed of the impact of the situation, the continuing requirement to provide those initial response services, and the the pressure on capacity despite financial support meant that these services were not as quick to materialize as we might have wished.” (Community anchor organisation, Glasgow City)

Organisations also highlighted the severe financial toll the Covid-19 pandemic had on communities in terms of unemployment, loss of earnings and increased financial insecurity in general. Many of these comments highlighted the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the labour market, where organisations noted that many people were facing unemployment and at risk of redundancy, and these effects were likely to become more acute as the full impact of the pandemic became clear. In particular, the end of the furlough scheme was seen to be of concern due to the anticipated increase in job losses.

Alongside the rise in unemployment, several organisations expressed concerns around an increase in the number of people claiming benefits. As a result, organisations highlighted emerging needs for access to support and advice relating to benefits, personal finances and debt, and support in seeking employment. One organisation noted that access to digital upskilling was particularly important given the increased focus on digital provision and the move to remote working. Increased reliance on benefits was seen to be of particular concern for some, due to a perception that the benefits system, in general, was inadequate and that families were likely to struggle once top-up payments came to an end.

Increased financial insecurity was seen by organisations as heavily linked to food and fuel poverty as people struggled to deal with reduced income due to job losses and debt. Several organisations noted the increased demand for emergency food parcels and meals during the lockdown and this was expected to continue as people continued to experience the financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Several of the organisations that highlighted unaddressed gaps on the theme of food poverty did not go into detail on the specific circumstances of ongoing food insecurity but simply noted that this was likely to be a concern going forward. One organisation reported that they had identified a gap in relation to food insecurity during the course of their project and attempted to include it in their SCF spend, however, due to the time when this need was identified it was seen as more of a recovery activity and considered more appropriate for CRF funding. As a result, the activity was rejected, resulting in a delay of 3 months:

“We discovered that some of our elderly residents were having difficulty cooking meals, [...] there were many reasons for this such as not having access to as much fresh food, usual in house support unable to visit due to pandemic . We looked to start a Casserole Club which volunteer Cooks would be matched with a

diner to share a portion of home cooked food. The idea that this approach would be sustainable and reduce food waste. This was an unknown need so had not been detailed in our application, we asked if we could include it as part of our project costs but it was seen more of a recovery activity. This gave us a delay of 3 months before we were able to start the project with the underspend.”  
(Community anchor organisation, Highland)

### **7.1.3 Digital exclusion**

As has already been discussed in more detail earlier in this report, just over one in ten organisations identified digital exclusion as a gap in provision that they were unable to address. Organisations commenting on this theme tended to report ongoing issues with broadband, limited access to digital devices and services and challenges in providing staff and volunteers with digital access.

Reflecting the unique challenge a rapid move to digital provision has presented for individuals and the third sector, organisations commonly highlighted that digital exclusion is likely to be an ongoing issue as we move into the recovery phase. Organisations felt that they had underestimated the number of people who did not have internet access and that those in more rural and remote parts of their community were the most acutely affected. Issues around providing staff and volunteers with digital devices and adequate connectivity to fulfil their roles were also reported, highlighting an ongoing need if the focus on remote working continues.

### **7.1.4 Geographic coverage**

Three organisations reported that there were unaddressed gaps relating to geographic coverage. Organisations commenting on this theme expressed the view that there was a lack of coordination between groups working in the same area, resulting in duplication and, in some cases, unmet need. As one organisation in Shetland noted, this meant there could be a lack of consistent provision across the local authority as certain activities were offered in some local areas but not in others. For example, this organisation felt that they should have applied to offer provision of electricity top-up vouchers in all areas within the local authority rather than only in their immediate local area, as it soon became evident during the funding period that this support was not offered by other organisations in the surrounding areas.

### **7.1.5 Other**

Twelve organisations identified gaps in provision categorised as ‘other’. These gaps were each identified by one organisation, apart from ongoing gaps in funding which were identified by two organisations. Unaddressed gaps in this category included:

- a lack of outdoor spaces for young people;
- a need for better coordination around transport and logistics;
- transport for medical appointments;
- support for carers;
- sustainable long-term interventions;

- identifying hard to reach people in the community;
- support for minority ethnic groups;
- support for women experiencing domestic abuse;
- PPE for NHS staff;
- hygiene supplies for the third sector;
- and ongoing gaps in funding.

## 7.2 Emerging needs and priorities

Anchor organisations that responded to the follow-up survey were asked to identify any emerging needs or priorities they had identified over the course of delivering their projects. Organisations were not asked to report on emerging needs or priorities in their monitoring forms, however, where these were identified these are reported alongside the results from the survey.

Of the 161 anchor organisations that made up the analysis sample, 75 organisations identified emerging needs or new priorities in their communities. Organisations that did not identify any emerging priorities did not specify these in their response or monitoring form, or their response wasn't clear enough to be included in the analysis. Some organisations explicitly stated that they did not notice any additional emerging needs.

Where emerging needs were identified, these were coded and aggregated into the broad categories shown in Table 6. As organisations tended to identify multiple emerging priorities in their answers the proportions shown in the table do not equal 100%.

**Table 6: Organisations identifying emerging needs**

Emerging needs	Number of organisations sampled identifying need	Proportion of organisations sampled identifying need
Poverty and unemployment	51	68%
Health and wellbeing	44	59%
Support for community organisations	32	43%
Digital inclusion	12	16%
Community recovery	10	13%
Staffing/volunteer capacity	9	12%
Other	9	12%



When grouped into these categories, organisations generally identified emerging needs or priorities that broadly mapped onto the gaps in provisions identified in the previous section (see section 7.1). In addition to needs relating to these gaps, organisations most commonly identified support for community organisations, in the form of core operating costs, as a priority.

### **7.2.1 Poverty and unemployment**

Needs relating to poverty and unemployment were the most commonly identified by organisations, with around two in three organisations citing this as an emerging need. Organisations reporting this as an emerging need tended to highlight the severe financial toll the Covid-19 pandemic has had on communities, and as financial measures (such as furlough) end, needs relating to financial insecurity were likely to continue as they moved into the recovery phase and the full impact of the pandemic becomes clear. Similarly to those groups identifying gaps in provision relating to this theme, organisations identifying emerging need also highlighted the impact of the pandemic on the labour market and the resultant rise in unemployment, leading to greater financial insecurity, food insecurity and a rise in people claiming benefits.

