

The impact of our grants

Beneficiaries – Direct and Indirect

The average number of people who benefit indirectly from a grant given to a group is approximately 160 and this number has increased in the last few years as we have been able to award larger and more detailed grants. For grants made to individuals the average number of beneficiaries is approximately six people – the applicant, their partner/carer/parent and other close family members.

One percent of the total population of County Durham and Darlington have benefited, either directly or indirectly from a Foundation grant given to an individual. For grants given to groups, the number of beneficiaries rises to 80% of the people in County Durham and Darlington.

All the grants we give are evaluated and monitored. As well as checking that the money has been spent appropriately (and on what was agreed) we also monitor how effective the grants have been in providing benefits to the users, any difference to the local community and any changes to the way the group works i.e. increased capacity.

Projects we have funded consistently report the following user benefits:

- Increased community involvement.
- New skills learned.
- Increased employment.

There is some evidence to show even on grant programmes where employment or training for employment was not an objective that economic benefits also result in addition to the expected social benefits. A number of people have been able to return to work as a result of a service being provided by a community group. In the case of our final Millennium Awards scheme, the projects started by our Award Fellows generated 38 new jobs.

The Award scheme also ran a 30-module accredited training programme covering all aspects of community project management and development, as well as several 'bolt on' specialist-training courses. Over 1,800 training units were delivered in a 10-month period resulting in 137 qualifications being awarded, many to first time achievers.

“As a direct result of the group expanding its service, five parents have been able to return to work or training.”

Wheatley Hill Out of Hours School Club

Groups report a number of **social benefits or outcomes** to their local communities as a direct result of their grant(s). The following are most frequently mentioned:

- Group expansion.
- Pride in the local area/facilities.
- Reduction in crime/vandalism or perception of crime and vandalism.
- Greater involvement by the wider community.
- New groups formed.

Most of the groups we support are small, with limited experience. Measuring the social impact of our grant is often difficult for them and many are just getting used to recognising the effect they have. In recent years, we have worked with clusters of groups and projects, such as the Community Networks or at a neighbourhood or ward level including the Fairshare Trust programme, where collective achievements can often have greater impact. The Community Development Foundation funded us to work in the neglected Redhall Estate in Darlington. Our work raised the profile of the area, helped engage more local people and provided additional services and facilities. The Estate subsequently went on to attract significant additional funding and help.

We can add special conditions to our grants and these often have the specific aim of increasing the capacity of the group's management committee. Producing supporting documents such as a realistic budget or an independently examined set of accounts or even completing the application form itself can also help to stretch an organisations capacity.

For our grants that benefit children and young people, we insist that successful applicants have an acceptable child protection policy, and when we cannot find adequate training locally for people to attend, we organise it ourselves.