

VCS Grants Prospectus Key Challenges: a Bristol story

This document should be read alongside 'The VCS Grants Prospectus: a proposed new approach to voluntary and community sector grants' and the 'VCS Grants prospectus: application process'.

Introduction

In economic terms, Bristol is a prosperous city nationally and internationally. Bristol's prosperity is built on a wide and varied industrial base and it is a beautiful and vibrant city with an international reputation as a good place to live and do business, a thriving arts scene and a modern city centre. In 2013 Bristol won top spot in the new Quality of Living Index for the UK's largest cities. Yet, Bristol still faces a number of significant challenges. Bristol's prosperity is not shared by all its citizens: many people face multiple disadvantage. Within the city some of the most prosperous areas in the UK sit side by side with some of the most deprived. The English Indices of Deprivation 2015 again confirms this pattern:

- 16% of Bristol's residents (69,000 people) live in the most deprived areas in England. This figure includes 17,800 children and 10,500 older people.
- In Bristol as a whole, 17% of people are income deprived, 24% of children live in income deprived families, 20% of older people are income deprived and 13% of working age people are employment deprived.
- Bristol has over 40 small neighbourhoods in the most deprived 10% in England for Multiple Deprivation. Of these 26 are in the most deprived 5% in England.

The Bristol neighbourhoods which suffer from high levels of deprivation are the same now as they were in 1999 and the deprivation is persistent.

However deprivation and disadvantage are not just spatial issues concentrated in particular areas of the city. Some people and communities, such as Disabled people, Black and minority ethnic people, lesbian, gay and bisexual people, transgender people, young people, older people, refugees, are more likely to be disadvantaged than others.

Who do we mean by 'disadvantaged people'?

By disadvantaged people we mean those people and communities who lack or are denied resources, rights, goods and services, and who cannot be part of the usual connections, activities and opportunities¹, available to the majority of people in Bristol. We have identified eight factors or challenges that contribute to disadvantage:

- poverty (financial poverty, food poverty, fuel poverty)
- unemployment and underemployment
- physical and emotional ill health

¹ This is based on a definition taken from: Levitas, R., Pantazis, C., Fahmy, E., Gordon, D., Lloyd, E. and Patsios, D. (2007) The Multi-Dimensional Analysis of Social Exclusion. Department of Sociology and School for Social Policy, Townsend Centre for the International Study of Poverty and Bristol Institute for Public Affairs, University of Bristol (page 9)

- lifestyle deprivation (not being able to access services and opportunities in the city)
- low engagement (not participating in the community)
- physical, social and digital exclusion or isolation
- discrimination
- crime and violence

We recognise that this list may not cover everything. We also recognise that people in our communities often face a combination of factors that limit their ability to have the quality of life they would wish for.

The Grants Prospectus vision

Through the VCS grants prospectus we want to take a preventative approach to support disadvantaged people, both those who are unable to withstand the effects of pressures and stresses and those who are likely to reach a point where they can no longer withstand them. Our aim is to build resilience for individuals, families, neighbourhoods and communities of interest.

We want to build on the strengths in the city and to support projects to provide the material and emotional framework for individuals and groups to feel fully part of our communities.

This document expresses the challenges faced by disadvantaged people in the city. We know that this disadvantage impacts on spatial communities and communities of interest who may face multiple, complex and often deep-seated issues. We recognise that these cannot be resolved by this prospectus alone. However the prospectus is a 'call to action' across the city for us to work together for a more equitable city.

Under each of the following 8 Key Challenge headings we show some of the issues faced by the city's disadvantaged residents, as identified by colleagues in the VCS through their day-to-day work and a number of local data sources. These are the things we want to change through Prospectus grant funding. These are given scale by facts and figures taken from recent evidence bases and are further illustrated by examples, based on real life in Bristol.

Challenge: poverty (financial, food & fuel)

Over a quarter of children grow up in poverty in the city. The actual number of children in poverty in Bristol has increased because of the rapidly increasing overall child population. Child poverty is a central determinant of life chances, and impacts on health and wellbeing in multiple ways. We cannot expect to end poverty through the work generated by the prospectus but we do want to support people to be able to make the most of the resources they have.

