

# The Voice and Influence Partnership Community Funds



Shared learning and impact report – October 2021



The Voice and Influence Partnership was formed in 2018 to deliver voice and influence support for black and minority ethnic (BME) communities, disabled people, people of faith, LGBTQ+ communities and older people (55+) in Bristol.

We work to make sure that individuals, groups and communities whose voices aren't always heard are listened to, and are part of shaping Bristol's future.

Our partnership is made up of leading equalities organisations and community champions from across Bristol.



**Lead Partner**



**Delivery Partners**



**Advisory Partners**



**Funded by**



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# The Voice and Influence Partnership Community Funds

This report is presented alongside a short film that features people who received and benefited from a VIP Community Fund grant. You can [view the film by following this link](#).

In year three<sup>1</sup> of The Voice and Influence Partnership (VIP) we introduced our VIP Community Funds one for each of the equalities communities we work with:

- Black Minority Ethnic (BME) Fund – delivered by The Care Forum
- Disabled People's Fund – delivered by WECIL
- People of Faith Fund – delivered by The Ammerdown Centre
- LGBTQ+ Communities Fund - delivered by OTR
- Older People's Fund – delivered by BOPF

The first grants were awarded at the start of 2020 with projects across the funds taking place up until the Partnership finished its current contract with Bristol City Council in September 2021.

The Community Funds model and resources were created centrally and the model adapted and delivered by each of the Delivery Partners for their communities.

The funds awarded micro grants which ranged in value from £250 - £600, dependent on the levels chosen by each Delivery Partner.

Over £15,300 of funding was delivered direct to 39 projects and 37 different organisations.

## Key learning

- There was a gap in available funding for micro, small and single person organisations that the VIP Community Fund approach and grant value met.
- There is value in offering micro grants from £250-£600. For future funds the recommendation would be to set the grants between £400-500.
- Offering micro-grants still resulted in significant pieces of work being undertaken. This included being enough to deliver one off pieces of work, by acting as seed money to get a piece of work going and through being flexible in what they could be used the grants were able to close a gap in other funding a group had secured so that their project could go ahead.
- Simplifying the application criteria, process and reporting requirements was central to the success of the VIP Community Fund model.

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<sup>1</sup> Year 3 of VIP was 17 May 2020-16 May 2021 plus contract extension period 17 May-30 September

- The simplified criteria was given as the reason some applicants had been able to apply to the VIP Funds having not previously met the criteria to apply to any other funding, which had impacted on the development of their project or idea.
- The simplified application process and reporting were both feedback as reasons people decided to apply and one's participants felt other funding opportunities could benefit from looking to simplify.
- Mirroring the elements of a standard funding application and delivery process helped build capacity and confidence for those who hadn't undertaken one before with several recipients saying they had gone on to apply for funding after the confidence boost of being successful with their VIP grant.
- Leaving the definitions of what the funding could be used for as broad as possible allowed groups to apply for work they wanted or needed to do. It was feedback that for other funding they had needed to change elements of their planned work to meet funders' objectives, which meant community needs that did not fit available funding were not met.
- The VIP Community Fund micro-grants enabled a wide range of work to take place, feedback showed there was a sector and community desire for something similar. But also for a pathway for projects the grants had supported to gain further longer term funding. The Bristol City Council BIF Small Grants are one possible opportunity to achieve this capacity building for those organisation.
- The small and grassroots organisations the fund's model attracted and enabled to apply, were able to deliver direct impacts and outcomes for the communities they work with helping them address the issues that matter to them. (see funded projects section pg 9-32).

## **Recommendations**

A longer version of this report was submitted to Bristol City Council, who provided the funding for The Voice and Influence Partnerships work during this period. The following recommendations were made.

- Consideration is given by Bristol City Council as to how a similar micro-grants programme could be funded and delivered in the City.
- To look at how a future micro-grant fund could act at an incubator / first entry level alongside and to compliment the BIF small and then medium/large grants processes. This would be in conjunction with capacity building support for recipients.
- A wider sector discussion, and gathering of insight to take place to gain an evidence base to ascertain how large the group of individuals, grass roots and micro organisations that would benefit from micro-grant funding is.

## **VIP Community Fund micro-grants shared model and resources**

### **Background**

At the start of year three (May 2020-September 2021) the Partnership created a set of VIP Community Funds which would allow us to support community focused organisation and individuals who many not otherwise have access to funding, to deliver work of direct benefit to the equalities communities we work with.

The idea of a community fund was first introduced in year two of the project when the incoming LGBTQ+ Delivery Partner OTR were asked to run a small scale community pot fund.

Based on the success of this, the VIP model was developed by The Project Manager and the BME Engagement Worker who ran a round one pilot before rolling it out to all the Partners based on this learning.

The Partners were provided with the shared learning from the pilot, and a set of centrally created resources that included:

- Application form (online and paper based)
- Guidance for Applicants
- Grant Agreement
- Shared learning document, containing the thinking behind the model, learning from the pilot and guidance on setting their own up using the supplied resources.

The application form and guidance for applicants from the BME Fund are provided as appendices and shared resources.

As well as this approach being a key part of Partnership working, it was also designed to reduce the staff time and resources that would have otherwise been needed if each Partner had developed their own process from scratch.

## **Key elements of the VIP Community Fund model**

### **Accessible and open to the widest possible range of applicants**

Previous feedback meant that we knew complex funding application processes were one of the main reasons small groups were put off applying to a fund.

Some small and micro organisations, groups or individuals are not able to apply for funding due to not being formally incorporated or constituted in a way that meets common funding criteria. To address this we removed many of the standard tick box criteria and simply asked applicants to provide evidence of work they had done or were doing for example by having an established social media presence, references or other means to evidence their work as a functioning organisation.

We wanted making an application to start the process of building a relationship of trust rather than box ticking and we wanted to be able to fund people to try out an idea or undertake something innovative.

The value of the micro-grants (£250-600) allowed us to feel we could step away from the idea that we needed to protect our investment and instead understand that innovation and new ideas may not always deliver what was intended or may fail, but there would be learning to be gained from that for a grant recipient.

