

The  
Henry Smith  
Charity

founded in 1628

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**Strengthening Communities (SC)  
Programme**

# Strengthening Communities (SC) – Overview

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- Running costs grants: £60k - £210k over 3 years
- Small, grassroots charitable organisations (£20k-£500k annual turnover) working in the most deprived areas in the UK
- Organisations embedded within communities, addressing local needs
- Services widely accessible to whole community
- Established organisations, track record of delivery
- Some support specific ‘communities of identity’ (e.g. Children & Young People, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities).
- Running since 2018, now 100+ grant holders

# Strengthening Communities – Location Criteria

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- **Eligible organisations** - both physically based and working within or immediately next to an area within:
  - i. The 10% most deprived areas in England/Scotland
  - ii. The 15% most deprived areas in Northern Ireland/Wales
- Use government Indices of Multiple Deprivation (for each country) to establish eligibility

# Grant Holder - Ingol and Tanterton Community Trust (Intact)

- Multi-service provider & hub for socially isolated adults in Preston
- Welfare/debt/financial advice, drop-in 1-1 support, work clubs, IT training, social/health activities, volunteering, community events
- Food bank & community 'Pantry'
- SC grant has funded Centre Support and Advice Officer
- COVID-19 response – food parcels, kept Pantry open, IT devices to the digitally excluded



*Intact CEO Denise Hartley and team open their community Pantry*

***"This is a brilliant community resource. The staff are wonderful. You are made to feel at home."*** (Intact beneficiary)

# Grant Holder – Hideaway Youth Project

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- Provides support to disadvantaged young people aged 8-25 in Moss side, Manchester.
- Drop-in sessions/advice/information
- Outreach/detached youth work
- Sports activities/dance class/basketball training
- Youth club/homework support/access to computers
- Cookery sessions/space to cook own lunch
- SC grant has funded evening sessional youth work and weekend provision of activities.
- Covid-19 response – online activities, IT devices to the digitally excluded.

# Strengthening Communities: Why Applications are Declined

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- **Reason 1 – Not in a deprived area** – In 2022, we have declined 20% of all applicants because the organisation's premises was outside the most deprived areas, down from 23% in 2021 and 39% in 2020
- **Reason 2 - Not a good fit** – In 2021, we declined about 20% of all applications because they did not fit, compared with 40% in 2020. Three main causes: work not localised to a particular community; work limited to narrow range of services; work too focused on a particular group
- **Reason 3 - Lack of information on services to be delivered** - In 2021, this was 10% of all applications, compared to 15% in 2020

# Grant holders' responses to coronavirus

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- Mainly responded well to the pandemic. Many have changed/modified services often very quickly.
- Good at identifying local needs and changing circumstances and increasing their responsiveness.
- Filling frontline gaps left by statutory services
- Have expanded partnership working
- Loss of earned income due to closed premises
- Constant uncertainty, the ever changing coronavirus restrictions make planning extremely challenging.

# Focus Group Discussions

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- Conducted three online, 90 minute focus groups of 6-8 participants
- Agree on what they had in common regarding
  - How they deliver services and associated challenges
  - The impacts of SC grants
  - Their experiences of SC grant making processes



## Focus Groups Findings: SC Grant Holder profile

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User-led, responsive, passionate organisations whose service model is generally building-based, providing safe, welcoming spaces for face to face work with individuals and groups from all sections of the community. It is 'a community hub not community centre' model in which partnership working maximises limited resources and volunteers are instrumental. Key objectives include tackling mental health issues, social isolation, financial and benefits exclusion and connecting people to promote community cohesion.

# Focus Groups Findings-Service Delivery and Challenges

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- Grant holders filling frontline gaps left by statutory services
- Grant holders increasing their responsiveness
- Grant holders expanded partnership working
- Loss of earned income due to closed premises
- Greater awareness of ICT (skills) shortages and exclusion
- Constant uncertainty

# Focus Groups Findings: Impacts of SC Grants

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- Core costs funding flexible, rapid service development/expansion
- Core costs funding facilitated capacity building
- The grant generated further funding
- More individuals supported
- Increased community awareness and cohesion

# Strengthening Communities – How to Apply

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- Applications online, anytime, no deadlines

Download the Strengthening Communities Funding Guidelines

Use links in Guidelines to check your postcode using the Indices of Multiple Deprivation links in the Funding Guidelines

Complete eligibility quiz to confirm you meet our criteria

Make an application using our online application form.

Any Questions?

# Contact details

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