### **7.2.2 Health and wellbeing**

After poverty and unemployment, needs relating to health and wellbeing were the most commonly identified, with 59% of organisations reporting these needs in their comments. Similarly to those organisations identifying gaps in provision relating to this theme, the majority of these comments referred to the considerable impact the Covid-19 pandemic and accompanying restrictions had on the mental health of individuals. In particular, organisations emphasised that loneliness and isolation were already significant problems for their communities and this had only been exacerbated by the pandemic. Where mental health needs were discussed, organisations tended to identify concerns around existing mental health conditions; newly emerging mental health issues; and concerns around access to mental health support including a resultant increase in demand for services.

### **7.2.3 Support for community organisations**

Just over two fifths of organisations that identified some form of emerging need emphasised the need for more support for third sector organisations. To some extent, these comments may reflect the structure of the fund where funding was targeted through CAOs and disbursed at a local level. Commonly this was linked to a recognition of the key role that the third sector had played during the Covid-19 pandemic. Recognising this role and the amount of trust placed in community organisations by the Scottish Government during the funding process, organisations frequently noted that the SCF funding process should be used as a model going forward. Many of the organisations commented on the way that the pandemic had highlighted the importance of third sector organisations and their role in the community, meaning that these organisations were uniquely situated to identify need and respond quickly. As a result, funding and investment in local organisations was seen by organisations as key to support recovery and renewal in communities. Alongside this, local networks on the ground should be better



supported and ways should be found to better align local authority resources within these networks.

#### **7.2.4 Digital exclusion**

Echoing those organisations who identified gaps in their current service provision relating to digital exclusion, organisations commenting on emerging needs again identified this theme as a priority going forward. Organisations raised many of the same issues that have been discussed elsewhere in this report. Namely that a move to online provision only has limited access to, and the affordability of, services for those without digital access. Organisations also noted a concern that the 'digital divide' had been amplified by the Covid-19 pandemic, with concerns raised around the impact that this had on service delivery and the ability to reach those most in need.

#### **7.2.5 Community recovery**

Several organisations highlighted emergent needs around preparing the local community for the easing of restrictions as we move into the recovery period. Comments on this theme included concerns around the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on tourism, improving infrastructure and restoring community confidence.

Organisations also felt that due to the impact of the pandemic and the level of support provided, there was now a certain degree of dependency in some communities. Several organisations noted that there was a need to design interventions to address this going forward, with the aim of empowering communities to support themselves.

#### **7.2.6 Staffing/volunteer capacity**

A small number of organisations emphasised the severe toll that the Covid-19 pandemic had taken on their staff and volunteers and identified that addressing this was an emergent need. For some, this involved recruiting new staff to reduce the burden on existing staff or to hire staff for a specific role. While others recognised the need for their projects to continue and as such were looking to maintain staff that they had hired during the pandemic.

Many organisations recognised the important role that volunteering had played throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and that maintaining this was a priority for them going forward. For example, one organisation reported that the pandemic had led to increased enthusiasm for volunteering and there was a desire to capitalise on this, while another felt it was imperative to ensure that people were empowered to continue making a difference in their communities.

#### **7.2.7 Other**

Twelve per cent of emergent needs were coded into the "other category". These were needs identified by two or fewer of the 75 organisations identifying emergent needs. Priorities identified by these organisations included a need to respond to the climate emergency; to address the impact on the self-employed and small

businesses; and a need to evaluate their project and identify outcomes as well as producing detailed reports to evidence impact.

### 7.3 Key learning

All of the organisations that responded to the follow-up survey were asked if they gained any key learning from their experience of delivering their project. For example, with hindsight, would they have done anything differently if they could run their SCF project again or did their approach to delivering the project change over the course of the funding period. As with gaps in provision and any emerging priorities, organisations were not asked to provide details on lessons learned in their monitoring reports but where these were mentioned, these have been reported alongside the responses from the follow-up survey.

Of the 161 anchor organisations that made up the analysis sample, 119 organisations, representing 74%, identified key learning points that they had gained through the SCF funding process. Organisations that did not specify any key learning points did not identify these in their response or monitoring form, or their response wasn't clear enough to be included in the analysis. Some explicitly indicated that they were happy with their approach to delivering the project and would use the same approach if they were to deliver it again.

The responses that indicated that they would do something differently were coded into the categories in table 7 and analysed to understand the challenges that these organisations had faced and what they might change if they were given the same opportunity in the future. The aim of this was to determine if there were any lessons to be learned for future funding processes. As organisations tended to identify multiple learning points the proportions shown in the table do not equal 100%.

**Table 7: Organisations identifying key learning points**

Key learning	Number of organisations sampled identifying learning	Proportion of organisations sampled identifying learning
Approach to service delivery	77	65%
Strong Partnerships	49	41%
Volunteer contribution	27	23%
Insight into community issues	25	21%
Community-led initiatives	24	20%
Effective communications	17	14%
Funding process	15	13%
Use of evidence	2	2%

The areas where organisations indicated they had learned lessons were around their approach to service delivery (65%), the importance of strong partnerships (41%), volunteer contribution (23%), insight into community issues (21%), the importance of community-led initiatives (20%) and effective communications (14%), lessons around the funding process (13%) and on the use of evidence (2%).

### **7.3.1 Approach to service delivery**

Most commonly organisations identified learning around their approach to service delivery. Of these, a third of organisations (33%) noted that they would change their approach to service delivery if given the opportunity to deliver the project again. In these cases, amendments tended to relate to the type of activities offered, the beneficiaries targeted, the medium through which services were delivered or the way in which they communicated with their clients.