This allowed us to have a very broad set of criteria for the funds, inviting people to tell us what they wanted to achieve rather than setting out what we wanted them to do.

### **Capacity building**

The grants were aimed at micro and grassroots community organisation, some of whom may not normally, or have ever previously, gone through a grant funding process. The VIP model was designed to include all the key elements of a funding application, awarding and delivery process but in a simple format and without the administrative burden.

The aim was that through taking part applicants and those who were successful gained experience and confidence to enable them to apply to larger and more complex funding processes and opportunities.

## **More than the money**

The small size of the grants were designed to act as seed money to help a project take place or community need be met. However as well as this use we discovered that micro-grants were also seen as enough to fund the whole of a piece of work or activity.

Alongside the grant we were able to offer the expertise of the project's engagement workers and more widely the Partners and VIP as a whole. Examples of this included support to connect them with other community groups or individuals, signposting to other funding opportunities or sharing learning.

## **A small impact with a bigger halo effect**

The Partnership believed that small demonstrable impacts for our communities was a central part of what we needed to deliver.

Through these a halo effect is achieved, not just of the impact on the specific piece of work but the way that idea can spread or develop, be shared or replicated through networks and connections and the empowerment and engagement that is achieved by people seeing actual activity happen.

All of the equalities communities we work with feedback to us that they feel they are asked to comment, take part and contribute to research, consultations and surveys, and that many reports are produced but they don't often see how this translates directly to action or outcomes for their community.

By supporting small actions that result in something being delivered or happening at a community level we can help counter this feeling of cynicism that many in our communities feel in relation to actively giving their time and energy to engagement and consultation opportunities.



## Funded projects

This section profiles the projects funded across all five of the VIP Community Funds, and shows the range of work that was undertaken and the impact it had.

### **Black Minority Ethnic (BME) Communities Fund Delivered by The Care Forum**

#### **BME Fund Round 1**

#### **Humanitarian Bristol**

**Diversify Food Project** - The funding helped to buy cultural and religiously appropriate essential food items for vulnerable people in Bristol during the lockdown, including Halal & Kosher, to create food parcels for members of BME communities.

- Funding received - £250

Anira Khokhar from Humanitarian Bristol said:

“The food boxes helped families across the city, who were struggling to buy food to feed their families.

“The boxes consisted of food items which would see families through a week. The impact of being able to provide culturally appropriate food boxes not only gave the family sustenance, but gave them hope that there was an understanding around their cultural needs.”

#### **Quotes from service users**

'Your box has fed me and my family, I felt ashamed to ask for help, but through a friend I reached out to your group, and you never made me feel bad that I had lost my job - Thank You' - Anon

'I wanted to say thank you for this wonderful food box with so many recipe ideas that I am exciting to make for my children. As a single mother, and having lost my part time job I was only able to make basic food for them. The halal meat will get us through at least a week and some delicious meals, and bring a smile to my children's faces' – Anon

**Consultation on Food and Mental Health** –A consultation with South Asian Women around the link between food and mental health including online focus groups, 1-2-1 telephone and face to face interviews, and ‘in the park’ sessions.

- Funding received - £500

The consultation highlighted the impact traditions and cultural foods have on this particular community’s mental health.

Examples include the lack of mental health services that they would be comfortable accessing due to the fact many were not culturally appropriate, and that their relationship with food and traditions were never understood or acknowledged. There was a clear conflict between the types of food eaten in their community compared to the nutritional and health advice from services.

The consultation has provided enough information for Humanitarian Bristol to develop resources and activities aimed at South Asian Women to accommodate their needs, bringing in their own cultural ideas and understanding of food, with the western take on nutrition, healthy food, and mental health wellbeing.

### **Quotes from participants**

“I never really thought about the link between our traditional food remedies and its many health benefits.”

“These sessions have been helpful, it was great to share some sensitive information around mental health and find ways to preoccupy myself with creating recipes that others shared which has supported them during the depression. I understand there is no quick cure, but there are ways to manage mental health conditions and food is a great way to discuss such a taboo subject”

## **Imayla CIC**

**Stepping Out** - The funding supported the running of a series of guided walks which enabled families to connect with nature and take exercise but also go ‘outside of their comfort zone’ into areas of the city they would not normally visit.

- Funding received - £250

Exploring inner city green spaces the walks were designed to highlight nature as well as interesting sights and places along the way. Bus stops and cycle paths were pointed out to help participants understand how they can get from where they live to the green spaces as alternatives to walking the whole way.

The family focus allowed parents to bring younger children along and provided an opportunity for different generations to do something together. The walks highlighted that a lot of people who took part didn't have access to outside spaces due to living in flats, but also hadn't know about (or for some felt comfortable) accessing the cities green spaces.

## **Sadaqa Group**

**Health and Wellbeing at Sadaqa** – Supporting single mothers to look after their own health and wellbeing, by reducing isolation and enabling access to group exercise sessions.

- Funding received - £250

The funding paid for a fitness instructor to run online zoom dance fitness sessions during the lockdown for five weeks. Participants feedback how much they enjoyed the activity and the relief it provided from the stress of the Pandemic. For some it was the only exercise they took during lockdown due to being scared to even go out for a walk. A Whatsapp group was set up for communication about the class and keeping in touch and volunteers who supported the participants with any IT issues.

## **St Werburgs Community Association (SWCA)**

**Capturing Stories of BAME people**, part of SWCA's 50th Anniversary – Engaging with people from BAME backgrounds where the Centre has been a significant place in their lives.

- Funding received - £250

The funding was used to help cover the cost of a photographer to take participants portraits and recorded their stories.

### **Quotes from participants**

"It [SWCA] is the first place I came to when I moved to Bristol six years ago. I made all my friends here and am so grateful for it. I like so many things about this community centre, the friendly staff, the interesting classes, free computer access. I love especially the Xmas Dinner Festive Friends."

"I started using the Centre in the 70's. It has always been a place that brought people from far and wide."

## **BME Fund Round 2**

### **Asian Health and Social Care Association Ltd**

**One Click Away** - working with South Asian Elders. Due to lockdown/s service users living on their own became isolated and lonely. Tablets were brought so service users could use them to keep in touch with each other and staff.

