

UK Shared Prosperity Fund Edinburgh Newsletter

November 2023

WELCOME

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) programme in Edinburgh has picked up pace with the vast majority of projects into the delivery phase. This summer a website was launched at www.edinburghukspf.org. The site details all funded projects and includes a blog area to allow space for projects to share more information about their work. Additionally, the first UKSPF Edinburgh networking event was held in September. As well as allowing people to meet, this event facilitated learning around the topics of net zero, evaluation, and participation.

A key priority in the Edinburgh UKSPF delivery is equality and inclusion. Care has been taken in the commissioning process to ensure that projects and services include and are tailored to those with protected characteristics. Attention has been given to groups in particular need and/or where there is not sufficient service provision. Whilst this is integral to the design of the programme itself (and to the notion of Levelling Up), it is also something that needs to be a focus of the conversation on an ongoing basis. Even services targeted specifically at groups such as those who are disabled, or those from an ethnic minority background, can challenge themselves about their practices and the extent to which they are accessible and inclusive to all - and there is also a need to be conscious that the external environment is always changing – whether that is new migrant communities arriving in the city, or new examples of best practices to consider. This newsletter particularly highlights some examples of projects actively working to promote equality and inclusion in the city.

Some UKSPF projects have been allocated additional funding in recent months to extend or expand their work. This was made possible through the reallocation of Multiply funds. Multiply sits alongside the three core strands of UKSPF and provides funding to support adult numeracy skills. This has been challenging to implement across Scotland, and therefore UK Government gave permission for the first year of Multiply funds to be reallocated to People and Skills projects. The Multiply programme in Edinburgh is led by the Lifelong Learning team within City of Edinburgh Council and has started delivery this year. We are currently in Year 2 of the UKSPF programme and delivery of Multiply will build over the remainder of this year and into Year 3.

The additional People and Skills projects commissioned through the Multiply underspend have allowed organisations to make direct extensions to their work or broaden the scope of delivery. As before, a particular priority in the commissioning process was to target groups who perhaps had less existing provision.



Southside Soil, Seed & Soul Community Outreach

For example the additional funding has allowed for new ESOL courses to be delivered in two different parts of the city, several projects targeted at economically inactive over 50s, and new digital inclusion work with those from a South East Asian background. For more details on individual projects, please do visit the website here www.edinburghukspf.org.

As we head into the second half of Year 2, we will be continuing to collect data and case studies about the impact of the UKSPF Edinburgh programme and we look forward to continuing to share successes and learning with you in months ahead.

UKSPF Funding is distributed by UK Government through local authorities. It runs 2022 – 2025 and is focused on three core themes: Communities and Place, People and Skills, Supporting Local Business. There is an additional funding stream called Multiply.

The programme management office for UKSPF Edinburgh is based at Capital City Partnership, an arms-length external organisation with expertise in grant funding and working with Edinburgh's third sector. The programme management team works closely with City of Edinburgh Council colleagues to oversee UKSPF delivery and report to UK Government as required.

If you would like to get in touch you can contact the team via ukspf@capitalcitypartnership.org.

Tackling inequalities through digital inclusion

Written by Bobby Veitch, People Know How

Digital poverty affects over 1.7 million households and denies those affected access to digital necessities such as housing, employment, leisure, and financial information. The impacts can be devastating and without essential services and resources available it will continue to affect more lives. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund supports People Know How's [Reconnect service](#) which aims to increase digital inclusion for adults and families, providing digital devices, skills, and connectivity to improve wellbeing.

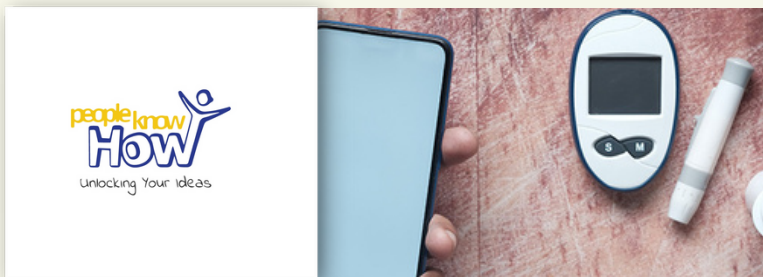
Recently People Know How had the opportunity to address a health inequality for one individual. This came about through working with the Community Help and Advice Initiative (CHAI). CHAI had been working with a young person impacted by type 1 diabetes and living in poverty with no access to digital devices. As a result, the young person was struggling with insulin injections and keeping on top of blood sugar levels.

The Reconnect service was delighted to provide a laptop with the specifications needed. This has meant the young person has been able to be fitted with an insulin pump, allowing her to live her life without the stress and anxiety that can come with tracking blood sugar and injections. Without access to this laptop, her independence and access to things she enjoyed would have been stripped away due to her diagnosis.

