



48

grants awarded



York
Community
Fund

£

£145,307

total grants awarded

Impact Report 2026

01 April 2025 - 31 March 2026



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 the cost of living crisis

CLIMATE ACTION

- Supporting environmental improvement and increasing walking and cycling

EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

- Providing culturally appropriate activities, promoting equity, diversity & inclusion, and providing advocacy for people experiencing disadvantage

HEALTH & WELLBEING

- counselling, mentoring, befriending and advocacy, parenting support, providing opportunities for social interaction, confidence building and/or skills development

41 micro grants of £1000



7 collaboration grants average £14,900

12.5%

Organisations were first time applicants

>1 The average number of full time staff



27 The average number of volunteers



Where the fund comes from

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

In 2025, the panel met and awarded 48 grants totalling £145,307, supporting projects that address the needs of local people. The fund was distributed as 41 micro grants and seven collaboration grants.

The collaboration grants give charity leaders dedicated time and space to build relationships, test new ideas, and strengthen the foundations that make partnership work possible. This is about deepening local connections and exploring new ways of working for resilience.

The micro grants are all about funding overheads, pilot projects, providing activities and small capital items.

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 organisations, led and delivered by people with lived 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, with 6 groups being funded for the first time.

The groups and people supported

In 2025, all the groups are small local charitable organisations with on average 0.8 full-time staff members, 3.4 part-time staff and 27 volunteers.

Annual income was only recorded for the groups receiving collaboration grants, and of those, 42% have an annual income of under £100,000, and another 42% under £200,000. Just one group had an annual turnover of just over £350,000.

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

Sustainable Development Goals

The majority of the community groups supported cited Good Health and Wellbeing as their primary goal, with others aiming for reduced inequalities



Supported organisations at a glance:

COLLABORATION GRANTS

- | | |
|---|---|
| Clown Space CIC - £14,000 | MySight York |
| Generate - £14,700 | New Visuality |
| Lived Insights - £14,700 | Night Light Theatre CIC |
| MySight York - £15,900 | Older Citizens Advocacy York |
| OSCAR's Paediatric Brain Tumour Charity £14,400 | Out of Character |
| Tang Hall Community Centre - £14,700 | Panda Playgroup |
| York In Recovery - £15,900 | Poppleton Community Railway Nursery Ltd |
| | Refugee Action York (RAY) |
| | Shopmobility York |
| | Snappy |

MICRO GRANTS - all £1,000

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 2nd Acomb St Stephen's Scout Group | St. James the Deacon Parish Church |
| Chocolate & Co | Tang Hall Community Centre |
| Derwent Lions CIO | The Collective Sharehouse Ltd |
| Emerging Voices | The Hut York Ltd |
| Family Matters York | The Island |
| Foxwood Tai Chi Group | The Land Haxby |
| Friends of Rowntree Park | The Mixed Bag Players |
| Gateway (York) CIO | The Tiny Roar CIC |
| Generate | Welfare Benefits Unit |
| Good Organisation (Social Ventures) CIC | YoCo: York Central Co-Owned |
| Insight2wellbeing | York City Church |
| Kyra Women's Project | York Disability Rights Forum |
| Lived Insights | York Environment Forum |
| Move the Masses | York In Recovery |
| Musical Connections | York Travellers Trust |
| | York Ukrainian Society |

Funded organisations - Collaboration Grants

The collaboration grants awarded by York Community Fund are giving community leaders the time and space to reflect, learn and strengthen partnership working across the city. Each organisation is using this dedicated capacity to deepen relationships, test new ideas and build more connected support for local people.

OSCAR's Paediatric Brain Tumour Charity is working with partners to develop a clearer pathway for children who receive specialist treatment outside York. They are strengthening relationships across services and identifying gaps in support, so families feel less isolated when their care returns locally. **£14,400**

MySight York is working with OCAY to develop a new partnership that brings together advocacy and vision-support services for older people with sight loss. They are using this time to align their approaches, strengthen referral pathways and build a more seamless experience for people who often struggle to navigate fragmented support. **£15,900**

Lived Insights is creating a Partnership Lab where organisations, leaders and people with lived experience can explore new ways of working together. They are investing in the relationships, trust and shared learning needed to support genuine co-production and more responsive local services. **£14,700**

Clown Space CIC is collaborating with other York organisations to expand accessible creative provision. They are strengthening mentoring relationships and developing new approaches to reach people who are currently not accessing support or creative opportunities. **£14,000**

York in Recovery, in partnership with Over the Rainbow CIC, are developing a Queer Recovery group to address the lack of LGBTQ+ specific addiction support in York. They are building community connections, learning from best practice and shaping a pilot that reflects the lived realities of LGBTQ+ people in recovery. **£15,900**

Tang Hall Community Centre is using its grant to reflect on and strengthen collaborative working across the Centre. They are improving communication, reviewing partnership roles and enhancing the Friday morning support hub so it can continue to offer reliable, well-coordinated support to local residents. **£14,700**

Generate is strengthening their leadership capacity to build and deepen collaborative relationships across York. Through the Trans Inclusivity Network, they are creating a safe and accountable space for organisations to share best practice, challenge assumptions and work collectively to improve trans-inclusive support. **£14,700**



Funded organisations - Micro grants

Micro grants are designed to help fill gaps in local provision by supporting practical needs, strengthening small community projects and enabling organisations to respond quickly to what local people need. All of these grants received £1,000.

