Developing a Social Economy fit for the 21st century
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Introduction and background

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to explain Community CVS’s changing role in supporting our local communities to develop a social economy fit for the 21st century.

1986
31st January registered as a charity ‘Blackburn and District Council for Voluntary Service’ with 26 members.

1990
Move to the St John’s Centre (which became our home for the next 21 years).

1991

1998
Change of Name to become Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service (split Hyndburn and Ribble Valley into a separate charity).

2002
Start distributing small grants on behalf of national Government.

2003
Set up Older People’s Forum and Circle of Friends to provide a voice for and a vehicle for mutual aid and support for older people and people with learning disabilities respectively.

2005 – 2008
CVS support the development and growth of local social enterprises (e.g. East Lancashire Moneyline, Jubilee Tower Credit Union, BwD Healthy Living, etc.).

2007
CVS lead role in supporting carers to set up Blackburn with Darwen Carers Service and setting up the Care Network as independent charities.

2008
CVS help BwD Interfaith Forum become an independent charity.

2010
Department of Health funded Fast 4wd project – CVS begin its journey pursuing an asset based community development approach (using recovery support volunteers) towards exploiting volunteer social prescribing solutions with the recovery community.

2011
Complete £2.5million Boulevard Centre Development – CVS, Nightsafe, Older People’s Forum and other local charities move in. CVS support local charities to set up the Families, Health and Well-Being Consortium.

2012
Undertake research for the NHR and the Bowel Cancer Screening Programme leading to piloting new engagement techniques to increase the completion of bowel cancer kits.

2011 – 2013
Part of the national NCVO Volunteering in Stronger Communities pilot, which was externally evaluated by Sheffield Hallam University as being better at getting people into work than the Government’s Work Programme.

2013
Develop new vision, values and mission placing social action at the core of what we do.

2013 – 2016
Department of Health funded Volunteering on Prescription pilot to trial boost the use of volunteers as navigators/ connectors to support people with mental health conditions.

2015
Begin to support volunteer managed community centres across Blackburn with Darwen. Rebrand CVS as ‘Community CVS’ to emphasise the importance of communities.

2016

2017
Start the Strengthening Volunteering in Blackburn project / Begin partnerships with Brian Mercer Charitable Trust and Eric Wright Charitable Trust.

2018
Formally launch the Community Pledge in association with Blackburn Community Foundation and Darwen Community Foundation.

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21st February 2018 Company Number: 2668971 Charity Number: 1008190
Achieving an integrated economy that works for everyone

Three interrelated economies

The Centre for Local Economic Studies and other commentators recognise that to have a successful resilient inclusive economy relies on having positive and productive interdependencies between the public economy, the commercial economy and the social economy.

The role of public sector organisations

In order to develop a social economy fit for the 21st century, everyone has a role. Our public economy partners need to protect the grants they provide to the smaller voluntary, community and faith sector organisations and open up commissioning opportunities for the larger charities and social enterprises. They should explore innovative ways to support the social economy using social prescribing models, using social value tools and social impact measurement as part of commissioning processes and supporting the development of collaborative partnership frameworks.

The role of commercial organisations

Commercial organisations wanting to support the local community and the social economy should look to engage with donating finances, donating time (i.e. volunteering) and donating ‘in kind’ resources as part of their corporate social responsibility obligations. Community CVS have set up Community Foundations as one easy to use mechanism to get involved with the social economy within Blackburn or within Darwen.

The role of ‘not for private profit’ organisations

In return, ‘not for private profit organisations’ enter a ‘social contract’ to go beyond the civic or transactional relationship to support the local community and its residents. We build lasting trusting communal relationships that support individuals for as long as is necessary, that treats them with dignity and respect but has an honesty that demands reciprocity with the individual giving something back in return. There needs to be a bond of mutual aid and support. The role of volunteering and use of volunteers is central to this. It is central to achieving a different community dynamic and emphasising the importance of two members of the community coming together to support each other. As an interdependent economy we can help to relieve some of the pressures that the public economy faces; we can also help to support current workforces and potential future workforces within the commercial economy.