- Funding received - £500

Those taking part felt having the tablet and the support in how to use it, eased the pressure of being isolated. By including those who already had their own tablets or desk tops they were able to increase the circle of people talking, feeling valued and continuing to be part of the day centre during lockdown.

#### **Quotes from participants**

“It was great to actually see faces and talk to staff, we talked about days gone by at the day centre”

“I played a singing game with one of my peers, we both sang together at the day centre on events before Covid, I thought I will never sing again”

“As the manager I was able to see our service users who were more at risk from Covid and get things done for them just by offering answers to their questions, I felt relieved to see them and update their records accordingly”

### **Black2Nature**

**BME nature and tree planting days** – Taking BME individuals and families from inner-city Bristol to the Chew Valley, giving them the opportunity to connect with nature by planting tree saplings, providing transport, lunch and snacks.

- Funding received - £500
- You can hear Ayesha Ahamed-Mendoza talk about the project in our short film [at this link](#).

Four tree planting days were held with 500 saplings planted in March 2021. The grant was used towards the cost of transport, lunch and staff costs. Attendees talked about how the event helped them to overcome anxiety and stress that had built up during the three lockdowns.

The days focused on BME communities and under-represented groups from inner-city Bristol, Black2Nature had identified they were often excluded from engagement

with the natural environment. The days were also designed to show how access to nature can improved mental health and wellbeing as well as physical health.

The days helped participants understand how to use the outdoors to help their mental and physical health and understand mental health resilience. Some families came and planted a tree for someone who had died of COVID-19 or in memory of a family member, they and talked about how that this had helped them with their grief.

### **Quote from participant**

“I wasn’t looking forward to going to the tree planting day, as I like playing games on my phone and using Tik Tok. I had lots of fun, getting into digging the holes, plating the trees and then running around with other kids, going on a big tree swing and going in a big stream and waterfall. I loved it and like going for walks now.” Laila age 12

## **Coexist Community Kitchen CIC**

**Speak & Eat** – Working with people who are refugee or asylum seekers teaching cookery and ESOL. The programme is eight weeks long and each week a participant is supported to design a session to teach about and cook food from their culture. The second half of the session is with a qualified ESOL teacher and everyone then eats together.

- Funding received - £500

Due to COVID-19 they were only able to have six participants take part, however the positive impact of the course sees benefits for the families and other people in the participants lives. The course is designed to help participants build resilience and enable them to manage other obstacles that are facing. The programmes strong focus on sharing knowledge and feeling respect allows people to feel dignity which they have seen helps people go on to better cope with the other challenges faced by those in the refugee and asylum system.

### **Quote from Participant**

“I think the kitchen is a very friendly place, I enjoyed working with the team so much, and the food was delicious. On a scale from 1-10 it was a 10! I met people at Speak & Eat who [I don’t] normally meet everyday and I like to say it was a pleasure to work there’- anon.

## Integrate UK

**Breaking Barriers Tutoring Sessions** - Supporting young people from Black and Asian Communities - BAME university students (18-24) gain paid work experience delivering remote tutoring in core subjects to younger service users whose educational attainment has been severely impacted by the pandemic.

- Funding received - £500

Early in the first lockdown, Intergrate became aware that a large number of their school age service users, due to digital exclusion or family or care responsibilities were not able to progress their studies or were not receiving the support they need to do so.

Their higher education service users were also being impacted in terms of isolation, their mental health and financial struggles. In response they set up a tutoring programme where older members at university provided one-to-one sessions for young people. The support for young people not only helped their attainment and future prospects, it improved mental health and reduced the pressures on parents who were not always able to support their child's learning.

Delivering the remote tutoring benefited the university students who were isolated in halls of residence, suffering financially and lacking a sense of purpose.

One of the student tutors has since decided to pursue a career in teaching because he enjoyed the experience so much.

“Thank you and to Intergrate for helping my kids get through the most difficult time with their studies. The tutoring was impossible for me to fund for three kids over so many subjects. Because of your support my son have been accepted to three universities and will embark an accounting degree.”

-From a Somali mother

Some of the young people supported by Intergrate



## **RA Cultural Consultancy Services and Tours**

### **Alkebuland in Four, a basic introduction to ancient Afrikan History**

– a free four week course investigating Ancient Afrikan History and its relationship to Bristol, the South West and Wales.

- Funding received - £500

Participants learnt about Ancient Afrikan (Alkebuland) history - before enslavement and its connection to Bristol and the South West and as well as about Bristol and the transatlantic trafficking of enslaved Afrikans. The course grew out of a community desire to gain understanding and empowerment from learning about Afrikan culture and history that pre-dated enslavement and western colonialism. The course had a strong 'pass on the learning' focus to encourage participants to share their learning and insights with family and friends.

### **Quote from Participant**

"It's great that this course is available and exactly what is needed within the Afrikan Heritage Community to further knowledge of self. I found the course to be informative and very interesting particularly when space was enabled and therefore enriched with the experiences and knowledge of the other participants on the course."

Nanyamka Yetunde

# **Disabled People's Fund**

## **Delivered by WECIL**

### **WECIL VIP Community Fund Panel**

As part of their community fund VIP Delivery Partner WECIL wanted to ensure that the grant selection and awards process was led by disabled people, and that this could also be a personal empowerment and development opportunity for those taking part. VIP Funding outside of their ring-fenced Community Fund allocation was used to support this work.

Their goal was to:

- Give power to ordinary disabled people (i.e. not WECIL staff, community leaders/activists, Third Sector professionals or Trustees)
- Support volunteers to make decisions as a group.
- Provide an educational experience.

Five Bristol based volunteers were recruited for the WECIL VIP Community Fund Panel, all of the panel members were disabled people.

### **Empowerment and development**

The group attended six sessions

1. Disability Equality Training and 'meet and greets'
2. General information about the project, Q&A
3. Timeline and explanation of the scoring process and deadlines
4. Initial open discussion
5. Decision making
6. Reflections

These sessions were designed to both empower them as individuals as well as giving them the skills needed to undertake the application assessment and selection process.

Approaching the grant selection and awarding this way took a significant amount of time and staff resource – more than initially estimated. It demonstrated that to make an experience like this 'real' and meaningful the group needed flexibility, time, and space to participate in a meaningful way and the organisational support to do this.