Some organisations reported that they changed their approach because they became aware of unanticipated unmet needs, or found that the original service they offered was already available from other organisations. For example, one organisation in Glasgow changed their approach to target those most in need after becoming aware that there were several other avenues of support available:

“At the beginning we were focused on addressing the crisis that had been created by COVID-19 and at first were supporting everyone who approached us. As a collaborative we began to reflect that not everyone required the same support and that there were other avenues of support/funding being provided from other sources. Considering this we moved our attention to seeking out those individuals and families who had been impacted severely, i.e. furloughed and lost employment.” (Community anchor organisation, Glasgow City)

Another area where organisations noted a need for change related to the method of delivery. For example offering food vouchers rather than food parcels or providing beneficiaries with cash payments. For one organisation the provision of food parcels led to concerns that people were becoming too dependent and they changed their method of delivery accordingly:

“As the lockdown measures eased we moved from food parcels to food vouchers. This encouraged people to purchase their own shopping, get out to the shops which helped their mental health and anxiety. People were getting used to having food parcels delivered but we knew that we needed to encourage people to get back to some sort of normality hence the reason for move onto food vouchers.” (Community anchor organisation, Glasgow City)

One organisation reflected that, with the best of intentions, they had in some cases pushed too hard as a team to support the community and this had come at the expense of their own wellbeing. With hindsight this organisation felt they would have paced themselves better if they had known how long the pandemic would last.

The other two thirds (67%) of organisations did not change their approach during the course of delivering the project but did identify aspects they would change or learning they would utilise if they were given the opportunity again. Several organisations commenting on this theme emphasised the importance of speed and efficiency in their approach to delivering the project, recognising that there was a need to get the funds and benefits to people as quickly as possible. For example, one organisation reported that if they were to deliver the project again they would focus on streamlining their process of delivering food vouchers as the system they used placed an unanticipated amount of pressure on staff. Whereas, for another organisation, the biggest takeaway was the speed with which they could respond when they had to: receive funding; request proposals; shortlist these and allocate funding within a month. There was also a perception expressed that the Council and other services often weren't as agile as organisations had initially thought, often responded slowly and this had impacted on delivery.

Several organisations identified learning around managing the increased workload of administering the projects under the Covid-19 pandemic. Lessons learned around this theme included remembering to include administration costs in funding applications, while another organisation noted the importance of having administration guidance and templates available to speed up processes. One housing association reported learning that having up to date information on their tenants had been key to their approach.

Many of the organisations highlighted the key role that staff and volunteers played in making sure their approach to service delivery was effective. For example, one organisation reported that the manpower provided by volunteers was "immense" in terms of the breadth of activities they carried out and the amount of time they gave up for the good of the community. Another organisation highlighted the strength of their paid staff members in terms of their ability to adapt and respond quickly to unique and continually changing circumstances.

A small number of organisations highlighted the importance of a holistic approach to service delivery, recognising that people are different and are likely to have varying needs. As one organisation states:

"One size does not fit all - there can never again be a tick box requirement for communities to 'fit' into the national or regional policies...The right way is the way it works, at the local level for the wider benefit of all in the community and that should be the basis of policy, adopted from the grass roots to the top table."  
(Community anchor organisation, Scottish Borders)

Other learning around approaches to service delivery included a need for effective communications across a range of platforms; allowing teams to work autonomously to deliver services; collaboration early on in the project and, in general, taking a flexible approach.

### 7.3.2 Strong partnerships

After approach to service delivery the most common learning identified by organisations was around partnerships, where 41% of organisations identified lessons learned on this theme. Organisations emphasised that they had learned the importance of strong partnerships through their experience of delivering the project, highlighting the importance of collaboration, coordination and sharing knowledge.

Several organisations reported that the experience of the fund had strengthened existing partnerships and how this had been important to reach the most people possible. For example, one organisation identified a preconception that people in rural communities look after each other and this belief had led to some of the most vulnerable being overlooked. For this organisation, coming together with other organisations as part of a resilience group allowed them to access funding and resources they wouldn't have been able to otherwise in order to support these hard to reach groups.

### 7.3.3 Community

The same proportion of organisations (41%) identified learning related to community. Generally, this learning could be split into two themes, with organisations highlighting learning around the importance of community-led initiatives (20%) and others that gained insight into community issues through their experience of delivering the project (21%). Organisations that reported that they had learned lessons on the importance of initiatives being community-led highlighted the unique position of community organisations, noting that their knowledge of the community was key to the successful delivery of the projects.

Commonly, organisations emphasised that their position in the community allowed them to respond quickly, efficiently and effectively to address local priorities. For example, one CAO highlighted that they learnt the importance of a community anchor taking the lead on behalf of others to ensure effective coordination during the funding period. Organisations emphasised that the unique position and expertise of community organisations and the third sector should be recognised by the Government. For example, as one organisation noted:

“The value of the third sector is often undervalued and the contribution it can make is often ignored. When larger public sector organisations were unable to move swiftly to respond to the crisis we became invaluable and showed just what can be achieved.” (Community anchor organisation, Highland)

Related to this, several organisations emphasised that community organisations were best placed to deliver projects in the community as they already have a certain awareness of the needs and priorities of the area, including existing relationships with local services. Placing more trust in these organisations was seen as preferable to national organisations ‘parachuting’ into local areas without a local presence.

Twenty-one per cent of organisations identified learning around community issues, where their experience of delivering the project allowed these organisations to identify and develop insight into issues which they had previously been unaware of. Organisations commenting on this theme identified issues around mental health and wellbeing, food insecurity, poverty, social isolation and inequality.

Organisations reported that better engagement during the delivery of their projects allowed hidden needs to be identified, meaning that they were able to respond effectively. Several organisations noted that, in responding to immediate needs in the short term, they identified the need for a longer-term, more sustainable approach and that this had become their priority going forward.

### **7.3.4 Effective communications**

Fourteen per cent of organisations identified lessons learned around communication, including more effective or different ways of engaging with the community or improved communication between organisations and services. For some organisations this involved the distribution of surveys to the community to allow their voices to be heard and to identify need, while other organisations re-developed their websites or provided information through other mediums such as newsletters, after reviewing how people were engaging with services.

For some, the experience of delivering the project taught them the importance of having a good social media presence and the need to develop the use of online materials to better engage with local communities. One organisation noted that although communication with the community was vital they also learned that good internal communication within the organisation was just as important. Another organisation emphasised the importance of listening, particularly when people are stressed:

“Listening is essential, early on in the pandemic you could hear the panic and concern in many voices and being calm and cheery was very important.”  
(Community anchor organisation, Highland)

For organisations that identified learning relating to improved communications, better communication between organisations was seen as necessary during the funding period to ensure adequate coordination and to avoid duplication. For two organisations, learning centred around the need for clear and regular communication between anchor organisations and funded groups, while the other viewed communication as important to understand whether their funded organisations were in difficulty or needed further support.

