



Shaping the future of the Newcastle Fund

Call for Evidence
Closes 12th October 2016

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1. Introduction

Newcastle City Council wants to gain views from a wide variety of stakeholders in order to inform the review on the future shape of the Newcastle Fund.

We have launched this Call for Evidence to gather views and ideas and help us to develop a proposal on how the Newcastle Fund should look in the future.

Respondents should feel free to include views on all or any of the questions set out in section 4 of this document. Respondents may wish to respond to all of the questions, or only focus on certain questions. Equally, respondents may wish to contribute other ideas which are not covered by these questions.

If you would like to respond to this Call for Evidence about the Newcastle Fund, you can either:

- Write to us using the postal address below:

Commissioner for Inclusion
Room 115
Newcastle Civic Centre
Barras Bridge
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 8QH

- Email your responses to newcastlefund@newcastle.gov.uk
- Complete an online survey at <https://letstalknewcastle.co.uk/>

The deadline for responses is **12pm noon** on **Wednesday 12th October 2016**.

The evidence gathered will be used to help us shape a proposal for the future of the Newcastle Fund from April 2018 and beyond.

A final proposal, along with a summary of the evidence gathered through the review and Call for Evidence, will be published at the end of October 2016. This will be made available through the Council's Let's Talk website.

2. About the Newcastle Fund

The Newcastle Fund is the Council's primary grant giving programme.

The Fund was introduced in 2011 and replaced a number of different grant aid programmes across the Council. The Fund provides monies to voluntary and community sector organisations based in the City for project specific running costs or core costs.

The current priorities for Newcastle Fund were agreed by the Council's Cabinet in July 2013 and seek to build capacity and resilience in the following three areas:

Build community resilience. For example by,

- Helping to create a stronger sense of communities, a richer environment and a more local robust economy by inspiring others to positively develop the places in which they live.
- Actively developing local people and making the best use of the many assets for well-being and social and economic development that already exist in communities.
- Recognising and building on people's often untapped skills, strengths, aspirations and networks and enabling them to be active in improving their own, and others wellbeing and health, rather than passive recipients of others' actions.
- Supporting the cultural vibrancy of the city, such as socially-inclusive events which are fundamental to the character of our city.

Improve individuals' resilience. For example by,

- Preventing loss of independence and minimising the need for higher cost or crisis interventions.

- Reducing loneliness and isolation or exclusion.
- Helping people to regain confidence and connect to their communities
- Maximising and protecting the wellbeing of people who belong to vulnerable groups or have long term conditions.

Improve mental and emotional wellbeing. For example by,

- Building wellbeing and health literacy so that people can take control over and improve their own wellbeing and health.
- Helping people access the foundations for stability – an income, somewhere to live, freedom from excessive debt, and employment opportunities.
- Enabling young people to have a good start in life.

Since 2011, **346** projects have been awarded grant funding from the Newcastle Fund, totalling over **£15.1m**

You can read more about the Newcastle Fund at <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/grants-and-funding/the-newcastle-fund>

3. What is a grant?

Funding provided under grant giving arrangements, as distinct from contracting, is a gift of funds for a specified purpose. The specified activities are defined by the recipient in their application, rather than by the funder.

The assumption underlying a grant is that it is subsidising a service the funder considers necessary, but which the recipient does not otherwise have the resources to deliver on a self-sustaining basis at the required standard. Funding under grants is limited to voluntary and community sector organisations and is outside the scope of VAT.

Grants offer the opportunity to undertake activity that cannot generate enough income to cover its costs. Grants are ideal for supporting research and development, building capacity or for new activities which over time could become self-financing. Grants are also widely used for projects and to cover the core operating costs of voluntary and community organisations such as salaries and overheads.

4. Call for evidence questions

4.1 Scope, purpose and outcomes

The current priorities for the Newcastle Fund, as set out on page 4, are intentionally broad and seek to fund grass roots projects which build community capacity and resilience and improve residents' mental and emotional wellbeing.

These were agreed by Cabinet in July 2013.

Question 1: How should we prioritise Newcastle Fund investment, especially at a time of financial constraints?

You may wish to consider:

- Whether the current priorities are still appropriate, or do they need review? If so, what changes would you like to see?
- Whether we should consider establishing a number of smaller grant pots, for which eligibility will depend on the size of organisation (e.g. funding specifically for micro to small organisations, and funding specifically for medium to large organisations)?
- Whether geographical approaches should be adopted? If so, what footprints might we consider?
- Whether investment should be targeted at deprived and disadvantaged communities?

There has been growing emphasis over recent 'rounds' for projects which support and develop active citizens, which support communities to design and develop their own solutions, and which empower people to effect positive change and offer new ways of working.

These ways of working - which we refer to as asset based practice – recognise and build on people's (often untapped) skills, strengths, aspirations and networks, and enables them be active in improving their own, and others wellbeing and health, rather than passive recipients of others' actions.

An asset is “any factor or resource which enhances the ability of individuals, communities and populations to maintain and sustain health and wellbeing. These assets can operate at the level of the individual, family or community as protective and promoting factors to buffer against life's stresses.” (Morgan, 2009 cited in I&DeA, 2010).

Question 2: How can the Newcastle Fund better support and encourage asset based approaches (rather than a deficit model) in order to build upon and unlock the potential of communities and residents' own strengths?

