

## COMMUNITIES MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING FUND UPDATE – WED 3 NOV 2021

### 1) Background

At the end of September, Scottish Government communicated their intention to create a Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund. EVOG wrote out to share the information we had at the time and invited discussion on the general principles of how the fund might be allocated. The fund was formally announced on 15<sup>th</sup> October<sup>1</sup> and we have since received guidance from Scottish Government. Key points include:

- £15 million is available nationally for 2021- 22 – this comes to £1.255 million in Edinburgh, and is expected to be the first year of a two-year fund.
- The fund will be distributed by Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) which in Edinburgh is made up of EVOG, Volunteer Edinburgh and Edinburgh Social Enterprise. The TSI will develop a local partnership plan which will set out local priorities within the fund criteria.
- The fund is to support mental health and wellbeing at a small scale, grassroots, community level. It can be used to increase capacity for existing groups and projects or for new initiatives. Groups do not have to have mental health and wellbeing as their main focus, but there needs to be a clear benefit to the mental wellbeing of people in their community.
- The following types of organisation can apply: Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisations (SCIO), Unincorporated Associations, Companies Limited by Guarantee, Trusts, Not-for-profit company or asset locked company or Community Interest Companies (CIC), Cooperative and Community Benefit Societies and Community Councils.
- The fund will support those aged 16 and over, and should be used for projects which help whole communities or community groups.
- Applications demonstrating a focus on addressing mental health inequalities by supporting those who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic will be prioritised, particularly those initiatives supporting communities experiencing multiple forms of marginalisation.
- People with lived experience should be involved in the funding process from an early stage and in ongoing planning and decision making.
- The majority of grants will go to small and medium sized groups and organisations – with incomes up to £1 million per annum, for small scale community projects – amounts of less than £10,000.
- The application process will be open by 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.evoc.org.uk/funding/money-to-support-mental-health-at-the-heart-of-edinburgh-communities/>

## 2) How to get the best from this fund for Edinburgh

We want to work with stakeholders to decide the details of this process together, but there are a few things that are already clear from existing discussions which we hope to use as a starting point.

- **Streamlined process:** We want to make sure the process is accessible to all, and focused on outcomes and funds projects which best meet the identified need. When we asked for ideas at the end of September we consistently heard that we needed to see a simple streamlined process where detail required was proportional to the size of the grant. We propose that there might be two parts to the process, with a smaller 'fast track' process for smaller amounts.
- **Move away from competition:** Competition does not necessarily bring the best outcomes for communities. We want to work with communities to see if we can find a balanced and transparent way to allocate this money in partnership, encouraging collaboration.
- **Informed by need:** We have a lot of information about existing need and this information will be gathered together, supplemented by knowledge in communities and used to guide allocation.
- **Support organisations to access:** The TSI have some separate funding to support this process and in Edinburgh intend to use much of this to build capacity for organisations to access the money, and facilitate engagement with those with lived experience.

## 3) We need your help!

We don't have as much time as we would like and so have had to organise opportunities to coproduce this process at short notice. See dates below and please see if you can contribute. If this does not work for you then get in touch and we will try to find other ways to get your ideas.

Everyone is welcome to participate in these discussions, but we are particularly keen to encourage people with lived experience and organisations representing communities experiencing particular mental health inequalities. We will support people with lived experience to contribute and we will also seek to support small organisations to ensure equality of access to all parts of this process. Please do get in touch to discuss how we could best achieve these aims.

## 4) Dates of online meetings\*:

- [Tue 16 Nov, 9.30-11.30am \(MS Teams\)](#)
- [Wed 17 Nov, 1.30-3.30pm \(MS Teams\)](#)
- [Tue 23 Nov, 1.30-3.30pm \(Zoom\)](#)
- [Thu 25 Nov, 11am-1pm \(Zoom\)](#)

\*Please note there is 1 event with 4 different dates - choose the ticket option with the date / time of your choice.

Everyone is also welcome to participate in a workshop at EVOC's Conference + AGM:

[Wed 17 Nov. 9.30am – 1pm](#)

## 5) Detail of decisions we need to take together

- **Partnership Plan**

We will draw together existing evidence to create a draft Partnership Plan, which we will circulate in advance of, and supplement following, the meetings. We intend to use the following sources: reporting data from the Thrive Collective Services, the Locality Improvement Plans and the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, evidence around demand and capacity gathered by Community Link Workers, data gathered by Public Health Practitioners in each locality, the Thrive Edinburgh Adult Health and Social Care Commissioning Plan, the Poverty Alliance's Get Heard reports and data collected by the Edinburgh Poverty Commission and the Mental Health Foundation. We welcome other suggestions and submissions in advance of the meeting, please send to [funding@evoc.org.uk](mailto:funding@evoc.org.uk).

- **Application process**

We want to achieve a streamlined process which is accessible to all, and which asks for the right level of detail – less detail for the smaller amounts of money. We want your ideas to help us find the right balance.

- **Selection process**

In response to consistent long-term feedback we want to develop a process which takes us away from a centralised competitive process towards a community commissioning model which allows money to be allocated directly in response to need. We will try, in partnership, to develop a process of allocation which moves away from competition as the guiding principle and towards local decision making.

## 6) Key dates

- Circulation of draft Partnership Plan – w/c 8 Nov.
- Engagement between 16 - 25 Nov.
- Application process will open for expressions of interest by 30 Nov.
- Timescales for the process beyond this point are to be defined in partnership, but all money needs to be allocated to organisations and groups by the end of March 2022 at the latest.

**7) Contact** Maria Arnold, Senior Development Officer for Adult Health and Wellbeing and Roisin Hurst, Development Worker for Community Investment: [funding@evoc.org.uk](mailto:funding@evoc.org.uk)

**Please note** that the merits of any potential bid will **not** be discussed. We are seeking input on need across Edinburgh, ways to ensure engagement from a broad range of groups, and how to develop the criteria and allocation process in order to get the best outcomes for communities in Edinburgh.