One organisation felt that all communities should have an effective communications system, highlighting that this was crucial to deliver projects in communities:

“An effective communication system is also integral to all the good work undertaken within communities. In our opinion all communities should have their own community portal, helpline and COMM’s team that is responsible for

ensuring communication is accurate and flows between organisations and the wider community. Although city wide initiatives such as the Glasgow Helpline are of value many local residents responded better to the idea of a more localised support service.” (Community anchor organisation, Glasgow)



## 8. Perspectives on the funding process

This chapter principally considers the experiences of the IFPs and their perspective of the SCF process (although learning is also identified from the CAOs), including their views on the funding process and their experience of working in partnership with both CAOs and other IFPs. The role of the IFPs was key to the delivery of the SCF as evidenced in Chapter 6, particularly in supporting anchor organisations to develop successful bids and administering and distributing funds. The SCF involved 9 IFPs working across Scotland to administer and distribute funds as well gathering monitoring and reporting information on expenditure and outcomes. A survey was distributed to the 9 IFPs in February 2021. Due to a technical problem, some surveys were completed in February 2021 and others in August 2021. This may have introduced some issues related to comparability, due to differences in the time elapsed since completion of the funded activities.

### 8.1 Perspectives from the intermediary funding partners

Similar to the anchor organisations, IFPs were also asked about their experience of delivering the SCF and how they felt about the funding process. All the partners responding to the survey provided a response to this question. Generally, the IFPs felt that, given the specific circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic and the need to get the money out to the community as quickly and efficiently as possible, the funding process had worked well. IFPs felt that due to the pace at which they were expected to respond to the pandemic, the light touch approach to the funding process had been necessary, although this had required a greater degree of trust in community anchor organisations and made monitoring more challenging. For the most part, partners involved in the administration of the fund felt it was difficult to answer whether they would do anything differently next time because the circumstances of the pandemic had been so unique.

#### 8.1.1 Application process

Echoing the findings from the data gathered from the anchor organisations, IFPs involved in the administration of the SCF generally felt their experience of the application and funding process had been positive. Most of the partners involved in the set-up and management of the SCF felt that the initial application process worked well due to the strong relationships between the IFPs and the Scottish Government, and reported that these relationships were central to distributing funding quickly to third sector organisations.

Some IFPs worked directly with organisations to draft their proposals collaboratively. These partners expressed the view that adopting this approach allowed organisations to focus on their pandemic response without having to worry about completing their applications when they didn't have the capacity or 'headspace' to do so. IFPs also emphasised that the opportunity to review proposals for funding early on meant that CAOs could focus their proposals,



remove or change ineligible elements and bring a more rounded package to the table for decision, ultimately reducing time spent on revisions or amendments.

Other IFPs acted merely as assessors and did not contribute directly to the funding proposals. These partners reported that they provided clarity on the application process and funding criteria, answered questions and requested more information on behalf of the CAOs when required. Another partner highlighted that the simplicity of the fund and the ability to work directly with organisations on their applications worked well, with the result that organisations considered the needs of the community and the most effective way to meet them. Ultimately, it was felt that the processing and payment of grants with minimal paperwork was good for both IFPs and organisations in terms of reducing the burden on those delivering the fund.

IFPs highlighted that effective communication and the strength of the relationships between the IFPs had been key to the speed of the initial application process. In particular, the time, knowledge and expertise contributed by those IFPs who were already established funders was central to the success of the process and made it as easy as possible for applicants. However, one IFP felt that although the more experienced IFPs were a valuable asset, there was a perception that these partners targeted a disproportionate amount of funding towards CAOs that they had funded previously. Recognising the sentiment in this response, it is noted that the intention of the initial funding process was to use existing relationships to distribute funding quickly and efficiently to those that needed it.

### **8.1.2 Unsuccessful applications**

IFPs responding to the survey were also asked to identify reasons for unsuccessful applications. Most partners who provided a response to this question felt that there were very few applications that were not progressed and one partner reported that they had no applications that did not progress. There was a perception among the IFPs that the main reason for the small numbers of rejected applications at the expression of interest stage was the collaborative approach taken to the application process as it allowed the proposals to be reviewed and amended before they were assessed by the oversight panel, resulting in no applications being rejected that progressed to the panel.

Where applications were not progressed, IFPs reported that this could be to prevent duplication (where similar activity was already being delivered in an area), because the size, scale or focus of the project did not match community needs or because the organisation was asking for funding for activities that were not in direct response to the pandemic.

### **8.1.3 Perceptions of the fund**

As previously stated, the IFPs felt that, given the need to get money out to people in the community as quickly as possible, the funding process had worked well. Although a lack of specificity in the criteria and few monitoring requirements had made comparisons challenging and the IFPs recognised that the funding process had been imperfect, there was a perception that the light touch approach had been the right one to adopt in an emergency situation. One partner, for example, felt that each stage of the funding process had its benefits:

“Working through known and respected anchor organisations offered confidence, good lines of communication, sharing, negotiating and open clear decision making. Using expressions of interest (simple proposition) which was then subjected to informed partner scrutiny, negotiation and amendment allowed for informed, well-matching funding bids. Respect between different partners allowed for experience to be recognised and respected within a light touch control framework. Siding on the judgement of 'a bit too much' rather than [reductions] through scrutiny' felt like the right approach in an emergency. Excess funds were negotiated to additional local impact which was again a better approach to servicing an emergency than re-call and re-cycling of funds.”  
(Intermediary funding partner)

IFPs also highlighted the reach of the fund in being able to support a wide range of local groups and organisations through CAOs, allowing funding to be distributed quickly by organisations who knew their communities well.

#### **8.1.4 Challenges**

IFPs responding to the survey were also asked if they had encountered any challenges or barriers during the delivery of the SCF. All of the partners that responded to the survey identified at least one challenge they encountered during the funding period. IFPs commenting on this theme identified challenges relating to working with CAOs, specificity of the funding criteria, issues of duplication and monitoring requirements, the pace of delivery and a lack of resources.

