

# OFFICER DECISION NOTICE



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
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This notice is to be used for the following types of officer decisions. (Select one option).

**A.** Decisions taken by officers under a specific express delegation from Council or a Committee.

**B.** Decisions taken by officers under a general delegation from Council or a Committee, which relates to (i) a permission or a licence, or (ii) the rights of an individual, or (iii) a contract or expenditure over £100,000.

<b>1. Title of decision:</b>	Award of Reading Borough Council Small Grants Fund (Round 1) 2023/24
<b>2. Date of the decision:</b>	04 August 2023
<b>3. The decision maker:</b>	Executive Director Resources

#### 4. Decision details:

Reading Borough Council agreed as part of its budget for 2023-24 to allocate £200k p.a. for small grants to the voluntary sector.

In line with the Corporate Plan 2022-2025 the theme 'Investing in Reading Future'.

The aim of the Small Grants Fund 2023/24 to encourage grassroots and innovative community action and the criteria is non-prescriptive to enable communities to apply for funding to support activities that are right for their community, but applications should demonstrate how they support the following key elements of the Tackling Inequality Strategy.

Grants of up to £5,000 are available for individual organisations, which can be increased to £10,000 for bids made in partnership, to support the infrastructure and/or additional capacity needed by organisations to expand existing service, deliver services in a different way or to develop new service.

The fund is administered in 2 rounds of £100k in Aug 2023 and later in 2023. Applications are through an online/offline form with guidance for applicants.

The funding window for Round 1 was from 12th June to 23rd July 2023. 95 applications were received.

In Round 1 of the 2023/24 awards totalling £100,000 were made.

Ninety-five applications, totalling just under £500k, were received. Each of the applications were evaluated and scored against the grant criteria. The highest possible score was 15 and the lowest 0. The panel agreed that the applications scoring between 11 and 15 should be recommended to be awarded. This amounts to £100,000.

The criteria were:

- Enable everyone within the borough to share in Reading's success
- Drive attainment in skills, education and training and access to quality employment
- Support people in the areas of the town where need is greatest
- Support the diverse personal life experiences of our residents and how

**5. Reasons for the decision:**

This decision is made under general delegated powers but in alignment with discussions at Social Inclusion Board.

An award panel comprising the Neighbourhood Initiatives Team Manager, Neighbourhood & Partnership Manager, Family and Information Manager, Culture Development Officer and Voluntary Sector and Social Inclusion Manager assessed the applications against the fund criteria and set out in the guidance to applicants. The Panel recommended grants be awarded to 20 organisations totalling **£100,000** as shown in the table at Appendix 1.

**6. Alternative options considered (if any) and rejected:**

Award fewer grants and retain budget for potential future allocations. This is not recommended as the Council has already made provision for further awards in 2023/24 within the budget.

**7. List of open Background Papers:**

Appendix 1- RBC Small Grants Fund 2023-24 (Round 1) – Awards

Appendix 2-SGF 2023-24 Round 1 Equality Impact Assessment

**8. List of confidential or exempt Background Papers:**

None

**9. Any other matters taken into consideration:**

Legitimate expectation of consultation

Procedural requirements

Public Health implications

Environmental or Climate Change

<input type="checkbox"/> Health and Safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Risk Management implications
<input type="checkbox"/> Transparency of Information (FOI etc)	<input type="checkbox"/> Privacy Impact Assessments
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights Act Duties	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Equality Impact Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Parenting	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Safety
<input type="checkbox"/> Regulatory duties	<input type="checkbox"/> EU withdrawal
<input type="checkbox"/> Armed Forces Covenant	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<b>Details of the matters taken into account:</b>	

### 10. Legal considerations

None to note as part of this decision

### 11. Financial considerations

The budget for the allocation of grant funding is contained within the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

### 12. Internal consultations

Officers from Resources, Public Health, DENS and Brighter Futures for Children were involved in the scoring of the grant applications.

Unsuccessful bids will be shared with other Council departments to determine if they align with other potential funding opportunities.

Sections 13- 18: To be completed only for Decision A (express delegation from a Committee)

**13. The name of the Committee:**

**14. Date of the meeting:**

Click or tap to enter a date.

