

East Suffolk Community Partnership Board
Covid Impacts Task and Finish Group Report
March 1, 2021

Introduction and Background

1. The Covid Impacts Task and Finish Group has now met three times since it was formed - in August and October 2020 and, most recently, on February 5th, 2021. At its February meeting, the group reviewed all the material considered at its previous meetings about the impacts of Covid-19 in East Suffolk. This is summarised in the table attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
2. The table identifies different types of vulnerability as a result of Covid-19, provides a description/context for each, summarises existing activity and then outlines additional activity that could be supported by the Board.

Task and Finish Group Proposals

3. The Task and Finish Group focussed on the additional projects/activity and prioritised them in terms of potential funding from the Community Partnership Board. There were five categories:
 - Priority for funding for 2020/21 i.e. the balance currently left in the budget
 - Priority for funding in 2021/22
 - Existing CPB projects that would benefit from additional funding
 - Projects where it was felt that there were alternative sources of funding
 - Projects which do not require funding at this point
4. There were a number of projects that were seen as a priority by the Task and Finish Group but, given the proximity to the end of the financial year, have been identified as a priority for Quarter 1 of 2021/22. These projects will be developed further over the next three months and presented to the June meeting of the Board in the form of outcome proposals. These are as follows:
 - A package of activity around employment support and skills development, including volunteering as a pathway to work and skills development for specific target groups
 - Additional debt support work to supplement the SASS service offer
 - Additional funding for the Student Life Peer to Peer Mental Health First Aid project
 - Package of projects to reduce frailty and vulnerability in older people at home, including through digital support

5. The Task and Finish Group noted that there are five projects that have been funded by the Community Partnership Board over the last 18 months that would all benefit from additional funding:
 - VCSE Bounce Back Fund
 - Hidden Needs (Social Isolation and Loneliness) Fund
 - Grandpads – simplified tablets aimed at older people
 - East (Everyone Active, Supported, Together) Bags
 - Extend the East Suffolk Youth Employment Service (YES)
6. There are a number of projects that the Board identified as a priority, but which require staff resources, rather than financial resources, to implement. These include:
 - Three campaigns
 - ‘Deal with debt’
 - Ensure that people are accessing the support that is available to them through sources such as the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme and Suffolk Advice and Support Service
 - Promoting volunteering as one of the ‘5 Ways to Wellbeing’
 - East Suffolk ‘employment gateway’ website
 - Work with SODA to update our vulnerability mapping and further work to target support to vulnerable families using the Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT) software.
7. The Group also identified projects where they thought that there were better sources of funding than the Community Partnership Board:
 - Tablets for Covid patients in Ipswich and James Paget hospitals
 - Additional laptops for children and young people to supplement the school’s provision through Suffolk County Council
 - New Volunteer Suffolk portal.
8. Of the three projects that the Task and Finish Group identified as priorities for funding in the current financial year, the first – Domestic Abuse Community Champion training, aimed at community response groups and Good Neighbour Schemes (and anyone else out and about in communities) – is being developed as an East Suffolk pilot with existing funding through Suffolk Public Sector leaders so no funding is required from the Board although it will be developed under the Community Partnership and Community Safety Partnership umbrella.
9. The second project builds on a new initiative developed by Community Action Suffolk and is focussed around providing additional capacity in East Suffolk to identify, train and support a network of Covid-Support, Community and Digital Buddies through a programme called ‘Buddy Up’. The total cost of this project is £14,747 and the ask from the Board is £10,369. The details of the project are set out in the East Suffolk Buddy Up outcome proposal attached as Appendix 2 to this report.
10. Finally, the Task and Finish Group recommends that the balance of funding be allocated to two existing projects – the Grandpads project and the Bounce Back fund as a ‘top up’

to the funding already provided by the Board for these two projects to meet the huge demand for both of these projects. The outcome proposals for these projects have been considered and agreed by the Board at previous meetings.

11. It is proposed that £11,500 be allocated to lease a further 10 Grandpads for 2 years for East Suffolk residents, given that demand for these simplified tablets is outstripping supply and that there is clearly huge unmet demand in the District without, to date, any direct promotion to potential recipients and their friends and families. This would bring the total number of Grandpads in the District to 140 (jointly funded by the Board, East Suffolk Council and Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG). Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG has also funded 15 Grandpads specifically for people with Learning Disabilities and we are currently exploring their use for cancer patients with Norfolk and Waveney CCG.
12. It is proposed that the remaining balance of £20,131 be added to the current £125,000 pot for the Bounce Back Fund (which includes the £100,000 contribution already provided by the Board and £25,000 provided by East Suffolk Council). This will ensure that this vital support for community organisations extends further into the 2021/22 financial year. The aim of this funding is to enable community organisations in the District to 'open up' (once it is safe to do so) by helping them to access the equipment, PPE and resources to enable them to resume their activities confidently and safely. The demand for this fund is high – as reported to the last meeting of the Board - with over £100,000 of the current £125,000 pot allocated to a range of community groups including community buildings, organisations involving volunteers, youth groups, arts and sports groups.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

- a) consider the table attached as Appendix 1 which provide an overview of existing and potential responses to the impacts of Covid-19 in East Suffolk
- b) mandate the Task and Finish Group and partner organisations to develop the projects identified as a priority for 2021/22 funding from the Community Partnership Board and bring outcome proposals back to the June Board meeting
- c) allocate £10,369 towards the Buddy Up project as per the outcome proposal attached to this report as Appendix 2
- d) allocate the remaining £31,631 in the budget to the Grandpads project (£11,500) and the Bounce Back Fund (£20,131)

Nicole Rickard, Head of Communities

East Suffolk Council, on behalf of the Task and Finish Group