Given the light touch approach to the funding process, it is perhaps not surprising that many IFPs identified challenges around trying to balance speed, flexibility and risk. Several of the IFPs identified challenges relating to a lack of clarity around the funding criteria in the initial stages of administering the fund which made it difficult to identify who was eligible and which activities could be funded. This lack of clarity was viewed by some IFPs as making the application process more time consuming to administer as a result of repeatedly having to explain to CAOs the eligibility and intention of the fund.

IFPs also expressed the view that the lack of clarity around the funding criteria often made it difficult to help organisations submit consistent applications or to make comparisons against similar projects. One partner noted that the openness and flexibility of the criteria made it harder for some organisations to decide what they wanted to do and what they could apply for.

However, one partner felt that although there had been challenges throughout the funding process, with hindsight they would not have done anything differently. This partner wanted to highlight that they had been requesting a move to a light touch funding process for a long time and that stopping communities ‘jumping through hoops’ to get the funding they need was the right approach moving forward.

#### **8.1.5 Lessons learned from the funding process**

Similarly to the anchor organisations, IFPs involved in the delivery of the SCF were also asked about any key learning they had gained through their experience of

delivering the fund. Learning identified by IFPs was in many ways closely related to the challenges they had encountered during the funding period, including lessons on clarity of criteria, effective communications and the funding process. As well as highlighting the importance of strong partnerships, CAOs, community-led initiatives and trust.

## **8.2 Perspectives from the community anchor organisations**

Although lessons learned relating to the funding process are discussed in more detail elsewhere, 13% of organisations responding to the question on learning in the follow-up survey also identified learning on this topic. Organisations commenting on this theme highlighted that a small amount of funding and direct investment in communities can achieve a huge impact.

Two organisations identified learning around the length of the funding period, specifically that they would have preferred more time to develop their ideas and that the lead-in time to a funding period should be taken into account in trying to set up future projects. One noted that without the time to develop their ideas properly there was a risk of duplication.

Another organisation highlighted that it was difficult to decide which organisations to provide funding to in such a short amount of time and their approach might have been different if the funding period had been longer:

“I think the process went relatively well from our point of view. It was difficult to decide which organisations we wanted to receive money and, with more time, I would have looked for more collaborative ways of responding, and/or providing funds to a wider range of organisations.” (Community anchor organisation, Edinburgh City)

Two organisations noted that although they recognised the need for funding exercises to have criteria, they felt that their positive experience of the SCF confirmed that there needs to be some flexibility to reach the right beneficiaries at the right time. One of these organisations noted that the ‘needs must’ approach of the SCF funding process had the effect of greater trust being placed in organisations:

“How important having a functioning, capable anchor organisation (in this case, us) in the community was to being able to respond effectively at speed. We saw firsthand (and supported) other communities who did not have the same capacity and saw how time was lost. Also how much easier it is to operate flexibly and at speed when unnecessary, cumbersome and restrictive administration is removed or minimized with regards to funding. I fully appreciate the requirement for effective due-process, evaluation, monitoring and assessment of value for money but there seemed to be a "needs must" minimization of this which felt much more trusting (I think aided by being supported by [intermediary funding partner]). Perhaps there is a more balanced approach to be carried forward from this.” (Community anchor organisation, West Lothian)

### 8.3 IFP perspectives on partnership working

All the IFPs that chose to comment on their experience of partnership working to deliver the fund were generally positive. IFPs felt that working in partnership with both Scottish Government and CAOs had allowed them to deliver a fast-paced, coordinated and joined-up response to the Covid-19 pandemic which they would not have been able to do otherwise. In working in partnership with other IFPs and organisations, IFPs were able to share knowledge, expertise and their experiences of supporting the third sector. This exchange of knowledge enabled the quick and agile roll out of the funding programme, ensuring support reached those most in need in communities.

Echoing much of the learning identified by the anchor organisations, IFPs also highlighted the importance of CAOs and community-led initiatives, referring to the unique positioning of third sector organisations within communities. Namely, that the SCF funding process highlighted the capabilities of the third sector and communities to respond to a major crisis. For this reason, IFPs felt that these organisations should be supported to continue their work in the community, given that they are well placed to have an awareness of and respond to community need. Generally the IFPs felt that the light touch approach of the fund had worked well but the role of the anchor organisations and the trust vested in them had played a key role in ensuring this approach had been a success.

In addition to partnership working playing a key role in the delivery of the fund, IFPs also identified specific outcomes arising from the relationships they built with other IFPs, Scottish Government and CAOs. Outcomes identified by IFPs included the creation of respectful and trusted relationships; enhanced relationships with existing IFPs; increased interaction with local authorities; and increased visibility with their local communities. One partner for example, noted that taking on the role of a lead partner in the SCF had enhanced their reputational value.

Challenges around partnership working were identified by one IFP who highlighted that Scottish Government had some technical problems in the initial stages of the fund when new ways to virtually meet and share documents had to be found. This partner also noted a level of 'soft-critiquing' among those involved in the oversight panel, where IFPs were more reluctant to challenge the proposals of others if they did not have the knowledge or expertise in that area.

## 9. Communities Recovery Fund

Following the delivery of the SCF, the Communities Recovery Fund (CRF) was set up to support community groups, charities, social enterprises, and voluntary organisations who are supporting people and communities in responding to the challenges presented by Covid-19 as we moved into the recovery phase of the pandemic.

As the SCF was an immediate emergency fund and the CRF focused on recovery, the two funds were intended to fulfil complementary roles within the funding landscape. A number of CAOs involved in the SCF then went on to apply for funding from the CRF. Therefore, the follow-up survey also asked CAOs about their experience of the CRF to identify any additional learning gained through their experience of both funds, including whether they had applied any learning from their experience of the SCF to the CRF. Organisations were also asked to identify any additional learning or make any additional comments about their experience of the SCF or the difference between the two funds.

Of the 117 organisations that responded to the survey, 60 (51%) indicated that they were involved in the delivery of the CRF as well, 55 organisations said they were not involved and 2 organisations did not answer the question. Two of the organisations who indicated they were not involved in the delivery of the CRF reported that after their initial submission to the CRF they chose not to take their application forward. Of the 60 organisations that indicated they were involved in the delivery of the CRF, 53 provided an answer to the question on whether they applied any learning from their experience of the SCF.