## Quote from panel member

“From a young age, I received a variety of support for my dyslexia from a wide range of organisations. It is partly thanks to this support I have been able to attend my first choice university doing a course I love. I would like nothing more than to support a variety of these organisations help people receive life-enhancing assistance that I was so fortunate to receive, while also aiding my personal development and knowledge of a wide range of disabilities.”

## Funded projects

### AIM (Art in Motion)

**The Sketchbook Project** - AIM issued sketchbooks to disabled individuals and groups across Bristol along with accessible worksheets suggesting ideas and themes to help them get started.

- Funding received - £400

The project was designed to provide a meaningful structure of support, allowing individuals to create a body of artwork, receive feedback and be part of a wider network with the potential of sharing their artwork in the future. There was also the opportunity to share the finished sketchbooks as part of AIM's Mobile Art Resource.

The following photos of participant and their sketchbooks were sent in.



## **Growing People**

**Growing People** was set up in the first lockdown to empower people who were isolated with the tools they needed to engage with nature and their community through gardening. The project planned to distribute sustainable growing kits to people who were experiencing isolation and identify as disabled and encourage them to join weekly Zoom 'Grow Meetups'. Unfortunately due to ill health the project was unable to run.

## **Khaas**

**IT equipment fund** - Khaas is a unique in the South West in providing services specifically for children with disabilities and additional needs from Black Minority Ethnic (BME) communities and their carers and families.

- Funding received - £400

Khaas delivers services to improve the lives of BME families with disabled children. Khaas received a grant to enable them to purchase a much needed laptop. The laptop meant that they were able to work meeting COVID guidelines and continue to provide the service and keep in touch with their service users and carers.

## **Paul's Places' Advisory Group**

**Capturing the experiences of disabled people during COVID-19** – the project recorded the experiences of disabled people during the COVID-19 lockdowns - what it has meant to them and how it has impacted on them to help ensure that disabled voices are heard. The grant money helped fund bringing in professional expertise to work with the Advisory Group to collect and record the interviews.

- Funding received - £400

The Advisory Group is made up of people who are supported by Paul's Place and they play an active role in planning and decision making for the charity, with a link directly to the Board of Trustees. The project empowered those participating, allowing their voices to be heard, speaking about experiences that will resonate with so many people. The recording are also being used as an educational tool to bring to life some of the challenges faced by physically disabled adults and carers, especially the impact of loneliness and isolation.

### **Quotes from participants**

"It's been nice to get my view on things across. I hope in some way maybe I can help other members [of Paul's Place]. How we are feeling the members, is a massively

important thing, it's important to say what we're feeling and thinking. To have a voice not to be put in a corner and just sit there. It's nice to have a voice now and to use it for a change." Participant

"I can pass these recordings on to other people and it would be interesting to know how other people have felt during this time. But I think you can do deep thinking and you realise what's important and what isn't important. It's made me value things more and I think my son is the same... I think it's just enjoying the basics of family life." Participant

## **Umbrella Music**

**Singing for Wellness** - accessible online wellbeing singing group for disabled people in Bristol via Zoom. Session included learning about singing techniques, along with learning well known songs and/or songs suggested by the group.

- Funding received - £400
- You can hear Kate Staniforth talk about her project in our short film [at this link](#).

Kate Staniforth (who runs and delivers Umbrella Music's work) reported back:

"I learnt a lot about the positives and how well singing for wellness can work online. It was great to be able to build up a rapport and get to know people over the internet and I enjoyed creating a safe and fun space for the clients to enjoy singing and it was wonderful to see people come back every week developing and benefitting from the group – and wonderful to learn that you can build a community and close connections online. People were very forthcoming with song suggestions so it felt very peer led which was a lovely collaborative way to run the sessions.

"One attendee came every week – engaged throughout and suggested songs and warm ups for us to sing. His parent sent me the following feedback 'C is so happy. He really enjoys the singing group and is excited to come every week'

"One of the attendees has now joined my in-person singing group, it has been great to see how she has grown in confidence."

## **People of Faith Fund Delivered by Ammerdown**

### **Black2Nature**

**Walk 4 Faith** – a series of videos were made with faith leaders in different BME community languages, explaining the importance of looking after our health, including our mental health, and encouraging regular walking.

- Funding received - £600

### **Bethel Church Bristol**

**Young Adults and Seniors Re-engagement and Fellowship** - During COVID, keeping the community connected was vitally important. The church had already started to raise funds and supply community members with a means of communication. The funding enabled three tablets to be bought and training and support given in particular to young adults and seniors.

- Funding received - £300

Volunteers from the congregation worked together to secure funding to support members who would not otherwise have been able to continue attending the online fellowship sessions. Ensuring individuals and families were not digitally excluded, isolated or cut off from the support of the congregation was a priority.

Those receiving the tablets were also given training and support so they could use zoom and YouTube to stay connected. VIP was one of two pieces of funding they secured to reach their goal and the congregation added to the funds to purchase screen and case protectors for the tablets to increase their longevity.

### **Bristol Methodist Centre**

**A safe service in times of COVID** - The funding was used to purchase PPE and equipment to enable them to continue to run a take away meal service for those in need and the homeless that was safe.

- Funding received - £600

Many of the centres guests (service users) were not vaccinated, and were vulnerable themselves, so it was not safe to continue to run the service as a day centre and hub so the Centre adapted to providing takeaway meals for the day and food parcels. They served from a hatch with some staff working outside so that they could have

conversations/ give information and advice and support whilst the guests were queueing for food.

Janet George from the Bristol Methodist Centre said:

“Between 30 March 2020 the end of August 2021 we served around 1,200 meals. About 30% of the guests we served during this period were new to the Centre. They had either moved to Bristol shortly before or during lockdown, or were residents of Bristol who had not needed to use the service before. Some were older people who mainly came for food parcels. Others took food back to people who could not make it to the Centre, because they were afraid to go to shops.

“Our user group is ethnically diverse, reflecting the diversity of inner city Bristol. The grant of £600 was vital in keeping the service going, especially as other grants and donations decreased during lockdown, although many individuals gave generous sums.