**15. Minute number:**

**16. The delegation given by the Committee:**

**17. The name of any member of the committee who declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision:**

**18. Any councillor or officer required to be consulted prior to the exercise of this delegation and details of their response.**

## Reading Borough Council Small Grants Fund 2023/24 (Round 1) – Awards

Organisation	Awarded (£)	Purpose
<b>1.Age UK Reading</b>	<b>£5,000.00</b>	<p>To put time and resource into setting up a third club, locating a venue appropriate for North Reading, employing and training staff, and supporting them to develop into the highly skilled practitioner they need to become in order to run this service. To use the funds to purchase resources and recruit, train and retain skilled volunteers. The new dementia club will serve 6-9 clients and their carers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Staff time to find a venue that is appropriate, accessible for users and affordable</li> <li>-Staff recruitment, induction, and training.</li> <li>-Volunteer recruitment and training</li> <li>-Travel and out of pocket expenses for staff and volunteers</li> <li>-Central and management/supervision costs</li> <li>-Marketing to potential referrers, users and carers.</li> </ul>
<b>2.Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association (BSANA)</b>	<b>£1,840.00</b>	<p>To organise Annual Street Party for up to 500 people: £450 base cost (food, supplies) and £800 for face painting/Mendi, cultural &amp; environment education/entertainment.</p> <p>This entertainment event will be specifically targeted to increase knowledge and awareness of the climate emergency through a fun engaging event.</p> <p>To support Community Fair (9 per year): £20 x 9 = £180.</p>

		<p>We are also seeking to increase the attendance of support charities to offer increased access to information around cost-of-living issues, disability support, environmental issues, etc. for the future.</p> <p>Insurance for the activities through the year: £160 -Necessary to run these events.</p> <p>2 x newsletter / advertising: £250.</p> <p>These are essential to advertise these events held throughout the year. We have had increased success translating information into multiple languages with our leaflets and we look to be able to expand this to attract further engagement with our diverse communities.</p>
<p><b>3.Becoming Mums- partnership with Alana House</b></p>	<p><b>£9,950.00</b></p>	<p>Partnership Project between Becoming Mums and Alana House. Working at Fairview Community Centre and at Hexham Road Community Centre with aim focussed support on Reading.</p> <p>To work in close partnership with Alana House, a community project run by PACT that uses a holistic and trauma-informed approach to support and empower women facing multiple disadvantages. Both us and Alana House offer a confidential, women-only, non-judgemental space and welcome all women who feel they need help, support, and advice. Working together with a specially selected cohort of at least 10 pre and postnatal people to receive dedicated and tailored support through a programme of creative workshops, guidance, advice, and peer to peer support. Organising 6 workshops with expert artists to learn practical sewing skills, using visible mending techniques to repair clothes and school uniforms, as well as creative crafts to create a sense of pride and achievement, working together on collaborative creative projects. Providing participants, a free and barrier-less access to a peer-to-peer support space, at Alana House where they are comfortable and access wrap around care, entirely for free, supported by a dedicated assistant support worker at Alana House, to provide wrap around care, signposting and manage additional needs. These spaces will foster friendships and connections with peers, as well as ensure the practical support that is needed is provided. They will also have their work</p>