The social economy in Blackburn with Darwen

Registered General Charities and Not for Profit Organisations regulated by the Charity Commission, Companies House or the Financial Conduct Authority

The table below illustrates the number of regulated organisations which operate in Blackburn with Darwen and have their registered office within the area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<td>£500,000 to £249,999</td>
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<td>Less than £50,000</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>115</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>176</td>
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In 2016, the 242 organisations had an annual income of £316,976,419 and net assets of £567,788,578. By sub sector the income divides as follows:

- 59% early years, primary and secondary education
- 12% social housing
- 5.2% health
- 5.2% adult and young people’s social care and welfare
- 6% religious organisations
- 5% employment support and training providers
- 2.8% international activities
- 2.2% environment
- 1.5% economic, social and community development
- 1.0% culture, arts, sports and recreational and social clubs
- 0.6% grant making foundations and trusts
- 0.5% umbrella organisations (e.g. CVS, FHWB Consortium, etc.)

Overall there are over 1,000 not for profit organisations operating within Blackburn with Darwen. The vast majority are operating ‘below the regulatory radar’ being unincorporated associations, community groups, faith groups, mutual support groups, arts and sports clubs, etc. These groups are the lifeblood of our local communities. We need to develop and widen the range of activities that these grassroots organisations provide and make it easier for people to find out what is available and how they can provide help and support.

There has been significant growth over the past 15 years, but in the last five years it is definitely the case that smaller charities and social enterprises are finding it financially difficult. The number of organisations closing or merging with a neighbouring charity or social enterprise has been rising and there are a number of organisations who have not submitted their annual returns or accounts. The impact of austerity is beginning to have an effect within the voluntary, community and faith sector.

In 2016, the 242 organisations had an annual income of £316,976,419.
The next five years

Challenges

Generally across the board, not for profit organisations within the social economy are reporting increased demand for support and the support needs of the people they are supporting are becoming more challenging and complex. Key challenges include:

- High levels of deprivation and poverty (especially child/family poverty, food/fuel poverty, etc.)
- High levels of economic inactivity and economic exclusion, which presents a challenge for achieving inclusive growth and supporting everyone to make an economic contribution to the prosperity of Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire
- Growing challenges of inequality and hidden populations
- Challenges of loneliness and social isolation, especially for the frail, elderly and for disabled people (physical, mental or learning disabilities)
- More people feeling digitally excluded as public services, universal credit, etc. become digital by default and commercial services (banking, etc.) move more on-line
- Greater demand on community effort to maintain community assets, public spaces and our environment

Priorities

1. To build strong collaborative partnerships that span the public, commercial and social economies to address the above challenges.
2. To encourage more organisations and individuals to give what they can in terms of time and money to support local charities, community groups and good causes and get involved in making a difference to communities on their doorstep.
3. To develop models of social prescribing and the social economy offer that can help to transform the health and social care system whilst supporting the values and principles at the heart of our NHS and social care system.
4. To develop the opportunities and make the connections to help social movements to emerge around issues of common concern such as:
   a. Food
   b. Physical activity
   c. Combating poverty and achieving inclusive growth
   d. Combating loneliness and social isolation
5. To promote volunteering and the five ways to well-being as an effective way of helping individuals with their own personal and social development and giving people the confidence to pursue their dreams
6. To raise the profile of the social economy and its importance to our communities and their economies.

There is an overarching challenge to intervene earlier and prevent what some commentators have described as the perfect storm of reductions in available resources combined with an ageing population who are facing more complex social conditions.
The role of community infrastructure

The Inclusive Growth Commission has argued that economic and social policy are interdependent and that there should be investment in social infrastructure, including community development and capacity building to help achieve economic outcomes for everyone. The commission felt there was a need to invest in ‘local anchor institutions’.


