

York Community Fund



30

grants awarded



£145,307

total grants awarded



£4,843

average grant



8,518

people supported



Impact Report



Two Ridings
Community Foundation

An introduction

The York Community Fund has been set up as a partnership between Two Ridings Community Foundation, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, City of York Council, York CVS and York Together. The fund focuses on strengthening York's voluntary and community groups with grants that support purposeful community action and create a sense of belonging.

The fund works through a participatory decision making process. Decisions are made collectively by a panel of local people with direct lived or professional experience of the issues the fund addresses.

The fund's priorities are:

Affordability & Cost of Living

- Keeping community organisation afloat, Reducing poverty & tackling cost of living crisis

Climate Action

- Supporting environmental improvement and increasing walking and cycling

Equalities and Human Rights

- Culturally appropriate activities, promoting equity, diversity & inclusion, providing advocacy for people experiencing disadvantage

Health & Wellbeing

- A holistic approach to health & wellbeing, counselling, mentoring, befriending and advocacy, parenting support and opportunities to socialise

Supporting small organisations addressing

AFFORDABILITY &
COST OF LIVING

CLIMATE ACTION

EQUALITIES &
HUMAN RIGHTS

HEALTH &
WELLBEING



Where the fund comes from

York Community Fund was launched in July 2024 with initial investment from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and York Central Ltd. It has since received donations from The Shears Foundation and York Friends Central Adult Schools Trust and generous individuals.

In 2024 the panel met and awarded 30 grants totalling £145,307, supporting projects that address the needs of local people.

The area the fund supports

York Community Fund supports small organisations with a turnover under £500,000 serving the residents of the City of York.

The reach of Two Ridings

Through working with Two Ridings, York Community Fund reached locally trusted organisations, led and delivered by people with lived and working experiences of the issues being funded.

It has allowed support for both long-standing organisations previously funded by Two Ridings and newer emerging community groups.

Several of the funded groups are dedicated to supporting children and families. Some organisations are expanding their services to provide refugees in York with much-needed support. Warm spaces are more crucial than ever, and several local organisations are providing safe havens for vulnerable people, fostering understanding and offering a warm place to gather. Meanwhile with food insecurity remaining a pressing issue, several groups are making positive change for people around food and essentials.

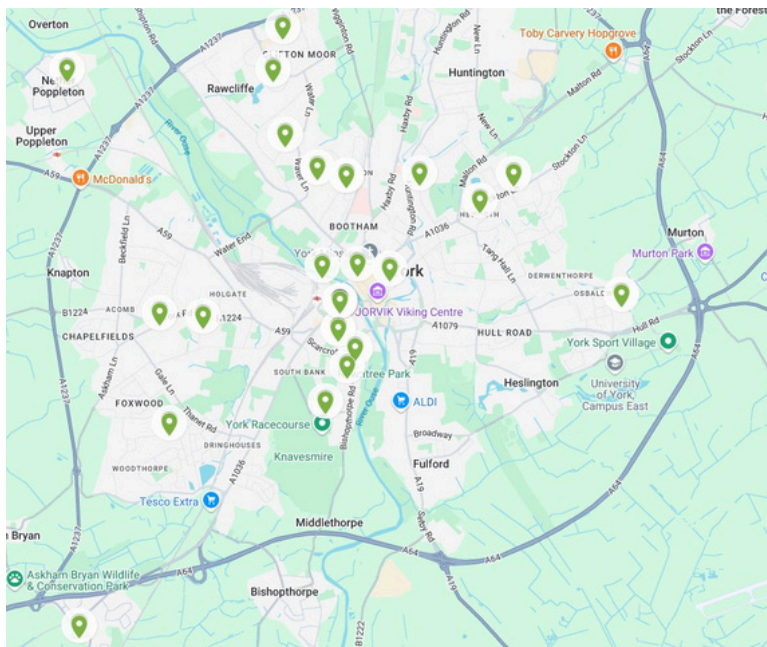
The groups and people supported

In 2024, 30 groups received funding, including 4 first-time applicants and 26 that had received funding from Two Ridings previously. All the groups are small local charitable organisations with on average 0.6 full-time staff member, 4.8 part-time staff and 6 volunteers.