		publicly celebrated, albeit anonymously, in a large-scale public exhibition in the Broad Street Mall, providing a sense of pride and achievement and sharing their stories.
<b>4. Berkshire Women's Aid (BWA)</b>	<b>£5,000.00</b>	<p>To provide one-to-one and group work to support some of our most vulnerable children in their crucial stage of development.</p> <p>To open referrals to a wider and more diverse part of the community and make it accessible to all referrals. To focus on reaching families from diverse communities - those less likely to engage with mainstream services; communities where domestic abuse is often hidden and not talked about. We want to target these communities and reach those most isolated due the language/culture/gender/sexuality/socio-economic and other barriers to engaging with services through usual channels. BWA reach children and young people who frequently feel they have no voice at all, we give them the ability to find their voice and be heard. Provide additional people to do the work e.g., would fund a worker for additional day a week (to deliver this specific project for 9 months); to advertise/promote the new service e.g., increased social media activity, targeted blogs and possible promotion on radio/ in local magazines and to buy resources/refreshments when running the groups/one-to-one sessions."</p>
<b>5. Browns Community Services CIC</b>	<b>£4,968.00</b>	<p>To deliver 4Es training, and the salary costs of the Support worker and project manager.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £800 - Part time salary cost of 4Es facilitator to deliver 8 sessions (2 groups. 4 sessions each, 24 service users) £100 per session.</li> <li>• £640 Venue hire for 4Es (£80 per session)</li> <li>• £1,800 Part time salary cost of project manager to arrange logistics, referrals from stakeholders, prepare reports, stakeholder management &amp; work with employers to arrange work placements. Works 2 days per month. £100 per day</li> <li>• £1,500 2 Volunteers supporting the project manager. Working 1 day a month. Includes onboarding costs</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £1,728 Part time Support worker offering practical and emotional support. Each young person gets 4hrs of support over project length. £18 per hr. 24 service users</li> <li>• £6,468 Total project costs</li> <li>• £1,500 Funding to cover volunteer costs.</li> <li>• <b><u>£4,968 Grant request</u></b></li> </ul>
<b>6.Caversham Muslim Association (CMA)</b>	<b>£5,000.00</b>	<p>1.To deliver:</p> <p>5 sessions for youth activities/ education</p> <p>5 sessions for women</p> <p>cost includes hire of venues, cost for guest speakers, DBS checks/administration, and costs of materials</p> <p>Anticipated costs: £2000</p> <p>2.To recruit a Community Development Coordinator to organise and support the work of the CMA. T</p> <p>The temporary Community Development Coordinator will support the CMA activity with 20hrs per month over the course of the 12 months. Total cost £3000 (which includes any training requirements, DBS checks, etc)</p>
<b>7.Dance Reading</b>	<b>£4,900.00</b>	To provide inspiring and creative vocational training for 15 young people who love the arts but who are at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and are experiencing multiple layers of socio-economic disadvantage and Disability. The programme of weekly training sessions totally a minimum of 18 workshops, will give them the opportunity to do work experience, meet and work with arts professionals, to have tailor made mentoring with practitioners who

		specialise in working with neurodiverse young people and the arts, and to achieve UCAS points through an Arts Award qualification, helping to secure their future.
<b>8.Dingley's Promise</b>	<b>£4,778.97</b>	To provide dedicated small group support with 3-4 children, identifying their specific emotional and social needs and using new resources and techniques to address these. The group sessions will be led by an experienced Early Years Practitioner and children will support 3-4 children in each. All children will have a 'wellbeing' session each day over 24 weeks as an extension to their Lean Through Play activities, which we would expect to have a significant impact on their social and emotional development against The diverse 'Sensory Library' of resources will enable us to provide resources for 22 centre families and approximately 50 outreach families, enabling them to trial the impact of the resources and purchase them where they are able, or prolonged use of the resources where not financially viable. Four vital holiday playschemes will provide much needed respite for families, whilst focusing entirely on utilising the sensory library to design activities which support social development and emotional wellbeing.
<b>9.Double Okay-Partnership with Rising Sun Arts Centre</b>	<b>£9,994.50</b>	<p>Partnership Application to continue collaboration with the Rising Sun Arts to run creative, arts-based activity sessions for LGBTQIA+ people who are at risk of social isolation, health and social inequalities and discrimination.</p> <p>To deliver 11 sessions for a minimum of 50 people, between October 2023 and August 2024. To support Double Okay as freelance artists and provide a continued opportunity for them to develop their professional practice as workshop session leaders, supporting and uplifting this vulnerable community, building their skills and experience, and enabling sustainable delivery for this marginalised community group to take place in Reading beyond this project.</p> <p>To support the new 'Queer Social' team at the Rising Sun, which is run by a team of LGBTQIA+ volunteers in collaboration with Double Okay. This will provide another safe space for LGBTQIA+ people to socialise in the evening and provide</p>



		an opportunity to come together with peers, and without risk, to help overcome social isolation and loneliness.
<b>10.First Days Children's Charity</b>	<b>£1,286.53</b>	Partly Funded -To fund Safe Place to Sleep Project to ensure that children in Reading Borough who need a bed, bedding, or a mattress, but whose parents cannot afford one have a safe place to sleep.
<b>11.Grassrootz</b>	<b>£5,000.00</b>	To launch some Youth provision in Dee Road Estate aim to give the young people off Dee Road some opportunities which they are currently not getting. The aim is to give the young people not only some positive experiences, but give them better opportunities to engage in positive activities, become Role Models to them.
<b>12.Lynn Everett</b>	<b>£5,000.00</b>	To help with warmth and the cost of living. To help with the cost of living as well as provide friendship and support for the community of Southcote. To provide food, utilities and running cost to keep going through the winter.
<b>13.Me2 Club</b>	<b>£5,000.00</b>	<p>Program Implementation: To cover the costs associated with program implementation, such as recruiting and training volunteers, conducting background checks, and screening procedures, organising matching processes, and providing ongoing support and supervision to volunteers. It ensures that the program can be effectively established and maintained.</p> <p>Volunteer Support: To provide ongoing support to the volunteer buddies, including training, resources, and regular check-ins. This support is essential for ensuring that the volunteers are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively support children with additional needs.</p> <p>Outreach and Awareness: Implementation of outreach and awareness campaigns to promote the program and reach a wider audience. These efforts can include raising awareness about the importance of inclusion, educating the</p>