“Through the time we ran the service this way we learnt the value of regular one to one conversations in the queue and all staff feel that they know guests much better now and that there is more trust from the guests, because we did not close and abandon them.”

### **Quotes from participants**

“Remaining open offered a continuity of service that was essential in reassuring individuals who were clearly alarmed about the unprecedented events of lockdown.”  
Chris Keegan (Staff member)

“Having PPE gave me the confidence to continue to help those most in need and signpost essential services during a very difficult time.” Deacon Corinne Brown (Staff member)

“10 out of 10, without the service we would have been without water, but it’s also been nice to have friendly chats and get some emotional support when we most needed it” Anon (Guest at the Centre)

### **Photos of staff and the funded service**



## **Bristol Sikh Temple**

### **Live streaming of programmes and services to the congregation -**

The grant was used towards the purchase of equipment and facilities to enable live streaming of the temples services/sermons through social media.

- Funding received - £300

The Bristol Sikh Temple has a congregation of around 1,000 with a significant number of them being elderly. The funding allowed the Temple to offer a route to service when there was no other way during the lockdowns and the pandemic, and they had around 100 people engaged with each streamed service/sermon.

In their report they highlighted that: 'being open and receptive to social media has been a great benefit, something that we would normally be hesitant about, and might not be associated with temples and religious organisations as it is not traditional. However, I think embracing technology is definitely providing benefits now and will continue to in the future.'

## **God's House International Centre**

### **Supporting ex-offenders and single parents during the pandemic –**

The funding was used to support five single parents and five ex-offenders. The single parents helped were on zero-hour contracts and could not work during the pandemic. The ex-offenders normally do piece jobs to supplement their income but could not during the pandemic. They recipients were given supermarket vouchers, the funding allowed the Centre to provide an extra voucher to each family.

- Funding received - £600
- You can hear Pastor Osien Sibanda and recipient Laila talk about the project in our short film [at this link](#).

In setting up the support the Centre realised that when working with families from different cultures whose food is different from that normally donated to foodbanks or provided in food boxes, food can be wasted or has to be given away by the recipient because they do not culturally eat it or know what to do with it. Giving out supermarket vouchers instead was the Centre's solution. They realised that by knowing what supermarkets are close to where the recipients lived they could provide a voucher for a shop close by allowing them to do their shopping without having to pay for transport. The Centre developed a database to enable them to do this.

"I learnt that it is such a blessing to belong to a caring community and to share with others. The vouchers helped the recipients not only financially, but also helped them

mentally and contributed to their overall well-being. I also learnt that people could find it hard to reach out and ask for help in times of need, so we needed to be proactive in building relationships with others so that those in need would feel more comfortable to ask for help.

“Finally, I learnt that it was not only the well-being of recipients that was improved, but our well-being in the welfare department was positively affected also - we were happier and deeply satisfied with helping in this way.” Member of the Centre’s welfare team.

## **UWE Multi-Faith Chaplaincy**

**Talk Corner for International Students** - The Chaplaincy developed a space specifically for International Students to connect during the pandemic.

- Funding received - £600

The funding was used to setup a peer support group for international students facilitated by the voluntary Chaplain. The work to set everything up has been completed with the first meeting planned to take place at the beginning of November 2021 and then weekly.

Working on the project has highlighted how many students suffer from loneliness and anxiety and experience cultural challenges – some not leaving their rooms. The funds have enabled the creation of a safe space where students can receive support.

## **LGBTQ+ Fund**

### **Delivered by OTR**

## **Brigstowe and Freedom Youth**

**HIV through a Generation** – An intergenerational panel discussion with British Sign Language interpretation added.

- Funding received - £250

The event was put on as part of Bristol's local HIV Charity Brigstowe's World AIDS Day events 2020. It brought together young and older LGBTQ+ people to candidly discuss all topics relating to HIV and reflect on their experiences of HIV and AIDS in the 80's & 90's, and the modern day – including the impact of COVID-19 on LGBTQ+ people.

## **Bristol Bisons**

**Making in-person training COVID safe** – the funding allowed the Bisons (the South West's first inclusive and queer friendly rugby team) to resume in person training in a careful, safe, and managed way within covid restrictions and expand their trained first aiders.

- Funding received - £250

Being able to come back to in person training was a priority for the club. England RFU guidance had to be met before the club could return to in person practice. VIP funding covered hand sanitizer and cleaning products to enable this, and restocking the first aid kit. The VIP funding is also being used to subsidise the cost of training for an enlarged first aid team of volunteers and players. This will ensure at all training sessions and future matches there will be at least two qualified first aiders to provide appropriate cover as the team membership continues to increase.

As part of their ongoing commitment to using Rugby as a platform for creating an inclusive, respectful, and supporting LGBTQ+ communities in Bristol, the [Bisons' took part in a national campaign "Rugby for All" in April 2021](#). This campaign involved the Bisons' championing trans\* rights and inclusion in Rugby and calling out England RFU on their discriminatory new policy against trans\* and non-binary people in the sport.



## **Lara Lalemi, Sharifa Whitney James - Creative Tuition Collective and Kiki Bristol**

**Bristol Black Joy Project** - Working with LGBTQ+ black people and people of colour, The project interviewed individuals about their stories and their experiences living in Bristol to produce a short film and presentation to be taken in to schools to raise awareness of the experiences of this marginalised group.

- Funding received - £250

The target group for the film is school students 14+. The first session took place at City Academy School engaging with students, all from a Black, Asian, Minority and Ethnic (BAME) background with some identifying as LGBTQ+.

The students feedback illustrated the importance of seeing two representative QTIBPOC figures and hearing their journeys into becoming queer with pride. One student had the courage to approach the team and ask for opportunities with Creative Tuition Collective and Kiki Bristol. They have been able to help this individual to uplift their own voice.

The VIP funding enabled the project to incorporate two spoken word artists, Leila King and Travis Alabanza. These artists helped carry the narrative of the video and deliver the message of inclusivity and community. The organisers hadn't previously worked from concept to editing on a short promotional film, the VIP funding helped them to develop these skills so they can communicate their future messages more efficiently and effectively.

