

Additional statement for Public Health & Communities Policy Committee – 14th March 2025

Statement 14 - Amy Kinnear, Southmead Development Trust Bristol Impact Fund 3

Southmead Development Trust is one of the 30 organisations currently delivering the Bristol Impact Fund 2 to communities experiencing the greatest inequality in the city.

We were delighted to hear that a Bristol Impact Fund 3 is being considered with the full budget of £8.8million as BIF 2 has been a stalwart for the VCSE sector and for Bristol City Council to achieve its objectives.

We understand that there is no guarantee of funding as part of BIF3 but this is an opportunity for Bristol and the VCSE sector to continue the great work that BIF2 has enabled, namely creating community infrastructure and consistency of long-term that people and the sector need to thrive.

BIF2 funding has enabled the Trust to direct new resources and create infrastructure to one of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the city, facing social isolation and digital exclusion and is particularly focusing on older vulnerable people in our community. It has enabled us to develop 13 free community activities that take place across the week, every week, within our community corner.

In the life of our BIF 2 grant period we will have supported close to 500 people with social isolation, connecting and making friendships, knowing where to go locally for advice and being aware of all the City has to offer with advice and guidance, starting up or supporting small business and taking social action on things that matter to them the most.

We've supported over 100 vulnerable older people to overcome social isolation and gain digital skills by learning to be safe online, engage with online services, keep in touch with relatives and live independent lives. We have generated over £1million in social value (HACT methodology) during this project. Participants have also said:

“I really appreciate you helping me out with learning about technology. I've been able to use my laptop today when I went home sorting out my CV and I feel like I better understand the information given to me so I can now use my laptop thank you very much.”

“Great initiative, come get advice and you don't have to pay! It's really helpful, this centre has made my life.”

Achieving community impact directly corresponds to long term and sustainable funding. Long-term funding avoids the pitfalls of short-term funding: letting go experienced staff, recruiting new staff and support needed through induction and probation, as well as the time required in community development work to rebuild trust, create connections between people to people, people to organisations and organisations to organisations.

Here is some further context for our support of this recommendation:

- Bristol Impact Fund has been a stalwart in providing community services and enabled us to secure other match funding such as mencap and is one of the few funds that is a full cost recovery grant.
- The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) report [The True Cost of Delivering Public Services | NCVO](#) reveals that 87% of organisations are subsidising their grants and contracts and almost three-quarters of organisations (73%) cannot meet demand for the services they are funding to deliver with around seven in ten organisations (72%) have withdrawn from public service delivery altogether or are considering doing so.
- Underfunding is not a new problem, but the impact of continued high inflation has put charities delivering public service contracts at crisis point.
- Not only has this deepened need in communities and exacerbated inequalities, but it has forced public sector purses to tighten like never before.
- The Cost of Giving Crisis is, in part, caused by the knock-on effect of years of austerity and underfunded public services.
- As not-for-profit organisations that struggle to fit into payment by results and payment in arrears structures VCSE are limited to the 'risks' they can carry as organisations as we don't carry large reserves or profits.

I would be happy to discuss the matter further if this is of help to the committee.