- Some people are living daily in survival mode and suffer its negative effects – they are unable to plan or therefore change circumstances
- Lack of disposable income results in increased social isolation and decreased health and well-being - 'sitting the kids in front of the TV is free'
- Families regularly have to choose one necessity over another, i.e. food over fuel, transport over service, a bill rather than play etc.
- Families do not know how to feed their families affordable healthy and nutritious meals and some people are not able to provide food for all family members every day of the week
- People in rented accommodation often have higher fuel bills due to poor accommodation or key meter arrangements

Key facts:

- More than 1 in 5 of Bristol's older people (over 60) live in income-deprived households. Across the city this mirrors the pattern of deprivation in general. Impacts may include older people in these areas being unable to heat their home (fuel poverty) or unable to afford appropriate food (malnutrition).
- Almost 6,000 people over 65 could be malnourished or at risk. Individuals who are malnourished experience increased: ill health, hospital admissions, risk of infection, longer recovery times.
- In Bristol there are more children under 16 (25.3%) living in families in receipt of means tested benefits and/or having a low income than the England average (20.6%, 2011).
- 16,900 children & young people in Bristol live in families receiving either Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance (77% of all 0-19 year olds living in poverty).
- One quarter of Bristol's children are growing up in households unable to afford, or have access to, food to make up a healthy diet.
- Half of people in the city eat at least 5 portions of fruit & veg a day. This rate of about 1 in 2 has been broadly consistent for a few years. However, within Bristol this ranges from 39% (Lawrence Hill) to 68% (Clifton).
- In the 2014 Quality of Life survey 13% of respondents said they were finding it difficult to manage financially.

Challenge: unemployment and underemployment

Mapping Bristol neighbourhoods experiencing persistent concentrations of worklessness indicates that it has a spatial dimension. It is clear that there is significant correlation between these neighbourhoods and similar maps of low skills and poor health, although it can be challenging to draw causal links in either direction. Through the prospectus we want to start to tackle some of the complex issues that lead to unemployment and underemployment.

- The unpredictable income and working hours of zero-hour contracts create poverty and isolation
- Some people face language and cultural barriers.
- People live in permanent fear of welfare sanctions and changes and this results in people feeling less able to secure unpaid work-related experience
- Volunteering is increasingly important for people to gain skills and confidence but some people need support to volunteer.
- Some young people continue to leave school with few qualifications, no experience, low aspirations and no access to the networks that would enable them to find work.

Key facts:

- Long-term unemployment in Bristol is significantly worse than the national average, at 10.6 per 1,000 populations (2013)
- Over a quarter of young people are not in education, employment or training (Bristol Economic Briefing, 2013)
- The number of Bristol residents that have been unemployed for more than two years has been growing continually for the last two years.
- Economic Inactivity for White British is 35% with unemployment rate at 4%, only Indian and White Other are more economically active than White British; some BME groups have over double rates of unemployment to White British and Chinese rate of economic inactivity is highest at 56%; for some BME women economic inactivity is well over 50%.

Challenge: physical and emotional ill health

For Bristol overall, health and wellbeing has gradually improved. However, the main story is in the differences within Bristol. The majority of people in Bristol consider themselves in good or very good health but within Bristol “good” health ranges from only 76% in Hartcliffe & Filwood to 91% in Clifton East & Cotham. The impact and interplay of the other 7 factors of disadvantage on health are clear, and through the prospectus we want to focus support on healthy living and improving mental wellbeing.

- The number of people, especially men, living in the city suffering from mental distress is growing
- Some people are not able to improve their well-being through healthy eating
- Increasing numbers of homeless people are presenting with mental health problems
- Some children and young people are not able to be physically active or play outside

Key facts:

- Only 1 in 3 people in Bristol take regular exercise. Adult obesity is rising, and around half are overweight or obese with over 60% of people overweight in South Bristol.
- The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2014) highlights the persistent inequality in life expectancy, being 8.2 years lower for men and 6.1 years lower for women in the most deprived 10% areas of Bristol compared to those in the least deprived 10%; a problem appears to be worsening for women due to economic gender inequality impacts.
- Adults and children in “North & West (outer)” and South Bristol consistently have poorer health outcomes than all other parts of Bristol.
- The last decade has seen unprecedented population growth in Bristol, from 386,500 to 432,500; a rise

of 11.8%, compared to 7.7% across England and Wales (Bristol City Council, 2014). This results in more people living, working, playing and socialising in the same space which has a knock on effect on health and wellbeing.