The Collective Sharehouse Ltd is continuing to buy weekly fresh vegetables for their Give as you can, Take as you need food support and café. This ensures families can access nutritious food with dignity.

The Land Haxby is running family fun sessions. These sessions offer local families low-cost, accessible activities that help build community connection.

Insight2wellbeing is creating an accessible digital presence and began using virtual platforms to reach impaired and disabled peers, improving access to wellbeing support.

York Ukrainian Society is covering venue hire and associated costs for weekly support sessions for Ukrainian refugees. These sessions provide community, advice and a sense of stability for people rebuilding their lives.

Family Matters York is supporting their core overheads, helping them maintain consistent delivery of family support across the city.

York Travellers Trust is producing and distributing hampers to families most in need, easing financial pressure for Traveller families facing hardship.

Chocolate & Co purchased a new coffee machine to support the running of their community café and training space.

Chocolate & Co is a York-based charity that provides training and employment opportunities for people who have faced significant challenges, including homelessness, involvement with the criminal justice system or periods of instability. Through structured placements, they help individuals build confidence, gain practical skills and take steps toward rebuilding their lives.

They are filling a crucial gap for people who are often isolated or overlooked. Many of their beneficiaries have experienced chaotic circumstances and limited support networks, leaving them with few opportunities to re-enter the workforce. By offering skills development, emotional support and a welcoming community environment, they create a pathway for people to regain stability, purpose and connection.



Older Citizens Advocacy York (OCAY) is using their grant to support their overheads and service delivery, ensuring older people continue to receive vital advocacy and guidance.

New Visuality is delivering art workshops and an exhibition reimagining the refugee experience, giving voice to lived stories and building understanding through creativity.

Emerging Voices are strengthening their fundraising and visibility by purchasing a portable contactless donations device, branded t-shirts and logo stickers.

Welfare Benefits Unit is funding 45.5 hours of dedicated Welfare Rights Advice Line staff time, increasing capacity to support people navigating complex benefits issues.

The Island is training 20 new volunteers to become youth mentors, expanding their ability to offer one-to-one support to young people who need a trusted adult.

The Hut York Ltd is supporting their running costs, helping them continue offering creative and social opportunities for adults with additional needs.

Good Organisation (Social Ventures) CIC is bringing staff, volunteers, their advisory board and beneficiaries together for facilitated reflection and strategic planning.

Refugee Action York (RAY) is funding a youth residential and follow-on programme for 24 refugee and asylum-seeking young people, giving them space to build confidence, friendships and resilience.

Musical Connections provided free, accessible transport for vulnerable older people to attend their weekly musical sessions. Musical Connections is a well-established York charity that brings the proven benefits of music to isolated and vulnerable older people in both care and community settings. They also work closely with universities and schools across the city, running a large programme of intergenerational events that help bridge generations and build understanding.

These regular sessions offer far more than music. They create a sense of belonging, spark friendships and give people something joyful to look forward to each week. For many attendees, transport is the biggest barrier to taking part, and this funding ensured that those who are most isolated could continue to access uplifting, confidence-building activities that improve wellbeing and reduce loneliness.



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'



Kyra Women's Project is delivering two five-week neurodivergent creative writing courses for 12 women. Kyra is a York-based organisation providing holistic wellbeing support for women, particularly those experiencing mental ill-health, those in recovery, and those navigating complex life challenges. Their work creates a safe, supportive environment where women can build confidence, develop new skills and reconnect with their own strengths.

These creative writing courses offered a gentle, accessible way for women to express themselves, explore their experiences and build community with others who understand their journey. By combining creativity with emotional support, Kyra helped participants grow in confidence, reduce isolation and take positive steps toward improved wellbeing.

Snappy is purchasing a secure, weatherproof storage unit for toys, games, bikes and sensory equipment used by children and young people with additional needs.

Shopmobility York is supporting their overheads, helping them continue offering mobility equipment that enables people to access the city centre.

YoCo: York Central Co-Owned accessed professional support to create a lively website, events, site visits, newsletters and press coverage, increasing visibility for their community-led housing project.

York Environment Forum is funding IT packages used to organise the Environment Festival and share information online.

MySight York is supporting the running costs of their Specialist Equipment and Information Service, ensuring people with sight loss can access tailored advice and practical tools.