		<p>community about the program's goals and impact, and recruiting both volunteers and participating children.</p> <p>Sustainability and Expansion: To be sustainable in the long run. we currently support 28 children with additional needs and disabilities in the Reading area and this funding will ensure that the program can continue operating and providing support over an extended period. Additionally, to support the expansion of the program to serve a greater number of children and increase its impact in the community. To use this funding to recruit 10 new volunteers in the area.</p>
<b>14.No5 Young People</b>	<b>£4,995.00</b>	To provide urgent support for vulnerable and distressed children and young people through vital, specialist counselling so that they can go on to thrive and achieve in all areas of their lives. To provide 135 free, professional, confidential counselling sessions to very vulnerable 11 - 17-year-olds, on a full cost recovery basis. We are now paying specialist youth counsellors a sessional fee to see the neediest children on our waiting list.
<b>15.Parenting Special Children</b>	<b>£4,900.00</b>	<p>To provide a specialist triage service for Reading families facing complex challenges. To enable 140 families (approximately 560 beneficiaries) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have an assessment of their needs by a specialist practitioner</li> <li>• Receive advice and information related to the complex needs faced by their families</li> <li>• Be referred to the most appropriate internal and/or external services for their various needs</li> <li>• Be signposted to other local partners, including food banks, domestic abuse charities, clothes banks etc.</li> </ul>
<b>16.Parents And Children Together (PACT)</b>	<b>£5,000.00</b>	To provide a funding for an additional 0.4FTE Bounce Back 4 Kids (BB4K) Support Worker to support more than 10 domestically abused children and adults to heal from trauma between 1st January 2024 and 30th June 2024.

<b>17.Rank &amp; File Theatre</b>	<b>£5,000.00</b>	<p>To cover sessional costs consisting of 2-hour weekly engagement sessions in a theatre studio at South Street Arts Centre over 8 months between September 2023 and April 2024. To cover the hire fees for the theatre studio rehearsal rooms at South Street Arts Centre on a weekly basis and cover any additional transport costs for disabled participants with access needs. To support our existing infrastructure as a community theatre for marginalised cohorts and allow us the capacity to expand our service to include new participants and provide regular consistent engagement over an eight-month timeframe in a professional theatre venue.</p>
<b>18.Reading Welfare Rights, Reading Berkshire</b>	<b>£5,000.00</b>	<p>To hold group and one to one sessions to teach, coach, train and empower the parents, guardians or carers of adults with learning disabilities to be able to submit good quality benefit applications to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on behalf of the adults that they are caring for.</p> <p>COSTS -  Teaching hours (group sessions) £18.53 PH × 4 hours per month = £74.12</p> <p>Teaching Hours (121 sessions)  £18:53 PH x 7 hours per month =  £129.71</p> <p>Large space at 135 Cardiff Road - £50 per month</p> <p>121 room at Reading Mencap office - NO COST      Travel, transport, production of teaching and training materials for teacher and volunteers - £25 per month</p> <p>TOTAL cost per month: £278.83</p>

<b>19.South Reading Over 50s Social Club</b>	<b>£2,580.00</b>	To provide social opportunities for vulnerable older people in Whitley Wood and South Reading. To provide hot meals to be delivered once a month, for 18 months, to enable the volunteers to have regular breaks, to cover any disruption caused by the building move and to allow a realistic time period for new volunteers to be found and trained.
<b>20.Sport in Mind</b>	<b>£4,807.00</b>	To provide a weekly 1-hour football session (outside curriculum time) for 12 ESOL students/refugees at Reading College, for 39 weeks across the academic year and 10 sport, exercise and mental health workshops across South Reading. To deliver 10 Sport, exercise, and mental health workshops across South Reading (including Whitley and Church wards) to give 300 young people a greater understanding of mental health and the benefits that sport and physical activity can have on good mental health and wellbeing.
<b>Total</b>	<b>£100,0000</b>	

## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

For advice on this document please contact Mark Redfearn [mark.redfearn@reading.gov.uk](mailto:mark.redfearn@reading.gov.uk)

Please contact the Project Management Office at [pmo@reading.gov.uk](mailto:pmo@reading.gov.uk) for advice and/or support to complete this form from a project perspective.