IPPR North suggests that the role of community infrastructure going forward should focus on 5 functions:-

1. A leader: identifying the needs for their local area and directing influence and resources to address priorities
2. A broker: brokering, building and sustaining relationships between a wide range of people and organisations between and within sectors
3. A platform: creating physical and digital space for new forms of civic engagement
4. System changer: developing new ways of involving civil society in achieving social change
5. A champion: ensuring that civil society has a strong and effective voice


The Independent Commission on the Future of Local Infrastructure suggested a vision for community infrastructure as a conveyor, bringing people, organisations and sectors together in solidarity and mutual support, and working within and across geographic boundaries and retaining strong links with the communities it serves. The report suggests 10 things community infrastructure should focus on:

1. Forge productive relationships with local communities, public bodies and local businesses to create a supportive environment for social action
2. Have the skills, knowledge and capacity to seize new opportunities, face new challenges and adjust to changing circumstances
3. Focus scarce resources sensibly, based on evidence of need and greatest potential social impact, using principles appropriate to the local area
4. Provides strong leadership that enables, empowers and develops social action
5. Keeps up-to-date with developments in relevant areas as impact assessment techniques, technology and data sharing and social finance
6. Monitor, assess and reflect on the impact of its own work
7. Convene ‘a voice’ for local communities to shape policy and influence decision-makers at all levels on behalf of local people
8. Provide effective diagnosis of the capabilities and needs of local groups to promote high quality services driven by good governance and strategic change management


Community CVS vision and values

“A vibrant community, which is independent, resilient and sustainable, where local people from all walks of life support each other to achieve their potential and lead healthy productive lives”

To do this we will be:-

Inspiring people and organisations to action: through volunteering, through donating money or resources to make a positive contribution to the life of the community

Connecting people and organisations across all sections of society: helping to create the social networks across our communities, across the three economies to instigate positive change

Influencing decision makers: to listen to local residents, charities, community groups and social enterprises, who have a voice to shape key decisions about the local community

Developing charities, social enterprises and projects: building the capabilities of existing local organisations and helping to set up new organisations and activities to meet identified priorities and needs within our local community

Targeting our support to the most vulnerable within society and the more deprived neighbourhoods within our community to maximise our impact

Our core values are:-

Community stewardship
- We value service to the community over self-interest and believe that everyone has a responsibility to be involved in looking after our community and making it a better place to live, to work, to learn, to volunteer, to get on with each other, to have fun and enjoy life.
- We need to look after the environment and promote sustainable forms of development.

Co-operation
- We value co-operation and actively encourage individuals and organisations to work together in partnership for the benefit of the community.
- We will build collaborative partnerships with not for profits, with public bodies and with the business community across the three economies for the benefit of the community.

Fairness
- We value social justice, equality and solidarity and strive to achieve a more equal society as a way of supporting the social, economic and environmental well-being of everyone within the community.
- We respect people’s similarities and differences and treat people in an equitable and fair manner irrespective of their age, gender, disability, ethnicity, faith or belief or sexual orientation.

Voluntary action
- We value voluntary action, which is activity that is not pursued for private gain or profit but for social benefit and to put something back into our community.
- We believe volunteering is a valuable part of life that contributes to health and well-being.

Willingness to listen, learn and innovate
- We value and are willing to try new ways of working alongside more tried and tested approaches.
- We are interested in listening to people’s ideas and learning from other people in order to improve what we do and the impact we have.

Mission statement
“To achieve positive social change by inspiring people and communities through social action”
Support for vulnerable adults facing severe and multiple disadvantage

5 ways to well-being
Who regularly engage in each of the activities on at least a weekly basis

Bowel Cancer Screening Programme

Note: 85 individuals supported for at least 3 months

Note: 86 individuals supported for at least 3 months

Volunteering

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<tr>
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<th>2017 – 2018</th>
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<tr>
<td>Number of people registered</td>
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<td>Volunteer hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Value of volunteering ($)</td>
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<td>Enquiries about volunteering</td>
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<td>749</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Sharing volunteer good practice and promoting volunteering

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015 – 2016</th>
<th>2017 – 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Practitioner Network meetings</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of attendees at Practitioner Network meetings</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of volunteers involving organisations supported at network meetings and by promoting their volunteer opportunities</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Support

Targeting our support to the most vulnerable within society to improve their health and well-being and future life chances.