30% of groups have an annual income of under £50,000, and another 30% under £100,000. All groups have an income of under £300,000.

A wide range of people were supported by the funding including people living in poverty, children and young people, families, older people, local residents, people looking for employment, people with disabilities, refugees and asylum seekers and people from the LGBTQI+ community.

Geographical spread of the fund



Supported organisations at a glance:

- Accessible Arts & Media
- Big Futures Foundation
- Clements Hall Trust
- Family Matters York
- Generate
- Good Organisation (Social Ventures) CIC
- HOPING York Street Kitchen
- Kyra Women's Project
- Lived Insights
- Lollipop
- Move the Masses
- Musical Connections
- Next Door But One
- Night Light Theatre CIC
- Older Citizens Advocacy York
- Panda Playgroup
- Planet Food York
- Reflect
- Refugee Action York (RAY)
- Shared Story CIC
- Sing & Sign Maestros
- St. James the Deacon Parish Church
- Sunflowers in York
- The Collective Sharehouse Ltd
- Toolbox Drama
- Welfare Benefits Unit
- York Inspirational Kids
- York LGBT Forum
- York Travellers Trust
- York Women's Counselling Service

Funded organisations in 2024

Accessible Arts & Media Running movers and shakers sessions for adults with complex learning and physical disabilities. Movers & Shakers provides a vital social lifeline and supportive community for people who are all too often excluded, reducing isolation and improving wellbeing for adults with complex learning disabilities. The profound positive impact on participants' wellbeing comes from them being valued as individuals and having opportunities to: socialise and connect with others; learn new skills; support and collaborate with peers; grow in confidence. Movement activities support physical wellbeing and sensory activities support relaxation.
£4,710

Big Futures Foundation is raising aspirations for disadvantaged kids, providing direct support in schools and communities to inspire change. They are using their funding to cover core costs including staff, IT and training to ensure they retain key staff members and the high quality service they provide.
£5,000

Clements Hall has been a sustainable welcoming space for many local groups in the South Bank area for over 10 years. They host over 50 community organisations from foodbanks to dance classes, resident associations to community fairs. Increased energy costs have affected them considerably and they will be using their funding to help cover their energy costs so that they remain the welcoming and comfortable space for the community at large.
£5,000

Family Matters York is using their funding to offer courses for families with children who have additional needs, providing vital resources and support. It brings parents together to share their experiences of challenges and to learn how to help their child reach their potential, boost their self-esteem, and cope with the impact on the whole family. With their new understanding the course equips parents with strategies to try at home, and to boost confidence, wellbeing and ability to cope.
£5,000



"It's hard to feel like their behaviour isn't the result of our parenting so I felt relief, validation and confidence just knowing other people were often experiencing the exact same things."

Generate provides a variety of support services for transgender, non-binary and gender-diverse people, a group which does not receive specific support from other services. They have recently received funding to expand their work, but this is very much focused on practical support. The objective of this funding is to increase the hours for their community development coordinator so they can offer more activity-based services which would help to develop trans people's social engagement, confidence and general well-being through outreach and advocacy.
£5,000

Good Organisation runs a range of tourism-related initiatives in York specifically for York's most marginalised residents, including walking tours led by individuals with lived experience of homelessness or addiction. In partnership with the Institute for Social Justice, Good Organisation conducted research into the growing disconnect between residents and tourists, highlighting concerns such as the rise in short-term holiday lets reducing available housing and increasing anxiety among those seeking homes.

In response to these findings, Good Organisation are using funding to help develop a resident-led tourism assembly aimed at giving local people a stronger voice in shaping York's tourism policies. The initiative will engage 30 residents from diverse backgrounds and provide them with training and resources over a 10-month period so they can influence tourism decisions and promote more equitable, regenerative approaches that address social inequality in the city.
£5,000



HOPING York Street Kitchen is keeping the city's most vulnerable fed with free, freshly cooked meals. There are many people who, for reasons of homelessness, financial stress, mental and/or physical disability are unable to provide themselves and/or their families with wholesome food. It is anticipated that this number is going to increase significantly in the foreseeable future. HOPING addresses this by providing freshly cooked food, free of charge, to such people on a non judgemental basis, once a week from a York centre location. They also distribute food to people's homes where mental or physical issues prevent them collecting themselves. Their funding covers core costs of food and kitchen utensils. **£5,000**