### 9.1 Lessons learned from the SCF

Most commonly, organisations used the question on learning to highlight the positives of the SCF funding process, the CRF funding process or both. Organisations commenting on this theme highlighted positives around the simplicity of the funding criteria; the support they received from the IFPs; the organisation of the fund; the continuity provided by CRF (in relation to previously funded SCF projects); and that the CRF allowed more sustainable longer-term planning or allowed them to continue work they had started before the pandemic.

In addition to the positives identified by organisations, a range of learning was also highlighted. In the main, responses to the question on learning in this section reflected many of the key learning points from the SCF funding process (see section 7.3), indicating that organisations involved in both funds felt their experience of the SCF provided practical knowledge that they could apply to other funding exercises. Echoing previous responses, organisations commonly highlighted the importance of the support they had received from IFPs and the strength of the partnerships they formed as learning they would apply in delivering the CRF. One organisation, for example, reported that they had sent the initial

application to the wrong funding stream and the advice they received from the IFP to appeal the decision had been invaluable.

Several organisations noted that they were taking forward the partnerships established during the delivery of the SCF and they were building on these during the delivery of the CRF. Two organisations noted that the learning they gained from the SCF allowed them to refine their applications and project proposals, building capacity which encouraged them to apply to the CRF.

As has been noted previously in section 7.3.3, organisations felt that their experience of applying to the SCF and delivering their projects had provided them with greater insight into the issues within their local community. Organisations felt that this knowledge allowed them to make their projects more responsive to the needs of those most in need. Furthermore, the first-hand experience of addressing these needs through their own projects allowed them to identify the gaps that still needed to be addressed. As a result, they were able to tailor their CRF projects to respond to unmet need.

The importance of effective communications was highlighted by two organisations. For one organisation this was linked to a need to avoid duplication and to make staff aware of what support was available. The other organisation commenting on this theme highlighted learning around communicating with beneficiaries, in terms of using a variety of mediums and using calls as a point of contact to check in on people.

Other areas of learning reported were each identified by one organisation. These learning points included a realisation that longer term funding is needed to tackle the underlying issues of poverty, and that creativity and innovation could be applied to service delivery. For one organisation, the SCF was different to many of the funds they had applied for before, in terms of requiring a more rapid, project-driven and proactive response. This organisation felt that their experience had put them in a better position to successfully deliver the CRF as they were able to develop and draw upon the systems and networks established during the SCF funding period. Echoing this sentiment, another organisation stated that the main difference between their experiences of the two funds was that, because of their involvement with the SCF, they had a better idea of what they were doing in applying to the CRF.

## **9.2 Challenges with the CRF**

In addition to the learning points that were gained through their experience of the SCF, some organisations responding to this question (5 organisations) also highlighted challenges they had encountered during the funding period. Almost all of these comments were related to the CRF. Challenges reported by those 5 organisations included the criteria for the fund being unclear, issues relating to the online application form, confusion around the CRF being thought to be tied to the Adapt and Thrive Fund and one organisation who expressed concerns that they believed that they were ineligible for CRF funding due to their area not being

classed as a priority even though they covered an area of extreme deprivation. It is important to note that although the CRF did prioritise certain areas for funding, these were areas and communities identified as experiencing the greatest impact from the pandemic. For example, areas where Covid-19 has resulted in increased deprivation and or disadvantage. However, these areas may not necessarily have mapped onto areas with the highest levels of deprivation.

### **9.3 Differences between the SCF and CRF**

Organisations who indicated they were involved in the delivery of the CRF were also asked if there was anything else they would like to add about their experience of the SCF. Of the 60 organisations that indicated they were involved in delivering the CRF, 47 organisations (78%) responded to the question on whether there was anything else they would like to add. Although organisations were prompted to highlight any differences between the two funds, many organisations felt their experience of both had been broadly similar.

Of the organisations responding to the question, 13 organisations felt the funds had been similar and 8 noted that although the funds each had a different focus, their aims were complimentary. Organisations who felt the funds were similar reported that the application, delivery, reporting, monitoring and evaluation process were much the same in being simple and straightforward to access. Organisations felt that for these reasons, there had been no great difference in their experience.

For the organisations identifying similarities there was a general consensus that these similarities had made it easier to apply the learning they had gained through their experience of the SCF funding process to the CRF:

“The Group operated with the help of a lot of funding during the pandemic - we found that most of these funds were complementary to each other, and we utilised the learnings and experience, that we had gained working within the community over a number of years.” (Community anchor organisation, Aberdeen)

In particular, one organisation’s experience of the CRF reinforced to them the benefits of the light touch process as it allowed money to be moved quickly:

“Understand that a structured application and appraisal process is reasonable but the light touch process for the SCF allowed money to be moved to local delivery quickly, intermediary funding partners worked well and glad this process was the same for CRF” (Community anchor organisation, Highland)

Organisations expressed a range of views on the differences between the two funds. In general, organisations felt that the SCF funding process was quicker and more agile compared to the CRF. Some organisations described the CRF process as long, confusing and bureaucratic, although some of this perception may have arisen due to complexities surrounding the use of the online portal. One

organisation noted this meant the support of the IFPs was crucial in allowing them to proceed with their application.

Other organisations disagreed on which fund was more flexible, with one organisation expressing the view that the SCF was more flexible and the CRF more focused in it's aims, while another felt that the CRF was the more flexible of the two funds.



## 10. Conclusions

The following chapter presents a brief summary of output and identifies key learning emerging from the findings, which may have relevance for future emergency funding initiatives.

### 10.1 Outputs

The SCF supported 465 organisations distributing £17,056,890. Grants were awarded to organisations working across all 32 local authority areas in Scotland. When analysed by Urban/Rural classification, a substantial amount of funding was delivered to smaller, rural communities, and island communities in particular, received higher amounts per head of population than other local authority areas. Most funding was distributed to areas of between 10,000 and 125,000 people, although just over a quarter of funding was distributed to projects in the Glasgow City Council area. A majority of the funding was delivered to projects operating within the two lowest SIMD quintiles, with the least deprived quintiles requesting and receiving the least amount of funding.