Lara Lalemi one of the organiser said:

"A project like this has not be started in Bristol, until now, and is filling the representative and supportive roles young QTIPOC need but do not often have close to them. We would also like to offer this session to other schools interested in supporting their students in this way."

### **Quotes from participants**

'Thank you so much for your inspirational session today. I really do feel that our students got a lot from it. The session was well structured which enabled the students to stay engaged and you guys rocked the presentation!' The school's LGBT+ organiser

'I really liked it...As a person who is QTPOC it's not easy, especially when your parents are judgemental. Learning about the history was inspirational, as I now know that there were people just like me all through history' Student

'The session was empowering and enlightening. There are lots of white faces at Pride and it was so nice to see and hear people of colour speaking about their experiences and the history of QTPOC people' Student

'I found it comforting to know there is a society for you, where you can belong' Student

Images show the project filming and the speaker presenting it at the school



## Kiki Bristol

A Night With KiKi and... showcasing and connecting queer BIPOC voices in lockdown via three online events curated to be expressions of the queer community's beauty, a refuge for people to escape to for a while and a way to let LGBTQ+ people know that they aren't isolated.

- Funding received - £250
- You can find the catch ups on [KiKi's Instagram account](#)

As well as providing comfort and community, the project also highlighted the lack of representation for LGBTQ+ people of colour, as well as the impact of coronavirus on black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people in the UK.

The featured performers were, Karteer Mugler, a voguer from London, Manly Mannington a Bristol-based drag king/queen founder of the House of Mannington, and Carbon Monoxide a Bristol based drag queen.

## Let's talk gay sex and drugs community group

**Queer Sex and Drugs** – online events using zoom to discuss feelings around lockdown, the target was a queer audience struggling with emotional issues during this difficult time.

- Funding received - £250

## LGBTQ+ Faces of Bristol

**Representation through visibility** – creating a photobook and virtual exhibition to raise awareness of LGBTQ+ people and communities in Bristol, experiences and engage with a wide diversity and demographic of LGBTQ+ people. The idea behind the project is to chart and celebrate LGBTQ+ people's lives and experiences.

- Funding received - £250
- You can hear Karen from the project talk about it in [our short film at this link](#).

Karen who set up the project said:

"Our main takeaway of success this year has been that this project is still growing, there are still so many new avenues to explore and with the help of current and future volunteers, we are confident that this project is going to be beneficial to Bristol; not only to the members of the LGBTQ+ community, but also to allies and especially to visitors and future residents who need a welcoming LGBTQ+ friendly city to live in.

"There is still so much work to be done in ensuring that everyone has positive representation (especially those who are misrepresented in the media and even those who are never seen) and this will continue to be our main goal."

## LGBTQ+ Fitness

**Inclusive fitness for LGBTQ+ communities** – the project encourages more LGBTQ+ people to feel confident in sports and physical activities. Particularly focussing on reducing isolation, improving health, challenging myths and stigmas of LGBTQ+ people in sport and better connecting the range of LGBTQ+ sports and wellbeing groups on offer in Bristol.

- Funding received - £250

The combination of exercise and community the classes offer provided a safe and supportive space for participants. COVID-19 impacted on the group's ability to meet in person with a move to online. LGBTQ+ Fitness also worked in partnership with Terrence Higgins Trust Bristol, to created more seated exercises, such as seated aerobics and seated Tai Chi to benefit participants.

## Outstories Bristol

**LGBTQ+ stories of lockdown** – gathering the oral history of the LGBTQ+ communities in Bristol's experiences of COVID-19.

- Funding received - £250
- The interviews are available on the [Outstories website](#) as well as acting as a archive of LGBTQ+ peoples experience during the pandemic.

The impact of COVID-19 on social, information, connection and support for LGBTQ+ people in Bristol was significant. Outstories were able to use the funding to support volunteers so that they could conduct interviews to record the communities experiences of the pandemic.

## Tom Marshman and Theatre Bristol

**Bubble Baths for the Soul** - providing support to LGBTQ+ artists who have been directly impacted by the pandemic. The project offered wellbeing support, networking, and LGBTQ+ targeted therapies for a six week period.

- Funding received - £500 (joint bid)

The program provided talking group therapies and therapeutic techniques and practices to help participants build a toolkit of survival techniques through group work.

Participants feedback that it helped them feel a sense of belonging to the LGBTQ+ community, others commented that developing work around allyship has helped them experience the different intersections of the LGBTQ+ experience. One artist identified the project as helping them to raise the bar of what they expect when performing by refusing poor conditions, and how that might directly support conditions improving for other artists. The program helped them to set what their boundaries are and create a space that is respectful of all peoples' needs.

### Participant quote

“To hear the parallels with other performers and writers, and how we all experience 'the system' of venues, funding etc, and where there are common things we struggle with which maybe then are things that the venues or programmers need to change - and to feel more empowered to set boundaries and discuss these issues, since I know I'm not the only one who has trouble with it.”

# **Older People's Fund**

## **Delivered by Bristol Older People's Forum (BOPF)**

### **Brave Bold Drama**

**Beside the Sea** - creation of an audio story remotely with care home residents who are either living with early stage dementia but are still verbal, and care home residents who aren't living with dementia. The residents developed the story and then record themselves using simple voice recorders, which were then posted back to Brave Bold Drama to edit with sound effects and music then post them back a CD of themselves performing the story for them to enjoy and share with family and friends.

- Funding received - £400

### **Eastside Community Trust**

**Easton Tea and Talk online** – Working with the centre's young volunteers to safely show older people how they can access a weekly session on Zoom, facilitated by their community engagement worker with sessions of chat, news, memories and shared interests.

- Funding received - £266

At the Cuppa Connect session at Easton Community Centre residents have engaged in various conversations and have also taken the time to support one other with the use of their phone.

### **Life Cycle UK**

**Silver Cyclists 'Cycle Buddy'** – the project matched volunteers who were confident cyclists to others in their local neighbourhood who would benefit from unlocking the benefits of cycling but didn't feel confident cycling in Bristol.

- Funding received - £400

The project not only helped participants build their cycling confidence it also increased physical activity, improved mental wellbeing and reduced social isolation.