Education, health and social care

Over the past 10 to 15 years, Community CVS has been developing new innovative ways to support various vulnerable groups to improve their own health and well-being, take control and make decisions that improve their future life chances.

The new ways involve elements of the following:

- Providing social spaces where peer support can naturally take place within a friendly supportive environment that is fun and focused on activities that the people share an interest in
- Providing information, advice and support in a non-judgemental way that allows people to make informed choices about how they want to improve their own life and the lives of their family (the jargon of co-production)
- Utilising volunteers, both those with ‘lived experience’ and residents from all walks of life (a blend that reflects our community)
- Describing processes using everyday language that is easy to understand – not over complicating matters or using technical language that do not need to be over complicated or over professionalised
- Helping to connect people to opportunities across the public, commercial and social economies and encouraging them to move freely to opportunities that are right for them at that moment in their life
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a) Older people

Assisted shopping – helping older people or disabled people to get out of the house, go shopping and have a chat and brew with a friendly face. Community CVS maintained this important activity in July 2016, when a partner charity did not have the necessary resource to continue its operation.

Bowel cancer screening programme – helping older people aged 65 to 74 years to understand the importance of completing and returning the bowel cancer screening kit. Community CVS completed initial research in 2012 into how to improve engagement techniques within particular deprived neighbourhoods and with particular low uptake groups (e.g. BME, learning disabilities, etc.). Various approaches have been piloted and the latest one involves a team of six people delivering call for a kit clinics across Lancashire and South Cumbria. Edge Hill University are evaluating this approach.

Older People’s Forum – helping older people to have a collective voice and take the lead in engaging to find out older people’s views, developing social activities, events and trips that help to combat isolation and loneliness and generally support older people within community settings. Community CVS has been supporting the forum since its creation in 2003 and currently employs the development officer that supports the forum.

b) People in recovery from alcohol or substance misuse

Since the introduction of the Fast 4wd project in 2010, Community CVS has recruited and trained residents to volunteer as recovery support volunteers and provide peer support to people in recovery to help them develop and grow, and become valuable members of the community – volunteering and participating in community groups.

One group that Community CVS has supported from its inception is VOICE. It is a recovery-led group that supports both people in recovery and the wider community. All its activities are delivered by volunteers.

The group has developed strong links with business, including Herbert Parkinson, Tesco, Costa Coffee. The group also won a national award from the Great Places Housing Group for the fantastic work it does, which is richly deserved. Activities the volunteers deliver include:

- The weekly Saturday morning breakfast club – which feeds over 1,400 people each year and provides a valuable social setting for sharing information, advice and support
- The Sunday Family Club – which brings people from all walks of life together and allows parents to spend quality time with their children and provide a space for peer support and mutual aid. The club supports over 60 families
- Distributes food parcels from the Food Share initiative

SENDIASS – in July 2015, we launched the SENDIASS service (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service). It builds on the parent partnership service that we delivered for the previous ten years. We provide independent impartial advisors that can help children, young people and families to navigate the processes involved in getting help and support for your children and young people, allowing families to make informed choices and helping everyone to find solutions that are in the best interest of the child or young person.

Circle of Friends is an independent peer support group run by and for people with learning disabilities and other support needs. Community CVS has supported the group since 2003 and helps the group to secure small grants and put on weekly or fortnightly activities that the group want to participate in.

b) Mental health conditions

From 2013 to 2016, we delivered a Volunteering on Prescription Pilot for the Department for Health developing a new approach where GPs and other health and social care professionals could refer people with mental health conditions to Community CVS where they would gain assistance from a volunteer community navigator to help the individual to join community groups, social activities, volunteer or receive other forms of help from the voluntary, community or faith sector to improve their health and well-being and overall quality of life.