- Bristol's Community Mental Health Profile (2013) reports that Bristol sits within the worst 25% percentile of adults (18+) experiencing mental distress in the UK.
- Certain BME groups are 40% more likely to be referred to mental health services through the criminal justice system with the same groups having lower than average of referrals from primary care (GPs and community mental health teams).

Challenge: not being able to access services and opportunities in the city

Bristol is a city with a rich and diverse cultural landscape. With theatre, live art, galleries, festivals and events, museums, attractions, sport events and facilities, Bristol can be a vibrant and creative city to live in. However participation levels vary widely across communities. Through the prospectus we want to improve access to these opportunities for disadvantaged communities. We also want to support disadvantaged people to access the services that are there to help them.

- Some people are unable to afford activities outside their immediate neighbourhood (much of the city's cultural offer is city-centre based and therefore not accessible).
- Some people's circumstances prevent them in engaging in fun or social activities
- Some services are not seen as accessible by some groups because of perceived cultural barriers
- Some people lack the confidence and self-esteem needed to enable them to interact and participate in opportunities.
- Some people do not know what services are available, what help is out there or what support they are entitled to.
- There is a lack of understanding, on behalf of the general public, of the barriers a person with a learning disability faces when travelling alone on public transport. Some people can be impatient and rude (Brandon Trust 100 Voices Conference)

Key facts:

- Transport issues are commonly cited as a barrier for people to engage with the wider community in Bristol. It is a particularly significant issue for older people and disabled people but has also been noted as an issue among young people.
- Research shows that people who live in neighbourhoods where they can walk to local services tend to have better social networks and have more social contacts than those who live in areas dependent on high car usage. Those in walkable neighbourhoods are more likely to know their neighbours, participate politically, trust others and be socially engaged.
- The Make Sundays Special evaluation in 2014 showed that very few people attended the events from the most the city's most deprived wards and that only 3% of survey respondents were BME.

Challenge: low engagement (not participating in the community)

National research that included a study in South Bristol showed that feeling part of something matters – and so does having a voice. People need to have someone locally that they can go to for advice and information. It concluded that everything is linked – neighbourhood satisfaction, health satisfaction, social support. There seems to be a link between people's satisfaction with their neighbourhood and their satisfaction with other areas of their lives, such as their health. Through the prospectus we want to support holistic approaches to wellbeing, community engagement and social life.

- Areas of low engagement offer fewer and fewer options for engagement and this then further depresses the opportunities for all
- A lack of natural support networks and positive social contact means that people have no support to fall back on if they need it
- Engagement opportunities are often targeted at those already equipped with the skills, confidence, mobility or experience to actively engage in their communities.
- Communities are becoming more segregated by race and ethnicity as they become settled
- Recent migrant communities can also experience low engagement, both individually and collectively, due to language difficulties or lack of social support networks, or even just due to lack of knowledge about what support is available.

Key facts:

- In 2014, only 25% of Bristol residents felt influential in their neighbourhood.
- More people are getting involved in voluntary work for a charity or community organisation (29% in 2014).
- Over the last decade, the population of Bristol has become increasingly diverse and some local communities have changed significantly. The proportion of the population who are black minority ethnic (BME) has increased from 12% to 22% of the total population. There are now at least 45 religions, at least 50 countries of birth represented and at least 91 main languages spoken by people living in Bristol.
- In July 2014 the University and College Union (UCU) conducted a survey of young people aged 16-24 not in education, employment or training and found 40% feel they are not part of society, 36% believe they will never have a chance of getting a job. The number of Bristol residents that have been unemployed for more than two years has been growing continually for the last two years. If a third of those claiming JSA for more than six months never left the house, as per the UCU survey, that would equate to some 1,752 people in the city.
- The percentage of people who felt that they belonged to their neighbourhood fell last year to 56% in 2014, but the 5 year trend showed no change (57% in 2009).