### **Quotes from Participants**

"Thank you so much for taking me on the ride yesterday - it helped my confidence tremendously"

“These groups’ help you get your foot on the ladder to improve and move on, I can’t be thankful enough, mentally I’m much better and health wise I’ve had quite a transformation.”

“Polly (a Cycle Buddy volunteer) is a great ambassador for your scheme. Such a really lovely lady, who made the two hours fly-by”

Life cycle participants on a ride



## RSVP West

**Schools COVID-19 Project** - finding a COVID safe way for their volunteers, and the schools that host them, to continue the support and cross-generational contact that volunteering in schools provides.

- Funding received - £400

Identifying that many of the disadvantaged pupils they work with had fallen behind in their work during the pandemic RSVP West were able to find ways to allow their volunteers to keep working with the young people.

## St Werburghs Community Association

**Adapting our activities for COVID-19** – ensuring people can still take part in social activities run by the Association to counter isolation and impact positively on older people's wellbeing.

- Funding received - £400
- You can hear Mavis who uses the Associations services talk about the project in [our short film at this link](#).

The funding was used to adapt their Tai Chi, Befriending and Festive Friends activities to make them COVID safe. Participants benefitted by having social contact, merriment and cheer, which impacted positively on their wellbeing, feeling more connected to their community and less isolated.

Six weekly Tai Chi classes were run, also acting as a mutual support group. The classes provided physical health benefits, particularly around improving balance, strength and stamina of those participating. For most participants it was the only weekly activity they did.

The Befriending Service provided weekly calls to 10 older people between January 2021 and mid-April 2021 to help combat isolation through regular contact and support.

Festive Friends is normally the Association's Christmas Meal for 100 isolated older people held at the Community Centre. They were able to remodel it for delivery. All participants received a roast dinner with pudding, menu choices and options catering for their needs, they were accompanied by wrapped gifts, cards and letters from primary school children, wreaths and spring flowers, and most importantly a door stop chat with a team member or volunteer. The Association said in their report "We were overwhelmed by responses, 'thank you' cards and follow up calls from our guests who absolutely loved it."

## **The 50 Plus Crowd at Bristol Drugs Project**

**Tacking digital exclusion** - increasing access to digital technology to help reduce isolation, secure greater access to wellbeing activities and building confidence to harness online alcohol or other drug use recovery tools.

- Funding received - £399

The funding allowed the purchase of two tablets and data and provide members with IT help and advice through COVID safe in-person workshops. The project was designed to raise their confidence in using technology and encourage those participating to be able to use publicly accessible equipment such as libraries, or to invest in their own tablet. Members who had their own technology but needed help to use it were also able to take part and benefit.

They were also able to use this project's initial period to look at greater connectivity opportunities for the Fifty Plus Crowd and the 20+% of those over 50 in drug and alcohol treatment in Bristol. This allowed BDP's Communication Lead to work with Hubbub to access 20 smart phones for the Fifty Plus Crowd and the service manager's expression of interest for laptops and dongles on offer from BCC secured 30 which are available to the Fifty Plus Crowd or others over 50 in BDP's services.

## Wildwood Arts

**Chat Back Pen-Pals** - the Chat Back project pairs a school and a care home to allow young people and older adults to spend time together developing friendships through exploring creative activities, finding out about each other through facilitated 'chats' using different prompts and starting points and usually culminates with a tea party event and exhibition of art work they've collaboratively made.

- Funding received - £400

The funding allowed the development of a remote version of the project with Wildwood's community partners pairing primary school children aged 8-11 as pen-pal correspondents with older people in care homes, sheltered accommodation and those living independently with and without home care.

## Zion Bristol Ltd

**Memories Cafe Music Project** - providing members of Zion's memories cafe with an MP3 player that will be preloaded with their own favourite music.

- Funding received - £400

Zion worked with 'Playlist for Life' to provide a positive experience through music for their members, in order to try and combat the isolation during periods of lockdown and the winter months when they could be prevented from attending the in person Memories Cafe sessions. Over two decades of scientific research has shown that listening to a personal playlist can make a significant difference to quality of life for people affected by dementia or memory loss.

They held their first session in the garden where the MP3 players were discussed, after handling the example MP3 players it was decided by the group that their phones would be just as helpful for music and those who did not have a smart phone would be happier with a digital radio to use.

They adapted the project to provide three digital radios to those members who requested them and gave headphones to all the members of the group so they could listen to music on their phones at devices at home. They held two sessions looking at how to use digital devices and music downloads and podcasts.

With the remaining funding they are holding two more music sessions for the group, a Xmas carol session with a choir leader and a sea shanty session.



Appendix 1 – example application form from the BME Fund an online version was also available



### **Voice and Influence Partnership (VIP) BME Community Fund application form**

The Voice and Influence Partnership BME Community Fund is open to Bristol based projects, community groups or individuals working with BME communities in the city. Six individual grants of £500 are available to be used to help address needs and issues that are currently impacting or affecting the communities you work with.

This could be through a one-off piece of work, be part funding for a new project, or to help support work you are already undertaking.

Applications open on [insert date] and you need to have submitted your application by the **closing deadline 9am [insert date]**.

**If you haven't already, please read the application information and guidance document before you fill in this form.** You can download a copy at [www.voiceandinfluence.org.uk](http://www.voiceandinfluence.org.uk)

You can complete this form and email it to us, post it back or [use our online application form](#).

To submit your application, or to get in touch if you have any questions, please use the contact details below.

**Email:** [VIPadmin@thecareforum.org.uk](mailto:VIPadmin@thecareforum.org.uk)

**Phone:** [insert number]

**Post:** VIP BME Community Fund, The Care Forum, The Vassall Centre, Gill Avenue, Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 2QQ

The form starts on the next page

## Voice and Influence Partnership (VIP) BME Community Fund application form

The application form will expand as you enter your information.