Social prescribing

Our work with people in recovery from alcohol or substance misuse and with people with mental health conditions has received a national profile and featured within the Local Government Association’s Guide to Social Prescribing – Just What the Doctor Ordered (May 2016). Using the ways to well-being to support people experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage

In 2015-2016, we started to pilot a new way of using the New Economics Foundation’s Five Ways to Well-Being model as a way of monitoring the distance travelled for the people we support. We devised a simple questionnaire that we get our participants to complete when they start, at 3 months and at 6 months. We have produced annual Ways to Well-Being Reports for 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 and have incorporated into two major projects for the next three years.

The first is the Strengthening Communities Volunteering in Lancashire project (worth £2.4million), which started in February 2017 and aims to support 726 individuals, who are unemployed or economically inactive to move closer to the labour market and into work. The second is our Ways to Well-Being project (worth £313,595 and funded by the Big Lottery Fund), which started in August 2017 and will support people facing severe and multiple disadvantage to become more resilient and improve their well-being.

Men Dive In FC is a mixed football team that participates in a social inclusion leagues and provides an opportunity for people with mental health conditions, learning disabilities, in recovery, having an offending background or some other support need, to do something positive, have fun, mix socially with a diverse mix of people and provide mutual support.
Inspiring people and organisations to action to build community resilience.

Collaborative partnerships

We believe collaborative partnerships are the best way of maximising our collective resources and capabilities to have the biggest impact within our local communities – especially focusing on collaborating with smaller charities and community groups. Examples of how we collaborate in practice for maximum impact. Simple examples include our willingness to employ people through partnership agreements with Blackburn Foodbank, with Blackburn with Darwen Older People’s Forum and with Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Forum to allow their trustees to concentrate on making a difference whilst CVS ensure that the staff are employed correctly and can work in a pleasant safe environment with minimum fuss.

Mobilising the public vote

By using our connections, our use of electronic communications and social media, we have been able to mobilise the public vote to secure three grants over the past 5 years for voluntary local community groups (see case study). In each case – the applicant utilised all their own contacts, but asked CVS to get the message out to a wider audience to mobilise the vote to get into the top three responses within the Granada TV region – which we did.

Case study: People’s Millions

Over the past five years, we have helped three local groups to secure nearly £50,000 each from the Lottery’s People’s Millions programme where we have helped South West Angling & Sports Association secure funding for the Dickens Lodge; Creative Support secure funding for the Social Inclusion Football League; and Sliding Doors securing funding for its Opening Doors for Isolated People project. It is probably one of the best success rates across the North West and is testament to the ability of our local community to pull together and support good causes.

Social inclusion football league

CVS regularly provides support to Creative Support to help develop the Social Inclusion Football League alongside Blackburn Rovers Community Trust and other members with teams in the league. CVS supports the Men Dive In FC teams, which are mixed teams of all abilities and made up with people who have learning disabilities, mental health, offending or recovery backgrounds. The team and league provide an opportunity for people to socialise, be active, have fun, do something positive, volunteer to help run the team and provide mutual support to other team members. CVS has helped to secure funding from Awards 4 All and the People’s Millions.

Community centres and neighbourhood community action

In 2015, the local authority asked CVS to support five community enterprises (expanded to 6 in 2017), who manage local community centres, which have been transferred to the volunteer-led enterprises from the local authority under lease agreements. The community enterprises are run entirely by volunteers. We provide help with volunteering, training, funding, etc. Working with the six volunteer-led community enterprises, who manage community centres located within our most deprived neighbourhoods, Community CVS has set up Neighbourhood Community Action (a new charity) so that we can work with the volunteers and their local communities to develop activities. Over the next 12-18 months – we aim to build closer collaborations across the community centres and help to bring much needed additional resource to those community centres to put on a wider range of activities that will meet the priorities within their neighbourhoods.