Challenge: physical, social and digital exclusion and isolation

Recent local research tells us that some people in Bristol are more likely to be isolated and excluded. Social isolation can have physically and emotionally damaging effects resulting in depression, poor nutrition, decreased immunity, anxiety, fatigue, and social stigma. Weak social connections carry a health risk that is more harmful than not exercising, twice as harmful as obesity, and is comparable to smoking 15 cigarettes a day or being an alcoholic.

Through the prospectus we want to support groups affected by exclusion and isolation by developing or building on existing local social networks within individual communities. This includes ensuring that the people affected have a major role in developing the solutions, rather than have interventions imposed upon them.

- Social isolation does not discriminate - there are people living in every neighbourhood and from every walk of life that experience regular isolation
- Older people, people with a limiting health condition and disabled people are particularly vulnerable to social isolation.
- People with learning disabilities are disproportionately affected by social isolation. For example young adults with an autism spectrum condition (ASC) are more likely to never see friends, never get called by friends, never be invited to activities and be socially isolated.
- LGBT young people often feel isolation and emotional distress following rejection by family or friends.
- More and more services are being pushed to online access only and some people do not have access to the internet or the skills to access digital services (such as online shopping and banking).

Key facts:

- Many people and communities who already experience economic, social and health inequalities also face digital exclusion. In Bristol, older people, disabled people, less well-off families and social housing tenants are amongst the most likely to be digitally excluded. When asked „do you regularly use the internet at home“ in the Quality of Life survey, 73% said they did (in 2012), and 15% did not have access to the internet. Figures show a decline in internet usage by age.
- Social isolation is a growing issue which impacts on people’s health & wellbeing. It is estimated that there could be 20,000 people (18-64) experiencing social isolation in the city as well as between 6,300 and 11,400 over 65. (Social Isolation in Bristol 2013, Initial Report).
- Research has noted that some 31% of adults with learning disabilities had no contact with friends, compared to only 3% of adults without learning disabilities.
- Data from the census of 2011 revealed that there are around 40,000 Bristol residents providing unpaid care for others, over 16,000 men and over 23,000 women. When caregiving becomes a full-time activity, the relative or partner’s opportunities for social contact also become severely restricted.
- It is estimated that there are some 26,060 Bristol residents who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) - approximately 6% of the total population of the city. Evidence from the Bristol Youth Links Needs Analysis of 2012 indicates that LGBT young people often feel isolation and emotional distress following rejection by family or friends and can suffer from mental health problems linked to difficulties coming to terms with sexual orientation or gender identity.

Challenge: discrimination

In 2013 two undercover BBC reporters showed that Muslims looking for jobs in Bristol faced possible discrimination. In 2015 we know that people still face barriers to employment and services in the city because of direct or indirect discrimination, for example older people are less likely to have access to a computer but more and more information about services is only available online. Through the prospectus we want to support people to understand their rights and be treated fairly. We want to support communities of interest working together to raise awareness of their needs and to challenge inequality.

- Understanding and tolerance of people from different ethnic backgrounds, races and religions is far from where it should be in a progressive, creative and multi-cultural city like Bristol
- The stigma of mental ill health still affects people and means that they are less likely to tell employers if they are stressed or anxious.
- More people in Bristol seek support because they are discriminated against at work or when accessing goods or services on the grounds of race or disability than any other protected characteristic.
- Carers are not valued by society for their contribution to their communities

Key facts:

- Experiencing racism has shown to triple the likelihood of developing depression and psychosis, experiencing racism from an employer increases risk of depression by 60%.
- Data from annual health checks for 1,400 people with learning difficulties in Bristol showed that they have poorer health outcomes (than people without learning difficulties) and that this is related to the (lack of) support to manage their health.
- There are more complaints of discrimination from BS5 residents than any other area in the city (47% of all complaints in Oct-14 to March-15).
- Black people in Bristol are 4 times more likely to be stopped under stop and search powers than white people.
- 1 in 5 black men in Bristol between the ages of 16-24 are unemployed compared to 1 in 10 white young men.