Kyra Women's Project is using their funding to provide 6 months of Your Money, Your life sessions and a contribution towards their rent to cover the winter months of their hub. This will allow them to continue to support vulnerable women in York and provide a warm space. **£4,900**



Lived Insights from Experience (LIFE) helps effect meaningful change for marginalised people. They empower local people, who are often excluded from public consultations, to contribute perspectives and design research. They are using their funding to design research programmes on subjects that matter to members, to grow and train their team of community reporters, to help influence policy to challenge public misperceptions and expand on their publications. **£5,000**

Lollipop raises awareness of deafness and its implications both within the deaf community and the wider community. They do this through the delivery of deaf awareness training for groups and individuals; education for children, young people and parents; education for local societies, schools and businesses, and through collaborations with other charities or services. Their funding is going towards part of their operating costs and overheads to ensure they can carry on their vital support. **£5,000**

Move Mates York is a simple but impactful walking project that pairs trained volunteers with individuals who need support to get active and stay socially connected. Volunteers are matched 1:1 with local people and meet regularly for walks tailored to the individual's physical and mental health needs. Referrals come from a wide range of partner organisations or through self-referral, and support is open-ended. The project helps adults of all ages overcome barriers such as isolation, poor health, or low confidence, offering gentle exercise, companionship, and a stronger connection to their local community.

Move Mates exists to help people feel healthier, happier, and less lonely. People report significant improvements in both physical and mental wellbeing, with many expressing how much they value the friendship, routine, and joy the walks bring. Their funding is being used towards the running costs of the charity. **£5,000**



Musical Connections is a well-established charity bringing the benefits of music to isolated and vulnerable older people in care and community settings as well as working with universities and schools across the city, running a large programme of intergenerational events and activities. The benefits of music are well known, and these regular weekly sessions create a sense of belonging, friendships are made, and the attendees all feel uplifted and happier.

Their funding is being put towards the cost of project management for 2025–26, alongside delivering 10 and 50 community linked events and workshops with universities/schools. 500+ people are expected to benefit from these workshops and events with previous people attending stating they feel happier, more positive and more satisfied with life after attending. **£5,000**



York Medical Group's Chief Executive, Zulf Ali, is convinced of the positive difference Musical Connections work makes to physical and mental health:

'While the mode is music, the outcome is healing through the magic of music...we want to be able to prescribe music, not pills, and we know Musical Connections can help us to do this'



Next Door But One use theatre to support people with mental ill health, alongside carers and LGBTQ+ youth.

They are using their grant over a full year to embed their arts participation programme further into communities ensuring they offer a meaningful, relevant and accessible opportunity for the young people that participate.

The outcomes from their programme see young people feel more confident, have new skills, feel more connected with others and improves their wellbeing in general. **£5,000**

Night-Light Theatre provide arts for wellbeing programmes, dramatherapy, and create theatre and film with hard-to-reach audiences in Yorkshire & the Humber. Their work happens in forensic mental health settings, prisons, hospitals, pupil referral units, rehabilitation centres, and in the community and focuses on supporting those facing homelessness, mental health issues and addiction. At the heart of their work is a social justice agenda; a dedication to promoting hope through highlighting the strength and resilience.

They are using their funding to create a 40 session theatre project for people affected by homelessness, to reduce health inequalities by creating art aimed at exploring themes of connection and community. This will culminate in a sharing event where people participating present their work and foster dialogue between the homeless community and support services. Expected outcomes for people participating include increased access to services, improved wellbeing and confidence, and heightened awareness of health resources. **£4,877**

Older Citizens Advocacy York (OCAAY) has been supporting older people and giving them a voice for many years in the city. Their funding is going towards essential operational services including rent, IT and phone services to ensure their 20 volunteer advocates can continue their support.

They work closely with many local organisations ensuring robust referral pathways are available for all the people they work alongside. **£5,000**

Planet Food York is a 'zero-waste' food-rescue, redistribution & re-purposing operation with a food shop, café and community hub, based in the Southlands Community Centre. They reduce hunger, increase people's health and reduce loneliness for local people all whilst reducing food waste.