Big Local Shadsworth with Whitebirk

In 2012, the Big Local Trust gave the Shadsworth with Whitebirk ward £1 million to invest in a community programme over the next 10 years. Working closely with Blackburn with Darwen Healthy Living we helped local residents to develop a vision and community plan for the area. Blackburn with Darwen Healthy Living was selected as the locally trusted organisation to help the residents to develop a partnership that oversees the whole programme. Community CVS has been selected as the locally trusted organisation to help residents to administer a small grants programme for the area and to encourage and support local volunteer-led community groups to apply to the fund. In addition, we are also currently undertaking a scoping exercise to look at the feasibility of developing an indoor activity centre for young people and families within the area.

Interfaith Forum and engaging with faith communities

In February 2006, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council asked CVS to take a lead role in setting up the Blackburn Interfaith Forum. The Forum has been successful in bringing together people from different faiths and backgrounds and has provided a platform for interfaith dialogue and understanding. We have worked with the committee members to develop a business plan that led to the organisation becoming a registered charity as the Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Forum on 11th June 2008. The business plan also led to the Interfaith Forum developing close links with local schools, developing open days at places of worship and promoting dialogue between faiths.

Volunteering into employment and skills

Through our involvement with LACVS and in our own right we are an active partner to the Lancaster and Lancashire wide Better Opportunities programmes and to a separate ESF project, which are focused on helping those furthest away from the labour market to receive support and move closer to the labour market and into work. Our specialism is to use volunteering as a key ingredient in building confidence, skills, experience, feelings of self-worth and motivation to take the step to overcoming whatever barriers they face and moving towards and into work. The programmes are:-

- **Age of Opportunity** – to help people aged over 50 facing multiple barriers to work
- **Invest in Youth** – to help young people aged 16 to 24 years, who are not in education, employment or training
- **Changing Futures** – to support adults facing multiple barriers and facing severe and multiple disadvantage to prepare them for work
- **REACH IT** – to support adults to overcome digital barriers to seeking work
- **ReachIt Digital Inclusion**
- **Strengthening Communities Volunteering in Lancashire**

We believe the above programmes demonstrate the important role that the voluntary, community and faith sector does play and should play within any strategies to achieve inclusive growth. CVs and the wider voluntary, community and faith sector are important intermediaries that can link those furthest away from the labour market with education, employment and training support and provide ongoing support to help people into work and provide aftercare support whilst they are in work to prevent people slipping back. We are ‘local anchor institutions’ that alongside Colleges and training providers have an important role of preparing people for work.
Supporting local charities, community groups and social enterprises to make a difference within Blackburn with Darwen.

**Government grants (2001-2017)**

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<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
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**Small grants distributed by Community CVS over the past 16 years**

- **Community foundations**
  - We have set up two dedicated sister charities to encourage individuals, local businesses, schools and colleges, larger charities and local public sector bodies to raise funds for their local communities. 100% of the funding raised will go to charitable activities in the local community through grants to local charities, community groups and good causes. We have set an annual target to raise £50,000 for Blackburn and £50,000 for Darwen and its surrounding villages. We will welcome the support and help of any individual or organisation to help reach those targets. If you are interested in getting involved with either charity please get in touch.

**Funding advice and workshops**

Community CVS has provided grant funding advice to local charities, community groups and social enterprises since 2001. We have a strong track record of securing grants from the national lottery distributors, the Department of Health, the NHS, the Home Office, DCLG, the Department for Education, from a variety of charitable trusts such as Henry Smith Charity, Lloyds Foundation, Tudor Trust, etc. We hold regular funding workshops to help local groups to make successful applications to a wide range of funders.