Challenge: crime and violence

Fear of crime and vulnerability may limit how residents interact in their community and venture out from their homes during the day or night. In 2014 15% of respondents reported that fear of crime affected their day-to-day life compared to 20% in 2012. Whilst this has fallen overall, we know that fear of crime will be greater for some people in our communities, because they may be targeted on the basis of their race, faith, impairment, age, sexual orientation or gender (and gender reassignment).

Through the prospectus we want to support victims or potential victims of targeted and exploitative crime (such as hate crime, domestic abuse and child sexual exploitation) and to support disadvantaged victims of crime to access criminal justice or restorative approaches.

- There is an increase in domestic violence and abuse
- People report feeling unsafe in their community on a regular basis
- There is an increasing awareness of Sexual Exploitation and the needs of young people (aged 18-25)
- Some victims of crime do not feel they have access to criminal justice or restorative approaches.

Key facts:

- In Bristol recorded Sexual Offences have increased by 36%. Crime rates in the five wards with the highest rates have all experienced a decline in rates across the past three years. This suggests there has been an overall decline in crime across Bristol, rather than falls being driven by larger falls in

certain areas.

- Of respondents to the Quality of Life Survey, fear of crime is greater amongst Muslim, LGBT, BME and disabled respondents as well as those living within priority neighbourhoods.
- In 2013/14 in Bristol, 750 crime incidents recorded by police contained at least one hate crime marker. This is a 13 per cent increase on the previous year.
- Around 7,000 domestic violence and abuse incidents were reported to the police in 2013/14. Of these 3,200 were categorised as a crime – representing around a six per cent increase compared against the previous year.
- Recent estimates suggest around 14,000 women and girls in Bristol have been a victim of domestic abuse in the past year.
- It has been estimated in Bristol over 200 young people are at high risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) victimisation and over 80 young people experiencing or having recently been victims of CSE.

Real Life Examples

We intend to have four real-life examples from Bristol to show the impact of a combination of some of these 8 factors on people's lives. These will be inserted here into the final Key Challenges document post consultation.

How voluntary and community sector organisations can use the Key Challenges

We want VCS organisations to tell us how they can use this grant funding to support disadvantaged people and communities to:

- Manage well and have the resources to make the most of money, food & fuel
- Be in work, education or volunteering that is viable and fulfilling
- Improve physical and emotional well being
- Access services and opportunities in the city
- Build supportive networks and be part of the community
- Be physically, socially and digitally included in the life of the city
- Be valued, be treated fairly and have their human rights protected
- Feel safer and have better recourse to criminal and restorative justice

We have clear evidence of who is disadvantaged in our city and where they are. We will expect VCS organisations to tell us in their grant applications what evidence of need their proposals are based on.

Source Documents for these key challenges:

Annual Population Survey West of England 2014

Bristol City Council (2013) *Bristol: State of the City 2013, Mayoral Priorities*

Bristol City Council (2014) Joint Strategic Needs Assessment*

Bristol Mental Health Needs Assessment 2010

Chan, S. (2014) *Bristol Quality of Life Survey 2014, Briefing Note* (Bristol City Council)

Clarke, D. (2013) *Social Isolation in Bristol, 2013* (Bristol City Council)

Kinghorn, D. (June 2014) *Bristol – Ambitious About Fairness. A report from the Bristol Fairness Commission* (Bristol City Council).

Mills, J. (October 2015) *Deprivation in Bristol 2015, Briefing Note* (Bristol City Council)

RSA (2014) *Social Connections and Wellbeing: why we look at people's networks*

<http://kwmc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Knowle-West-Findings-Summary-for-public-use.pdf>

Safer Bristol Partnership (January 2015) *Bristol Crime and Disorder Strategic Assessment*

<http://www.stop-watch.org/your-area/area/avon-somerset>

*This will be updated with the JSNA 2015 when it becomes available, post consultation.

Consultation survey

We have an [online survey](#) with questions relating to the three consultation documents and we encourage you to complete it. Please contact the Investment & Grants Team and ask us to send you a copy if you would prefer not to complete it online.

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