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Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed: Small Grants Fund 2023/24 Round 1

Directorate: Resources

Service: Data, Intelligence & Policy

Name: Mark Redfearn

Job Title: Social Inclusion and VCS Partnerships Manager

Date of assessment:03/08/2023

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### Version History

Version	Reason	Author	Date	Approved By
1	Updated SGF Process	MR	3 <sup>rd</sup> Aug 2023	MR / GH

## Scope your proposal

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- **What is the aim of your policy or new service/what changes are you proposing?**

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Reading Borough Council agreed as part of its budget for 2023-24 to allocate an ongoing £200K for small grants to the voluntary sector. This grant funding is to be awarded in two rounds, with the first £100K being awarded by July 2023.

The expectation is that the small grants fund is focussed on supporting the broader objectives of the Tackling Inequality Strategy to create further opportunity for local voluntary and community organisations to play an active role in making Reading a more equal place to live for its residents.

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- **Who will benefit from this proposal and how?**

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The intention is to encourage grassroots and innovative community action and the criteria is non-prescriptive to enable communities to apply for funding to support activities that are right for their community, but applications should demonstrate how they support the following key elements of the Tackling Inequality Strategy:

- Enable everyone within the borough to share in Reading's success
  - Drive attainment in skills, education and training and access to quality employment
  - Support people in the areas of the town where need is greatest
  - Support the diverse personal life experiences of our residents and how these can contribute to their equal enjoyment of life and achievements within the borough
  - Provide additionality by complementing existing strategies, work, and partnerships aimed at making Reading a more equal place to live
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- **What outcomes does the change aim to achieve and for whom?**

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The specific scope of the Tackling Inequality Strategy is to go beyond the Council's existing activities and strategies to achieve a more consistent quality of life for our residents in our most deprived areas.

The SGF is providing funding to grassroots projects that support and guide our residents to become more self-sufficient, built on a bedrock of valued educational attainment, strong skills and practical knowledge that enables them to realise their potential through accessing suitable employment opportunities.

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- **Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?**

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The SGF is focused on supporting residents living within the most deprived areas of the borough, with the initial activities delivered in areas identified as consistently having the most acute and highest levels of deprivation within the borough.

Outputs and learning from the SGF will be available to all Council services to be utilised across the whole of the borough.

Details of the SGF will be shared and promoted by key VCS organisations to ensure grassroots groups are aware of the opportunity for funding and advice and guidance on how to apply. Council officers are also available to respond to specific requests for information and advice.

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## Assess whether an EqIA is Relevant

How does your proposal relate to eliminating discrimination; advancing equality of opportunity; promoting good community relations?

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- **Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some groups may be affected differently than others (due to race, disability, sex, gender, sexuality, age, religious belief or due to belonging to the Armed Forces community)? Make reference to the known demographic profile of the service user group, your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc.**

No. The SGF is focused on addressing issues which may limit residents' abilities to participate and enjoy the benefits of living within the borough, including all the protected characteristics detailed within the Equality Act, and residents belonging to the Armed Forces community.

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- **Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Make reference to your complaints, consultation, feedback, media reports locally/nationally.**

No. The SGF supports activities to improve inclusivity within the borough, with a strong element of delivering improvements within communities and building capacity for further improvements in the future. Details of the SGF and how to apply will be widely promoted across local communities by VCS leaders, and Council Officers are available during the application window to answer enquiries on the application process.

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If the answer is **Yes** to any of the above, you need to do an Equality Impact Assessment.

If **No** you **MUST** complete this statement.

**An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant because:**

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The SGF is directly focused on addressing issues which may limit residents' abilities to participate and enjoy the benefits of living within the borough, including all the protected characteristics detailed within the Equality Act, and residents belonging to the Armed Forces community.

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Mark Redfearn

X

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Lead Officer