

Press release: Multi-million pound boost for community-led services

Communities Minister Andrew Percy today (6 April 2017) announced a multi-million pound cash boost to community-led efforts giving local people greater control over local services.

More than 54 projects will receive a share of over £3 million communities funding to help deliver additional services.

A third of the projects receiving funding will focus on offering personalised schemes to improve people's health and general wellbeing. Other schemes will tackle social isolation, help people find a job, and support those facing homelessness.

Communities Minister Andrew Percy said:

Making a real difference to people's lives doesn't always happen by Whitehall diktat. It also comes from the dedication and inventiveness of local people who know their area best and the issues most important to them.

That's why we're supporting these innovative projects which provide tailored services that make a real difference to people's lives.

The Communities Fund

The [Communities Fund](#) was launched in December 2016 and totals £3.25 million. It's targeted at providing dedicated and personalised support to some of the most vulnerable people in society and those people who are struggling to manage.

Similar programmes have shown that significant benefits can be achieved from small amounts of funding that help local community projects to try different approaches to local priorities. For example, a community-led project in Ilfracombe, Devon, has addressed the high levels of youth unemployment in the town by creating 50 apprenticeships. This has saved around £1 million in benefits and is now funded by local partners. It has since expanded to 100 annual apprenticeships, with more than 50 young people helped into full time employment.

Communities Fund projects include:

Colchester Borough Council and Essex Public Health

A project in Colchester involving local schools, high street retailers and doctors' surgeries. It aims to get more people out walking and socialising as

a way to improve health and wellbeing.

Local residents will play a game on the street by tapping specially designed boxes on lampposts with a fob to earn points. An earlier pilot scheme with over 10,000 residents saw a huge jump in levels of fitness, with those meeting Department of Health guidelines on daily exercise reaching 48% from the previous 27%.

Plymouth City council

Plymouth City Council, with Devon and Cornwall Housing, NHS England and Royal British Legion, will deliver employment skills to local homeless people and other hard to reach groups. They will be given the opportunity to learn how to mend bicycles from expert mechanics.

The regular training will also give them the opportunity to earn qualifications. The workshop will also be open to the public, so customers will be able to take advantage of the skills of the newly trained bike mechanics and in turn allow them to develop customer service skills.

Further information

The Communities Fund was launched in December 2016. See [more information](#) on this website. View a [list of the Communities Fund recipients](#) (PDF, 84.4KB, 4 pages) .

The [Localism Act 2011](#) gives communities more say locally, from regulars running their local pub and protecting other treasured assets, to ambitious plans for new development, new jobs and better targeted local services.

Want to get involved in your community? See the [My Community website](#) for details on how to go about it.