York Disability Rights Forum is using their grant to support the annual Quiet Pride event for LGBTQ+ people who are disabled and/or neurodivergent, providing an inclusive, sensory-considerate celebration.

Foxwood Tai Chi Group is covering tutor fees and room hire for nine weeks of sessions, keeping classes affordable and accessible.

St James the Deacon Parish Church is using their funding to contribute to the wages of a Family and Community employee supporting local families through outreach and activities.

Night-Light Theatre CIC supported the costs of running their Create-to-Connect programme. Night-Light Theatre provide arts-for-wellbeing programmes, dramatherapy, and create theatre and film with hard-to-reach audiences across Yorkshire and the Humber. Their work takes place in forensic mental health settings, prisons, hospitals, pupil referral units, rehabilitation centres and community spaces, reaching people who are often excluded from traditional arts provision.

Their programmes focus on supporting people facing homelessness, mental health challenges and addiction, offering creative tools that build confidence, expression and connection. At the heart of their work is a strong social-justice commitment: a dedication to promoting hope, highlighting strength and resilience, and ensuring that people whose voices are rarely heard have the opportunity to tell their stories.



Out of Character supporting the core costs of their inclusive theatre company, enabling adults with lived experience of mental ill-health to create, perform and build community.

2nd Acomb St Stephen's Scout Group is funding safety checks for 10 scout minibuses, ensuring young people can travel safely to activities and camps.

The Mixed Bag Players purchasing materials to build puppets, accessed professional support to develop their legal structure and funded a mental health first aid course.

Lived Insights supporting staff costs to continue delivering their weekly café in Walmgate, offering a welcoming space for connection and community-led insight.

Generate is delivering a mentoring programme offering tailored one-to-one support for trans adults, helping people access guidance, confidence and peer connection.

Tang Hall Community Centre funded their annual FareShare subscription for the Breakfast Club, ensuring families can access nutritious food.

York in Recovery providing food supplies and other essentials for Brekkie@TheHub for an entire year, offering community and stability for people in recovery.

Panda Playgroup purchased outdoor play and learning equipment, enriching children's learning and exploration.

The Tiny Roar CIC is co-designing and delivering a programme of free events for the Make Space York Festival 2026.

Move the Masses is continue to deliver the Move Mates project, helping people build confidence, mobility and social connection through regular walking support. Move the Masses is a charitable organisation in York focused on increasing wellbeing through movement, with a mission to help more people become physically active so they can benefit from improved physical health, better mental health and stronger emotional wellbeing. They run a range of projects designed to make movement accessible and enjoyable for people of all ages and abilities.

Move Mates pairs trained volunteers with people who need encouragement, companionship or confidence to get out walking. For many participants, these walks provide structure, motivation and a vital social connection. By supporting this project, the funding helped more people experience the transformative impact of regular movement, reducing isolation and improving overall wellbeing.



Gateway (York) CIO supporting the running of their warm space, where people can also access additional services and signposting.

Friends of Rowntree Park are installing a rainwater harvesting system, composting equipment and essential furniture to support sustainable gardening and community activity.

Derwent Lions CIO provided a free Christmas party for care home residents, including all necessary transport, bringing joy and connection to people who may otherwise be isolated.

York City Church purchased acoustic panels for The Citadel Wellbeing Hub, improving sound quality and creating a calmer, more accessible environment for community activities.

Poppleton Community Railway Nursery Ltd is purchasing storage cupboards and worktops for their new community building, improving organisation and supporting wider community use.

A word from Celia

Over the past year, the York Community Fund has shown what happens when a city chooses to act together. Through 41 micro-grants and seven larger collaboration grants, we've seen community organisations grow stronger, new partnerships take shape, and practical support reach people who need it most.

These grants vary in scale, but they share a single aim: enabling grassroots groups to respond quickly, creatively, and compassionately. Micro-grants help ideas take off and keep small organisations moving. Collaboration grants give groups the stability to work together on deeper, longer-term solutions. Together, they help keep community spaces open, support neighbours to look after one another, and create opportunities for people to thrive.

What makes this Fund unique is that it is designed and decided by local people. Those with real experience of the issues shaping our city help set priorities and choose where funding goes.

Their insight ensures every pound is used where it will make the greatest difference.

But the need in York continues to grow. Community organisations are working harder than ever, and they cannot meet rising demand alone.

That's why I'm asking businesses, individuals, and anyone who cares about this city to join us.

A donation to the York Community Fund doesn't just support one project – it strengthens an entire network of care. It empowers local people to shape solutions that reflect real life. And it helps build a York where everyone has the chance to live with dignity, connection, and opportunity.

If you believe in that future, I invite you to help drive this work forward. Together, we can build a stronger, fairer York where everyone has the chance to flourish.



Discuss your giving with us

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