They have a staffing structure with 10% paid staff and 90% volunteer workforce. Their funding is being used for core costs, supplementing their Supervisor's living wage to continue this vital work in the community café. **£4,543**

Panda Playgroup are using their funding to ensure playgroup sessions in Copmanthorpe remain affordable, supporting families and community engagement. They recognise the value of the social interaction for the pre-school children, but they have also recognised that parents and carers are benefitting from the sessions as they were experiencing loneliness and social isolation. The older generation of the village are also volunteering to help. Covering the core costs of the playgroup benefits a wide range of people locally and fosters intergenerational relationships. **£4,152**





Shared Story CIC is bringing together people with long-term conditions through storytelling. Their funding is for running a weekly Not a Book Club in a local library where a facilitator reads aloud short stories and extracts from books and poems. People attending share thoughts and memories provoked by reading and lead to rich discussions on topics they wouldn't normally discuss. **£4,985**

"The best thing about Not a Book Club is the company, meeting people, exchanging views, reminiscing. It's been very helpful, it's given me an outlook on life which is more positive... It's a bit like a way back into society that I've lost because my previous existence had disappeared."

Reflect provide free support for anyone making an informed decision about a Pregnancy Choice without fear, pressure or judgement. They also provide care and support to anyone who has experienced Pregnancy or Baby Loss from any cause. They do this via one-to-one and couple support in a safe, compassionate environment where trained practitioners gently guide women or men through a structured-support programme to help enable them to grieve their loss(es) and move forward with hope. Their funding is being used towards staffing and volunteer expenses for their pregnancy loss support. They want to continue to offer this free of charge, alongside counselling where needed, so that everyone can access their healing support. **£3,585**

Refugee Action York (RAY) have 22 years of front line experience providing the only specialist service for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants within the city. It has a strong track record of partnerships across the city and is expanding its services to provide refugees in York with much-needed support.

Almost all the people they support have experienced trauma before or during their journey here, and many have physical and/or mental health needs. They have no family support nearby, very little money, and no knowledge about health services and how life works in the UK.

Refugee Action York currently run one session a week focusing on health and wellbeing and are using their funding to staff an extended service to improve levels of health and wellbeing, by providing additional access to information about these services in York, as well as opportunities for social interaction and learning English. **£5,000**



Sing & Sign Maestros is a small club for children with and without additional needs. Children and their families come together to sing and use makaton signs. The club allows them to socialise, have fun and build confidence. They are using their funding towards running the club and expanding it to include younger children with additional needs, enabling the whole family of children with additional needs to be involved. **£4,595**

St. James the Deacon Parish Church serves areas in Foxwood, offering resources to the whole of the community. Alongside regular worship, they also run a community cafe, offering free refreshments, snacks, food parcels and provide the space for free for a parent and toddler group. They have their own food bank, supporting local people who are struggling financially. They are using their funding to cover costs towards staff, food and heating to ensure they can keep their core offerings going and to also introduce a new baby group to offer new parents support and companionship. **£4,300**

Sunflowers in York is a community-based organisation, providing well-being and educational activities for Ukrainian refugee children and their families in York since July 2022. They are using their funding to provide fun, community-building activities to help Ukrainian children integrate into their new homes. The kids club sessions support children aged 0 to 17, where they have opportunities to learn, express themselves, enhance their emotional well-being, make friends and integrate into British society. Sessions provide physiological support for children while giving them an opportunity to do activities that they love. All staff and volunteers are Ukrainian refugees with lived experience of the issues faced by the children they cater for. **£4,680**

The Collective Sharehouse, is a 'Give as you can, take as you need' community food support and café, located in Clements Hall. A dedicated team of 30 volunteers, with no paid employees, support around 150 families a week, many being vulnerable and with additional needs. They open 3 sessions/week so that clients can come for a warm drink, social interaction and to collect some essential food to sustain their families.