**Big Lottery Fund**

One example where our collective efforts within the VCF sector to attract funding to Blackburn with Darwen from national sources which is starting to bear fruit is the Big Lottery Fund. If we look at the table below our performance is rising (our 2017-2018 and with additional capacity we could achieve so much more):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borough</th>
<th>Grant amount</th>
<th>Number of grants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blackburn</td>
<td>1,235,591</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darwen</td>
<td>1,454,302</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over the past 16 years, Community CVS has managed and distributed over £3million in small grants on behalf of public sector partners, including Central Government, Local Government, the NHS and semi-public / semi-community bodies, including the Community Development Foundation, and the Big Local Trust.

**Brian Mercer Charitable Trust and Eric Wright Charitable Trust**

In 2017, both the Brian Mercer Charitable Trust (set up by Brian Mercer – the founder of Netlon – now known as Tensar International) and the Eric Wright Charitable Trust (set up by Eric Wright – the founder of the Eric Wright Construction Group) have both entered partnerships with Community CVS to manage small grant funds on behalf of their charities in recognition of our ability to reach out to grassroots community groups, small charities and community enterprises. We have a three year agreement with the Brian Mercer Charitable Trust and a one year pilot with the Eric Wright Charitable Trust – which we hope to develop and grow.

**Case study: Al Hayat Languages**

Al Hayat Languages, are a small Blackburn based charity, who provide ESOL training for new people settling within our community so that they can integrate successfully. CVS helped the charity to secure a Reaching Communities Grant worth £277,797 for its SPICE project. We also supported them with an External Organisational Strength Review to build their skills and capabilities and in July 2018 developed a partnership between LACVS and Al Hayat Languages that secured a £1million plus contract with Lancashire County Council to deliver ESOL training across Lancashire for the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme.

**We congratulate the success of Al Hayat Languages, BwD Carers Service and Changing Lives, who collectively brought £1,454,302 of Reaching Communities grants to the Borough in 2017-2018. We also congratulate Sliding Doors for their success in the People’s Project and 47 organisations that have secured Awards for All grants in the past two years. We are having a positive impact on bringing Big Lottery Fund resource to Blackburn with Darwen for the benefit of our local communities.**
Connecting people and organisations across all sections of society to give their time freely to improving the quality of life for local communities.

**Volunteer Centre**

We have managed the local Volunteer Centre since the late 1990’s (previously known as a Volunteer Bureau). The Volunteer Centre is part of a national network of Volunteer Centres, which have nationally recognised quality accreditation – which is assured by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations. There is only one Volunteer Centre allowed to operate in each local area, who provide a source of local support and expertise to potential volunteers, existing volunteers and organisations that use volunteers. The Volunteer Centres have to perform the following five functions:-

- Strategic development of volunteering
- Good practice development
- Developing volunteering opportunities
- Voice of volunteering
- Brokerage

We liaise with public sector colleagues to oversee the strategic development of volunteering. We can provide advice on the Investors in Volunteering standard to volunteer involving Organisations. We organise monthly practitioners’ breakfast network meetings for volunteer organisers, who have responsibility for supporting volunteers. We produce a monthly volunteer bulletin with the latest opportunities and a quarterly A to Z of volunteering opportunities across the voluntary, community and faith sector within Blackburn with 139 volunteer involving organisations registered with our Volunteer Centre and having relationships with hundreds of other volunteer involving organisations through our small grant programmes, through our membership and network meetings and events.

**Volunteer Bank**

We also run a Volunteer Bank, and are keen for individuals and organisations to sign up to ‘deposit’ their volunteer offer. We currently have 312 individuals registered on the Volunteer Bank, but are keen to expand the Volunteer Bank to over 1000 people and organisations. We will provide or source necessary training. We can help with DBS checks where necessary. We want to help match people willing to give their time with volunteer-involving organisations, events and good causes that require volunteers. The volunteer will always have the final say on whether they want to tap into any of the volunteer opportunities or not and they can give as much or as little of their time as they want to offer. The Volunteer Bank is a way of being able to make connections easier.

**Volunteers’ Week, Festivals and Events**

Volunteers’ Week is an annual celebration of the fantastic contribution millions of volunteers make across the UK. It takes place from 1st-7th June every year. Community CVS takes to co-ordinate and promote activities taking place within Volunteers Week every year. It would be great if you can plan a volunteer activity to take place within Volunteers’ Week.