<b>Name of group or organisation</b>
<b>Which BME community do you support or work with?</b>
<b>Is your organisation based in Bristol? (Please answer yes or no)</b>
<b>Please provide a brief description of what your group or organisation does</b>
<b>Please provide a link to your social media platforms and website if you have them, or provide evidence of the existence of your group and its work.</b> If you want to send in examples such as images or promotional materials please only send a few examples. The quality of the evidence not the quantity provided is important.
<b>What will you call this VIP BME Community Fund project? If applying for part funding for another project what is that project called?</b>
<b>Please provide an outline of what this funding will be used for and how you will spend the money.</b>
<b>How will individuals from the BME community you work with benefit from this project?</b>  <b>How many people in total do you think will benefit from it?</b>
<b>When will this event/activity take place (please provide a timeline – start date to end date)</b>

--

**Your contact details**

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Job role</b> (if applicable)	
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Phone/Mobile</b>	

The Voice and Influence Partnership is led by The Care Forum and is funded by Bristol City Council. You can find more information about how we protect your privacy, store, and use the information you provide by [following this link](#).

**I give consent to The Care Forum to store and process my data in order to allow them to process my application. I understand that I can change or delete any data they hold about me on request.**

**Please answer yes or no:**

**Signed** (you can type your name in if sending back electronically):

**Date:**



## **Application information and guidance – please read before applying**

### **Voice and Influence Partnership (VIP) BME Community Fund**

The second round of the Voice and Influence Partnership BME Community Fund is now open for applications from Bristol based projects, community groups or individuals working with Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities in the city.

Six individual grants of £500 are available to help address the needs and issues affecting the communities you work with.

We have kept the requirements and application process simple so that applying is quick and easy.

You just need to be able to explain what you plan to do with your grant, how it will benefit the people you work with, and provide some evidence so we can be confident you will be able to do what you have said you will.

You can use the money for a one-off piece of work, as part funding for a new project, or to help support work you are already doing.

**The deadline for applications is 9 am [insert date].**

#### **You need to be able to meet the following criteria to apply:**

- Your project or group needs to work with or support one or more BME community and be based in Bristol.
- The Voice and Influence Partnership supports people aged 18+ so your proposal should be one that works with or supports people in this age group. We are not able to fund projects that are mainly for ages 17 and younger.
- You do not need to be a constituted or formally registered with Companies House to apply.
- You do need to be able to show us evidence that your project exists, what work/events/activities it has undertaken and who the project/group is aimed at.

- You will need to have either completed the proposed work/spent your grant on what was agreed, or be able to evidence that you have started the funded work by [insert date].

Below are some examples of why you might want to apply to the fund, your application doesn't need to directly relate to any of them – as long as you feel you have a good reason to apply you can put in an application.

### **Examples of why you might apply**

- You have identified a need in your community and wish to start a new service or develop an existing one and the grant will help you do this.
- Due to COVID-19 your group has lost funding or needs some extra funding to help you continue to provide a service to your community.
- You needed to change the way you work, for example moving activities or services online. Or you have identified a piece of equipment or technology that will make a difference to the work you do or the number of people you could reach.
- You have an idea you feel will benefit your community and the grant will help you develop this idea.

### **How to apply**

You can apply by completing our [simple online application form](#), or by filling in and sending back a paper or electronic application form either by post or email.

If you do not have a copy of the application form you can download one from [www.voiceandinfluence.org.uk](http://www.voiceandinfluence.org.uk) or contact us to request one using the contact details at the end of this document.

We recommend reading the application form all the way through before filling it in. We are only able to accept completed forms.

If you need information in a different format, need support in completing the application form, or have any questions please contact us using the details at the end of this document.

We will let you know if your application is successful by [insert date]. If you are not successful and would like feedback please contact us and we can provide this.

### **If you are successful and are awarded a grant**

- We will contact you to arrange a meeting to discuss how we can support your work. We will explain what we will need from you as well as any reporting and forms we may need you to complete.
- You will be asked to sign a Grant Funding Agreement and we will then be able to transfer the funds to you.
- We will check in with you regularly during the period your grant covers to see how things are going and to provide support for you and help promote the work you are doing where possible.
- We will also talk to you about how to promote The Voice and Influence Partnership and our work, where appropriate, as part of the funding.

### **What we would like from you at the end of the project;**

- A short statement about the impact of the grant funding – this could include what you were able to achieve, how many activities or individuals you were able to help/support, what the outcomes/impact of the work was for your community.
- A case study highlighting the impact of the funding – this can be written, filmed or a voice recording.
- We will arrange an end of funding meeting to talk about how the project went. We will also talk to you about any future plans you may have to develop your group or activities that have been inspired as a result the project or activity.

### **Deadlines**

- Applications open on: **[insert date]**
- Application deadline: **[insert date]**
- Successful applicants will be notified: **[insert date]**
- Grant awards will be distributed by: the **[insert date]**
- You will need to have either completed the proposed work/spent your grant on what was agreed, or be able to evidence that you have started the funded work by **[insert date]**

### **Apply by**

- [Completing our simple online application form.](#)
- Filling in and sending back a paper or electronic application form either by post or email using the details below.

If you do not have a copy of the application form you can download one from [www.voiceandinfluence.org.uk](http://www.voiceandinfluence.org.uk) or contact us to request one.

### **Contact details**

Please use these to submit your application if you are not using the online form, or to get in touch if you have any questions.

**Email:** [VIPadmin@thecareforum.org.uk](mailto:VIPadmin@thecareforum.org.uk)

**Phone:** [insert number of relevant staff member]

**Post:** VIP BME Community Fund, The Care Forum, The Vassall Centre, Gill Avenue, Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 2QQ

### **About the Voice and Influence Partnership**

The [Voice and Influence Partnership](#) is made up of leading equalities organisations and community champions from across Bristol. We work together to make sure our diverse communities are part of local decision making.

The partnership is for people who are: from a black, Asian or minority ethnic group, disabled, a member of a faith group, LGBTQ+ or over 55.

The Partnership is made up of Lead Partner [The Care Forum](#). Delivery Partners [The Ammerdown Centre](#), [Bristol Older People's Forum](#), [OTR Freedom](#) and [WECIL](#). Advisory Partners [Centre for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People](#), [SARI](#) and [VOSCUR](#).

The partnership is funded by Bristol City Council.

You can find out more about the Partnership by visiting our webpage [www.voiceandinfluence.org.uk](http://www.voiceandinfluence.org.uk)