"It makes a huge difference – without the laptop, she wouldn't have been able to get a pump. So instead of getting 6-8 injections a day, she can have a normal childhood."

Jane Doyle, Diabetes Nurse

Digital exclusion can have a significant impact on those living with diabetes. People Know How believes that digital connectivity should be recognised as a basic utility, accessible for everyone. As it stands some modern health interventions are only available for those who can afford devices and connectivity, leading to the poverty gap widening and the health of those impacted declining. Read more on this story on People Know How's blog here [Digital technology and diabetes](#).



People Know How Digital Technology



Fresh Start Growing Spaces

Fresh Start Hub – Feeling settled in the community

Written by Abigail Jackson, Fresh Start



Fresh Start Hub is situated in Pilton and provides access to advice, support and information. We provide affordable food in our community pantry, good quality homewares in our shop, community meals, cooking classes in our kitchen and access to 'Growing Spaces', our community gardens across Edinburgh. The Hub is a safe, welcoming, award-winning space, securing a Scottish Charity Award 2023 this year. We receive funding through UKSPF to support this work.

Last year we noticed how many service users did not have English language skills and were asking about classes. We were aware of other provision across the city, but there seemed to be a gap in North Edinburgh. With the kindness of two ESOL trained volunteers, we were able to provide classes in November 2022. Word spread throughout the community and the classes became more popular. With the support of UKSPF funding in 2023 we have been able to support over 20 people to learn English language skills, both at beginner and intermediate level.

The classes support people to feel included, valued and appreciated. They assist people to remove barriers to education, volunteering and employment: *"It's the best! There is a family atmosphere. I have the opportunity to meet other people from different nationalities, it's very interesting"*. The values of respect, collaboration and empowerment are foundational to our work at Fresh Start. We want to offer opportunities and allow people to be in charge of their own journey. We would love to see classes continue in the Hub and are grateful for the support from UKSPF and other funders that makes this possible.

Communities Empowered

Written by Naina Minhas, Networking Key Services (NKS)



Networking Key Services (NKS) works with the South Asian community in Edinburgh, and is supported by UKSPF funding. South Asians make up 6% of the total population in Edinburgh and experience health and socio-economic inequalities, exacerbated during and post-pandemic.

The community struggle with complex problems such as unemployment, domestic violence, and poor access to services. A recent survey by NKS carried out with 115 people revealed that 76% had deteriorating socio-economic circumstances and low mental health status following the pandemic.

NKS has an excellent track record of intensively engaging with the South Asian community over 30 years. This longevity means a strong trusting relationship with local communities and partner organisations. The staff team are from the heart of the communities and understand the challenges for South Asian communities very well. A community-led approach is at the core of all NKS activities. This means involving the community in governance and the design and delivery of services, as well as creating community champions' and enabling participant feedback. In places, NKS facilitates rather than leads the work - for example in the Carers Forum where forum members influence service provision through group advocacy, and the support groups where group members share advice and peer mentoring between themselves.

NKS has not been without challenges in terms of developing meaningful collaborations with communities. The cultural norms within the South Asian communities are such religious and cultural factors restrict women's ability to seek personal development and make social links. The culture of extended families makes it complicated for women with young children to engage in activities. Community workers often need to work through family hierarchies to reach out to young women.

Moreover, economic inequalities for South Asians make their day-to-day life difficult. Men work in casual jobs that entail long hours. The routine of women revolves around men's lifestyle which can restrict their flexibility. Recently, NKS found that many families include males silently struggling to deal with their health conditions at home. Men had no support and were not coming forward with their problems or issues. In South Asian communities, as the head of the family, men are supposed to be in control and don't like to be seen as vulnerable. Experienced NKS workers identified the gaps and began to talk to men when conducting home visits. Through time and conversation, men expressed a need for 'men only' social group. NKS is now encouraging male volunteers, and has set up a mixed group of men and women. Working with men has made it easier to engage with women and provide services to families overall.

NKS is open to all those with protected characteristics who present themselves to access services. NKS strives to be accessible to all through holding information sessions and destigmatising hidden issues in communities. You can find out more by visiting the NKS website here www.nkshealth.co.uk.



NKS Information Sessions

End Poverty Edinburgh marks Challenge Poverty Week

End Poverty Edinburgh is a group aiming to elevate voices of lived experience to influence decision making in order to tackle poverty and inequality in the city. It is supported by UKSPF funding.

On 4 October End Poverty Edinburgh hosted an event as part of Challenge Poverty Week. This was a hard-hitting event sharing first hand experiences and calling for more to be done on issues such as housing and food. You can read more about the event [here](#).

For more information contact ukspf@capitalcitypartnership.org