#### 10.1.1 People supported

The number of people supported by the SCF was not fully possible to measure as not every project recorded the number of people they supported. Those who did, often provided estimates and the number of people supported was not reported consistently across the various projects. Numbers were therefore not comparable across projects, CAOs or geographically. Where information is available, some organisations chose to report the number of households supported while others reported the number of individuals. Where information was available, a reported 11,267 households and 173,676 individuals were estimated to be assisted by the projects, although this evaluation notes this is likely to be a significant underestimation.

The overall fund was not targeted at any specific groups, allowing organisations to identify needs in their own communities. Findings suggest that many projects focused on supporting people with particular needs, characteristics or vulnerabilities which made them more vulnerable to the specific social, health and impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and the accompanying restrictions. Most commonly, organisations reported supporting vulnerable people; people with low or no income; people who are socially isolated; people shielding; people self-isolating and people with existing mental health conditions. Alongside supporting specific groups, many organisations also reported supporting people from an equality group as defined by the Equality Act 2010. However, as noted in sections 3.3 and 3.4, beneficiaries were not asked to identify as belonging to a particular group, so it is difficult to draw conclusions about recipient characteristics.

#### 10.1.2 Activities delivered

Grants from the fund supported a broad range of projects, many of them delivering multiple activities and providing a wide range of support to their service users. Most CAOs delivered projects focusing on food support; basic provisions; support for

volunteer management; medical prescription delivery; social outreach; digital inclusion and health and wellbeing support. Although, in many cases, activities were interlinked and targeted multiple areas of need. Therefore, in some cases planned activities fell into a number of categories and were not mutually exclusive.

The large majority of projects focused on food support in some form, either using funding to help a specific group to access food or taking a broader focus to support anyone in the local area with food and basic provisions. Commonly, organisations delivering projects focusing on food support used funding to establish or expand food provision through food banks in the community; to set up community fridges; or put in place systems to distribute surplus food to those in need. The focus on food support may reflect the stage of the pandemic during which the fund was available.

The findings suggest that the Covid-19 pandemic took a significant financial toll on the third sector, both as a result of a lack of opportunities for income generation and additional financial pressure due to the breadth of services they were expected to provide. For these reasons, many of the funded organisations requested funding for operating costs or to support volunteer management. These organisations focused on paying for staffing costs; supplementing core funding for the organisation; covering volunteer expenses and general management; and to pay for enhanced hygiene measures.

Many organisations recognised that people were confined to their homes, either through lockdown conditions, shielding or self-isolation, resulting in increased social isolation and impacting on physical and mental health, and general wellbeing. A fact that was reflected in the number of projects focusing on social outreach or health and wellbeing in some form. Projects delivered a wide range of activities designed to address these issues, including support with social interaction; medical prescription delivery; befriending calls; wellbeing packs; or through adapting their services to phone or online delivery.

The findings suggest that there exists a level of digital exclusion within communities, which has both been highlighted and compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic. Recognising the impact on face-to-face services and the rapid move to remote support, digital access was also a common focus for projects. These projects adapted their existing service to allow service users to access the service remotely and provided families and individuals with a range of digital devices to allow them to stay connected.

Reflecting the broad range of activities delivered, organisations also funded projects focusing on home and family life, financial assistance and advice services. These projects delivered activities such as educational and home-schooling support; parenting support; utilities assistance or direct financial support in the form of hardship funds or small grants; as well as funded projects that offered a range of advice services relating to welfare, debt and housing. A small number of organisations also delivered projects which aimed to improve community resilience to support communities to adapt to the realities of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **10.1.3 Experiences of the fund**

Overall, data from the monitoring forms and the surveys conducted with CAOs and IFPs suggests that the experience for those involved in administering the SCF was positive. Respondents to the surveys felt that the fund had been successful in its aim to distribute funding quickly to organisations at a local level and to support people who had been adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Those involved in the fund recognised that although the adoption of a light-touch approach had its issues in terms of assessing outcomes and monitoring impact, it was generally felt that the agility of the fund and the reduced burden on CAOs and funded organisations had allowed them to respond quickly to the needs of their local communities.

It is also important to note that the SCF was administered as part of a much wider funding landscape. For example, a number of organisations reported in their monitoring forms that they had received funding from other sources to fund other areas of support or organisational delivery. Not only does this make it difficult to directly attribute specific outcomes to the activities delivered under the SCF where organisations have reported multiple funders but without a robust evaluation of all the emergency funds, the level of duplication is impossible to determine.

## **10.2 Key learning**

This final section summarises the key lessons learned from this evaluation that may be able to inform approaches to funding in the future. This section considers what aspects of the funding process worked well and could be taken forward and adapted for other third sector funds as well as areas where improvements could be made.

### **10.2.1 Emerging needs**

CAOs identified a number of needs that emerged through the course of their projects. In general, these needs tended to map on to gaps in provision that organisations identified in the course of delivering their projects. Many of the organisations involved in the SCF reported that they were already taking action to address emerging needs. However, these needs could be used as potential areas of focus for future funding initiatives as third sector organisations move into the recovery phase.

Most commonly organisations highlighted emerging needs relating to poverty and unemployment, reflecting the severe financial impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had on communities in terms of unemployment, loss of earnings and increased financial insecurity. After poverty and unemployment, needs relating to health and wellbeing were also seen to be a priority going forward. Organisations reported that the pandemic has had a considerable impact on the mental health of individuals.

Organisations involved in the SCF also felt that, recognising that the third sector had played a key role in the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, greater support for community organisations should be a priority going forward in terms of sustained support and investment. Other priorities identified by organisations

included focusing on digital exclusion as a priority, community recovery and increasing staff and volunteer capacity.

### **10.2.2 Effective communications**

The evaluation of the fund highlighted the importance of effective communications. Communications between those involved in the fund were generally successful, where organisations highlighted that communication between CAOs and IFPs had been key to the delivery of their projects. The support provided during the funding process through the partnership with IFPs was described by the CAOs as invaluable and in some cases gave them the confidence to apply for CRF funding when they otherwise would not have done so. Positive communications between the various IFPs were also reported, where partners highlighted that effective communication and the strength of the relationships between the IFPs had been key to the speed of the initial application process.