They also signpost people to other organisations who can help them try to improve their financial position. After talking to the people they support, there were three items they would like to be able to access at the foodbank: fresh vegetables, laundry detergent and cooking oil. The funding has enabled them to get a good supply of all three for the long-term needs of their people. **£5,000**



Toolbox Drama is an inclusive provision for adults with additional needs. They deliver drama, music, dance and singing programmes on a weekly basis, as well as regular outreach workshops and large-scale events. All their activities are accessible to a multitude of needs, whilst also delivering high-quality creative arts activity delivered by experienced performers and practitioners. Because the people they offer sessions to are some of the most vulnerable and potentially isolated adults in York, the sessions always take social time into account. They are using their funding towards staff, overheads, and to offer new Makaton classes and develop a Signing Collective to support people who are non-verbal or use Makaton as a large portion of their communication. **£5,000**

York Women's Counselling Service is a women-led, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to improving the emotional and mental wellbeing of women across York. They provide high-quality one-to-one counselling for women in the York area who are experiencing difficulties as a result of current or past emotional stress and trauma, regardless of their ability to pay, and for as long as they need it.

They are using their funding towards extra room hire for an additional counsellor and to develop a specialised therapy service for women experiencing post traumatic stress. **£5,000**

Welfare Benefits Unit have been working in York for over 50 years and are the experts when it comes to benefit advice. They run a helpline 5 days a week giving a free specialist advice to frontline colleagues in charities and organisations in York who are dealing with clients with benefit queries.

They are using their funding towards staffing a specialist advice line via phone and email to help tackle food and fuel poverty by ensuring people can access and claim their benefit entitlements. **£5,000**

York Travellers Trust's mission is to relieve the poverty, advance the education and promote the health, social and economic welfare of the Gypsy / Traveller community in and around the York area. Their core work includes advice, advocacy, conflict resolution, anti-discrimination and promotion of better health, education, community development and social cohesion. Their funding is going towards staff and overheads so they can extend the hours of their Public Living room and free Community Market, particularly over the winter period. They know this will immediately address the needs for food security and warmth in the local community. The hub has also seen an increase in the diversity of people using it of late and they love the level of community cohesion this has generated. **£5,000**

York LGBT Forum is run entirely by volunteers. They support and advocate for the LGBTQ+ community, providing a safe space for individuals to meet, share experiences and access peer support. In response to requests from members, they are using their funding for community wellbeing events, offering a safe space for the community to attend a series of free activities such as make up tutorials for men and women, voice coaching for transgender members and clothes swaps. Stigma, discrimination, exclusion and rejection puts LGBTQ+ people at high risk of mental illness and these sessions will reduce isolation and create supportive networks thus improving mental health and wellbeing. They are not just sessions, they are lifelines that offer community, connection, and mutual support. **£4,980**

York Inspirational Kids is using their grant to boost activities for autistic and disabled children, fostering skills and promoting social inclusion. Their activities will improve mental health by providing a place disabled/autistic children feel they belong; help to increase confidence; provides social & interaction situations to improve personal skills;

enables them to meet like-minded young people; offers the ability to develop existing personal skills to improve their prospects for social inclusion, transferrable skills and skills to aid the possibility for employment. **£5,000**



Give where you live. Grow what you love.

A word from Celia

The York Community Fund was created by the people of York, for the people of York, and with the people of York. It's a fund built on the belief that local people understand local challenges—and that together, we can build a fairer, more connected city.

York is a city of beauty and opportunity—but also of stark inequality. For too many, the cost of living here makes daily life a struggle. Children face barriers to fulfilling their potential. Others feel isolated or left out—because of poverty, disability, or simply a lack of support.

We believe everyone deserves to live with dignity, safety, and a sense of belonging. And while that might feel far off for some, it's not out of reach.

Across York, grassroots groups are already creating change—offering practical support, connection, and hope. These are the groups the York Community Fund exists for.

As a donor, your gift does more than help a single project. It sustains the organisations behind the work—keeping the lights on, the doors open, and the staff and volunteers equipped to respond to real needs. It enables groups to be resilient, adaptive, and impactful.

And the impact goes further still. The Fund helps build a stronger, kinder York—filling gaps in vital services, fostering inclusion, and strengthening the bonds that hold our communities together.

Your support helps make all of this possible. One donation to the York Community Fund supports many causes—amplifying your impact across the city.

If you love York and want to be part of shaping a more just and connected future here, this is a powerful way to give back.

Let's grow the circle of care and opportunity—together.



Discuss your giving with us

Don't hesitate to contact Celia directly on 07519 485103 to talk through your giving options.