Within Volunteers’ Week, we also arrange a volunteer award ceremony each year and distribute certificates to volunteers to thank them for their contributions to our local community. We are keen to hear from companies who wish to sponsor the volunteer awards ceremony. Community CVS manage a volunteer events team, who have contributed to many of the successful events held in Blackburn Town Centre, including the Heritage Festival and the National Festival of Making. Our chair, Paul Mason, is part of the Blackburn Town Centre BID committee and chairs the events sub-committee. We would welcome potential volunteers, who want to join our events team and be part of the volunteer bank.

**Wide Range of Volunteering Opportunities**

We hold probably the largest local database of volunteering opportunities across the voluntary, community and faith sector within Blackburn with 139 volunteer involving organisations registered with our Volunteer Centre and having relationships with hundreds of other volunteer involving organisations through our small grant programmes, through our membership and network meetings and events.

Examples of the types of volunteering opportunities available include:

- Arts and crafts teaching/helping roles
- Assisted shopping and befriending volunteer roles
- Bar assistants, café assistants, catering and hospitality roles
- Community centre assistants, facility management / cleaner roles
- Coaching or counselling roles
- Customer care and shop assistant roles
- Events management and meet and greet roles
- Fundraising roles
- Health champions
- Marketing roles, social media / web master roles
- Mini bus drivers
- Outdoor volunteer roles to help maintain parks, cemeteries, wildlife reserves
- Peer supporters and peer mentors
- Reception and administration roles
- Sport coaching and/or managing teams
- Trustee or committee member roles
- Volunteer community development or youth worker roles
- Volunteer digital buddies and digital champions
- Volunteer handy man or trades roles

There is role for every gift or skill and if there is not one on the list, we can offer your skill set to the organisations we work with and there will be certainly someone out there in need of your help and support.

**National Pilots on volunteering**

We have a national reputation for testing innovative ways of utilising volunteers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Funder Description</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017-19</td>
<td>ESF</td>
<td>Strengthening Communities Volunteering in Lancashire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-16</td>
<td>Department of Health</td>
<td>1 of 25 chosen to pilot new approaches to volunteering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteer on Prescription Pilot – using volunteer community navigators to support people with mental health conditions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-15</td>
<td>NCVO / Dept of Health</td>
<td>1 of 6 chosen by NCVO to participate in their Volunteering in Care Homes Pilot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-13</td>
<td>NCVO / Big Lottery Fund</td>
<td>Volunteering for Stronger Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 of 15 partners chosen by Volunteering England</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-13</td>
<td>Department of Health</td>
<td>Fast 4wd – pioneer recovery support volunteer role to help people in recovery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Acknowledgements

Community CVS would like to thank its funders over the past eighteen years, which have included:

- Big Local Shadsworth with Whitebirk and the Big Local Trust
- Big Lottery Fund
- Blackburn College
- Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
- Blackburn with Darwen NHS Primary Care Trust
- Blackpool NHS Teaching Hospitals Trust
- Brian Mercer Charitable Trust
- Capacitybuilders
- Childrens Workforce Development Council
- Community Development Foundation
- Department for Communities and Local Government / ODPM
- Department for Education
- Department for Health
- Eric Wright Charitable Trust
- European Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund
- Health Foundation
- Henry Smith Charity
- Home Office
- Lancashire Association of Councils for Voluntary Service
- Lancashire Constabulary
- Lloyds Foundation
- NCVO
- NESTA
- NHS England
- Skills Funding Agency
- V-Involved
- Volunteering England

Acknowledgement

We would also like to acknowledge and thank our 200+ member organisations who have supported our efforts throughout our existence and the close working relationship we have had with Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council.

Photograph Acknowledgement

The majority of photographs have been taken by Geoff Wilkinson, who has kindly given permission for Community CVS to use them.