Question 3: Could the Newcastle Fund have a greater role in encouraging 'community action' and 'active citizenship', and how these objectives are defined locally? Is so, what opportunities do you think there are?

Currently, as part of the application process, projects are asked to define their own outcomes and outputs as a result of the work to be funded through the Newcastle Fund. This helps to provide an agreed

framework within which the Council and organisations themselves can monitor as work progresses.

Question 4: Should we review our approach to measuring outcomes achieved as a result of Newcastle Fund investment?

You may wish to consider:

How might we measure outcomes achieved by the overall investment of the Newcastle Fund, as well as project by project outcomes? What is the best way to identify and agree these outcomes?

- Should we consider outcomes achieved at a community or locality level?
- Do you think there should be greater focus on broader outcomes achieved by projects – such as coproduction, collaboration, capacity building, and social value?
- How do we share learning from grant funded activities so that it benefits the wider community?

4.2 Collaboration

The Fund is currently a city wide, Council led grant giving programme. There may be opportunities for greater collaboration with other grant programmes, for example:

- with neighbouring local authority areas
- with other funders e.g. Big Lottery
- with the NHS
- with other internal Council grant giving arrangements e.g. Ward grants

Question 5: Should we seek to align the priorities and objectives of the Newcastle Fund more closely with other grant programmes? If so, which ones?

4.3 Growing and developing the Newcastle Fund

Over the past 5 years, the Council has had to save £191m as a result of government spending cuts, new burdens and unfunded cost pressures.

The Council will be required to make further savings over the next four financial years, and has recently set its budget for 2016-17 which includes further savings of around £32m for the financial year.

Resources available for the Fund will therefore face increasing pressure. Given this, we may wish to prioritise Newcastle Fund arrangements which maximise the potential to grow grant giving resources from other funders.

Question 6: Do you think that the Newcastle Fund should be used as match funding for other initiatives, such as Well North, or Community Led Local Development (CLLD)?

You may wish to consider:

- What other initiatives might we want to consider using Newcastle Fund as match funding for?
- What proportion of the Newcastle Fund do you think appropriate for use as match funding (e.g. 25%, 50%, 75%, 100%)?

Crowdfunding is the practice of funding a project by raising contributions from a large number of people. It is often performed via internet mediated mechanisms and social media alongside traditional networks. The crowdfunding model is based on three types of actors: the project initiator who proposes the idea and/or project to be funded, individuals or groups who support the idea, and a moderating organisation (the "platform") that brings the parties together to launch the idea.

Question 7: Could we grow the Newcastle Fund using crowd funding? If so, what types of initiatives do you think should be our focus for crowd funding? What other opportunities do you think there are to grow the fund?

4.4 Administration and Community Participation

The Newcastle Fund is currently administered by Council officers. This includes administration of the **application and award process** (takes place annually), **administering payments and collecting performance data** (frequency dependant on level of grant as set out in the [Newcastle Compact](#)) and checking, where appropriate, that services meet basic health and safety and safeguarding standards (once during the term of the grant agreement)

Question 8: Are there changes we can make to Newcastle Fund processes (e.g. application and checking) to better create the conditions required for different kinds of conversations and ways of working that enable local communities to create change and make positive change?

Question 9: Do our processes encourage collaboration of formal and informal strategic alliances (e.g. geographic alliances, communities of interest alliances)? What do you think we could we could do differently to support collaboration?

Question 10: Do you think the Council is best placed to enable the opportunities in this section and throughout this document? Would an external community based organisation be better placed to develop and grow these opportunities?

The current evaluation process means that bids for the Newcastle Fund are currently assessed by officers from across the Council, with external partners from Cabinet Office, Big Lottery and Northumbria University participating in the Panel process. Cabinet receives the recommendations of the Panel and makes the final awards.

Question 11: Do you think there should be a greater role for communities themselves in any part of the Newcastle Fund processes? If so, which parts and how? (For example, one way could be through internet mediated voting on a shortlist of projects.)

Question 12: Do you think we should consider or explore other opportunities in shaping the future of the Newcastle Fund not covered by the questions above?

5. Have your say

We are keen to hear views from a range of stakeholders, including but not limited to, residents and communities themselves, community and voluntary sector groups and organisations, statutory agencies, and others who are interested in shaping the future of the Fund.

You can share your views by:

- Writing to us using the postal address below:

Commissioner for Inclusion
Room 115
Newcastle Civic Centre
Barras Bridge
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 8QH

- Emailing your responses to newcastlefund@newcastle.gov.uk
- Completing an online survey at <https://letstalknewcastle.co.uk/>

6. What happens next

The timescales below may be subject to change:

- 21 September 2016: Call for evidence opens
- 6 October 2016: Overview and Scrutiny Committee evidence gathering session
- 12 October 2016: Call for evidence closes
- October 2016: Evidence received will be considered and a formal proposal developed
- 31 October 2016: Proposal published for consultation
- November 2016 – January 2017: Formal consultation on proposal takes place
- 8 January 2017: Formal consultation closes
- January 2017: Feedback from consultation considered
- March 2017: The Council's Cabinet receive recommendations for the future shape of the Newcastle Fund from April 2018 onwards