Although communication between those involved in the fund was viewed as positive overall, in a few specific instances communication could have been improved. IFPs highlighted a need to improve the communication of the funding criteria to CAOs during the application and assessment process, including the nature, scope and timing of the fund. However, this may also be a consequence of the built-in flexibility of the fund.

Both IFPs and CAOs also highlighted the need for better communication between those administering the fund and funded organisations during the funding period to ensure adequate coordination and to reduce the possibility of duplication. In particular, a need for better communication and coordination between CAOs and the funded organisations working in the same local area was highlighted, to allow organisations to effectively identify unmet need. These challenges suggest a need for clear lines of communication and management structures to be put in place to ensure that future funds are well coordinated and to allow for clearer communication with funded organisations, LAs and others.

Most of the partners involved in the set-up and management of the SCF felt that the initial application process worked well due to effective communication and the strong relationships between the IFPs and the Scottish Government, and reported that these relationships were central to distributing funding quickly to third sector organisations. There was some evidence that communication around the funding criteria in the initial funding phase could have been improved as a lack of clarity sometimes made it difficult to identify who was eligible and which activities could be funded. Better communication around the funding criteria and the initial funding phase may have addressed some of the negative perceptions/experiences expressed in response to the IFP survey.

### **10.2.3 Partnership working between Scottish Government, IFPs and CAOs**

This evaluation highlighted the importance and effectiveness of establishing and building on strong relationships to successfully deliver funding efficiently and at pace. Both the CAOs and IFPs felt that all those involved in delivering the fund brought their own skills and expertise, allowing them to deliver a fast-paced, coordinated and joined-up response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Both IFPs and CAOs highlighted the high level of trust established between those involved in the delivery of the fund.

It is possible that future funding initiatives could benefit from continuing to build on the relationships established during the course of delivering the SCF as well as those partnerships formed under other emergency funds. In particular, using the local knowledge and expertise of CAOs and other third sector organisations could inform the initial direction of future funding initiatives, providing focus and reducing the under-use of the services delivered. The findings suggest that continued prioritisation of structures and partnerships that enhance community resilience would help support the fragile community and voluntary sector. In particular, there is a need to maintain these networks to prevent the loss of the partnership gains made through the SCF funding process and so these partnerships can be mobilised again if required.

### **10.2.4 Pace, simplicity and the light touch approach to funding**

CAOs and the IFPs involved in the administration of the SCF generally felt that the pace, simplicity and light approach to the funding process had been successful. In particular, the light touch approach to funding had been central to the agility of the fund, reduced the burden on the funded organisations and allowed grants to reach those most in need in communities throughout Scotland. Some IFPs involved in the administration of the fund felt that the approach to the funding process was imperfect in some ways, in terms of spending and direct impacts being hard to evidence for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation. IFPs also reported that the lack of clarity around the funding criteria made meaningful comparisons between projects challenging during the application process, meaning it was sometimes difficult to determine if projects were eligible for funding. However, the overall positive reception of the fund does raise questions around whether future funding initiatives could be simpler and faster, while minimising the burden placed on third sector organisations.

Some organisations and IFPs also highlighted the relative agility of third sector organisations in responding to the needs of the community compared to LAs. However, without further research specifically focusing on the LA response, this evaluation is unable to draw any comparisons between the third sector and LA responses to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Given that data required to evaluate end user reception or outcomes was for the most part not available, the experiences of those involved in the administration and delivery of the SCF suggest that several steps could be taken to improve future

funding initiatives. Firstly, reviewing the amount and format of information requested in both application and monitoring forms, to identify ways to provide focus and direction to organisations without being overly onerous. Secondly, reviewing funding criteria to improve the clarity of information provided to those involved in administering the fund, and to CAOs, to reduce confusion and improve accessibility to applicants. Thirdly to consider ways in which some aspects of the light touch approach could be taken forward to improve future funding initiatives, with the aim of striking a balance between speed, flexibility and risk. Finally, there is also a balance to be struck between agility and responsiveness in an incredibly time-sensitive situation, with the need to evidence outcomes for public spend and this should be carefully considered going forward if a full evaluation is required.

# Appendix 1

## Acronyms

CAO	Community anchor organisation
CRF	Communities Recovery Fund
CWF	Community Wellbeing Fund
EOI	Expression of Interest
IFP	Intermediary funding partner
LA	Local authority
LFP	Lead funding partner
SCF	Supporting Communities Fund
SCFP	Supporting Communities Fund Partnership

## Appendix 2

### Partner organisations

	<b>Partner organization</b>	<b>SCFP member</b>	<b>IFP member</b>
CEIS	Community Enterprise in Scotland	x	X
CHEX	Community Health Exchange (part of Scottish Community Development Centre)		X
CLS	Community Led Support (a National Development Team for Inclusion project)		X
Corra	Corra Foundation	x	X
CRNS	Community Resources Network Scotland		X
CWA	Community Woodlands Association		X
DTAS	Development Trusts Association Scotland	x	X
GWSF	Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations	x	X
HIE	Highlands and Islands Enterprise	x	X
SCA	Scottish Community Alliance	x	X
SCCAN	Scotland Communities Climate Action Network		X
SCDC	Scottish Community Development Centre	x	X
SCHW	Scottish Communities for Health and Wellbeing		X
	Scottish Enterprise		X
	Scottish Government	x	
	Scottish Islands Federation		X
Senscot	Social Entrepreneurs Scotland		X
TNLCF	The National Lottery Community Fund	x	x





© Crown copyright 2022

You may re-use this information (excluding logos and images) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/> or e-mail: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk). Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

The views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and do not necessarily represent those of the Scottish Government or Scottish Ministers.

This document is also available from our website at [www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot).  
ISBN: 978-1-80435-052-2

The Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

Produced for  
the Scottish Government  
by APS Group Scotland  
PPDAS1027058 (02/22)  
Published by  
the Scottish Government,  
February 2022



Social Research series  
ISSN 2045-6964  
ISBN 978-1-80435-052-2

Web Publication  
[www.gov.scot/socialresearch](http://www.gov.scot/socialresearch)

PPDAS1027058 (02/22)