

# GM Walking and Wheeling Fund Impact report



July 2024

Created by Salford CVS, on behalf of 10GM

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July 2024



# About the fund

In autumn 2023, the GM Walking and Wheeling Fund distributed small grants of up to £2,000 and medium grants of up to £5,000 to voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector organisations across Greater Manchester. The fund was managed by Salford CVS on behalf of 10GM and financially supported by GM Moving.

Small grants were awarded on a rolling basis by representatives from Salford CVS and 10GM, who met three times between October and December 2023 to agree the awards. Medium grants were awarded in December 2023 by a panel made up of representatives from 10GM, GM Moving and the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP).

Round 1 and 2 small grant recipients were required to complete their projects by the end of March 2024. Medium and round 3 small grant recipients were given a one-month extension and were required to complete their projects by the end of April 2024.



# Aims of the fund

The GM Walking and Wheeling Fund 2023-24 aimed to improve the health and wellbeing of communities across Greater Manchester by encouraging people who are less active to walk or wheel regularly.

In addition, medium grant recipients were also required to address at least one of the following priorities through their projects:

1. Supporting people who are statistically more likely to be less active or inactive to engage with walking, for example people with disabilities, people from ethnic minority backgrounds, or people from lower socio-economic groups.
2. Recruiting and training ['Walking Champions'](#) who will act as advocates for walking and encourage other people to walk regularly.
3. Working with communities to understand key walking destinations / routes and local barriers and solutions to help get people walking.
4. Working with communities to embed walking into daily routines.
5. Encouraging walking by making improvements to the local walking infrastructure or natural or built environment.

Designing movement into health and care pathways and systems is a key priority of GM Moving, therefore applications were particularly encouraged from projects with explicit links to the health and care system - for example, a community group which delivers walks starting and finishing at their local GP practice or pharmacy.



# Grants: in numbers

**Blue** = small grants programme

**Pink** = medium grants programme

Grants awarded

26

£ Awarded

£48,342.55

Applications we weren't able to fund this round

40

12

£46,693.00

53

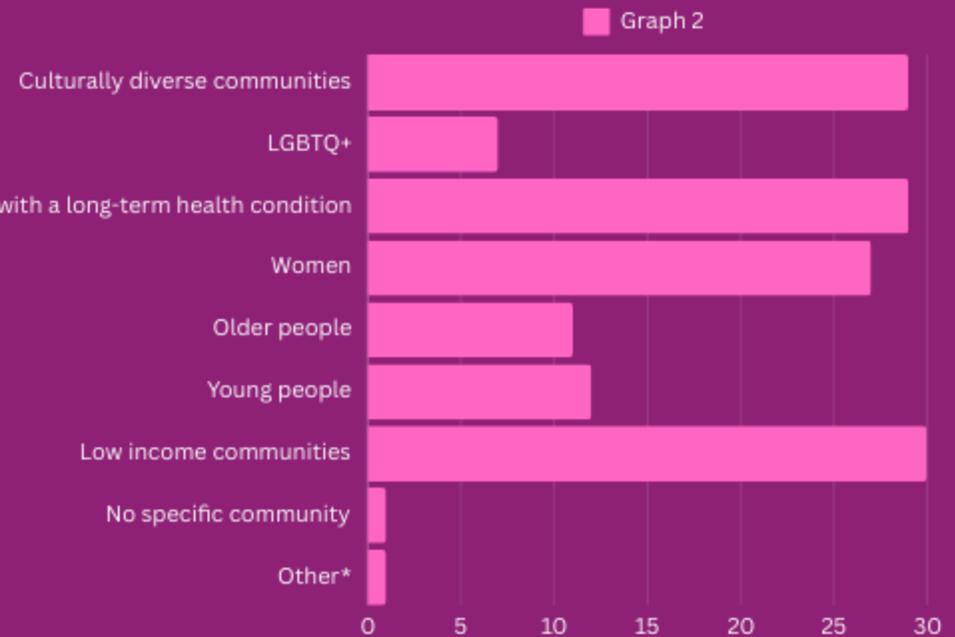
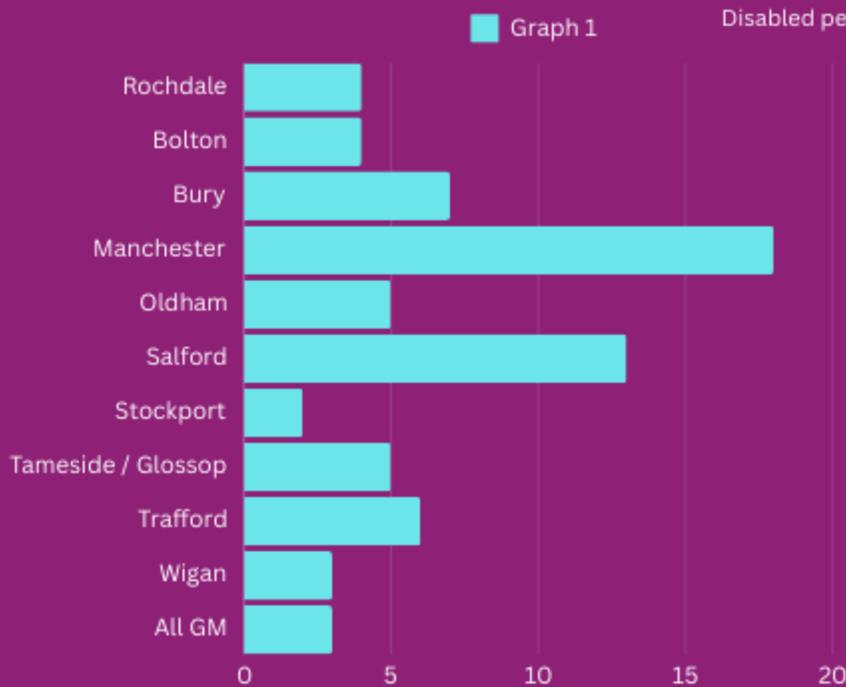


# Regions and beneficiaries

Graph 1 represents the number of grants awarded across the ten boroughs of Greater Manchester.

Graph 2 represents the number of grants awarded across beneficiary groups.\*

\*data from 32 of 38 funded projects



\*Other - Unwaged carer

# Impact:

## Small grants

The projects encouraged an impressive 1029 people who are less active to walk more often.\*

\*data from 21/26 funded projects

"I regularly attend the mosque, usually by car... By joining Yuvanis's group walks, I have started attending a mosque that's closer and choose to walk there instead. It's easier than I thought."

Beneficiary (65), Yuvanis Foundation



1029

beneficiaries



242

sessions



508

new beneficiaries

# Impact:

## Medium grants

The projects encouraged an impressive 411 people groups hadn't worked with before to walk more often.\*

\*data from 11/12 funded projects

"The walking group is my time of the week where I'm not a carer but I'm out with family on a walk"

Beneficiary, Lifted



beneficiaries



sessions



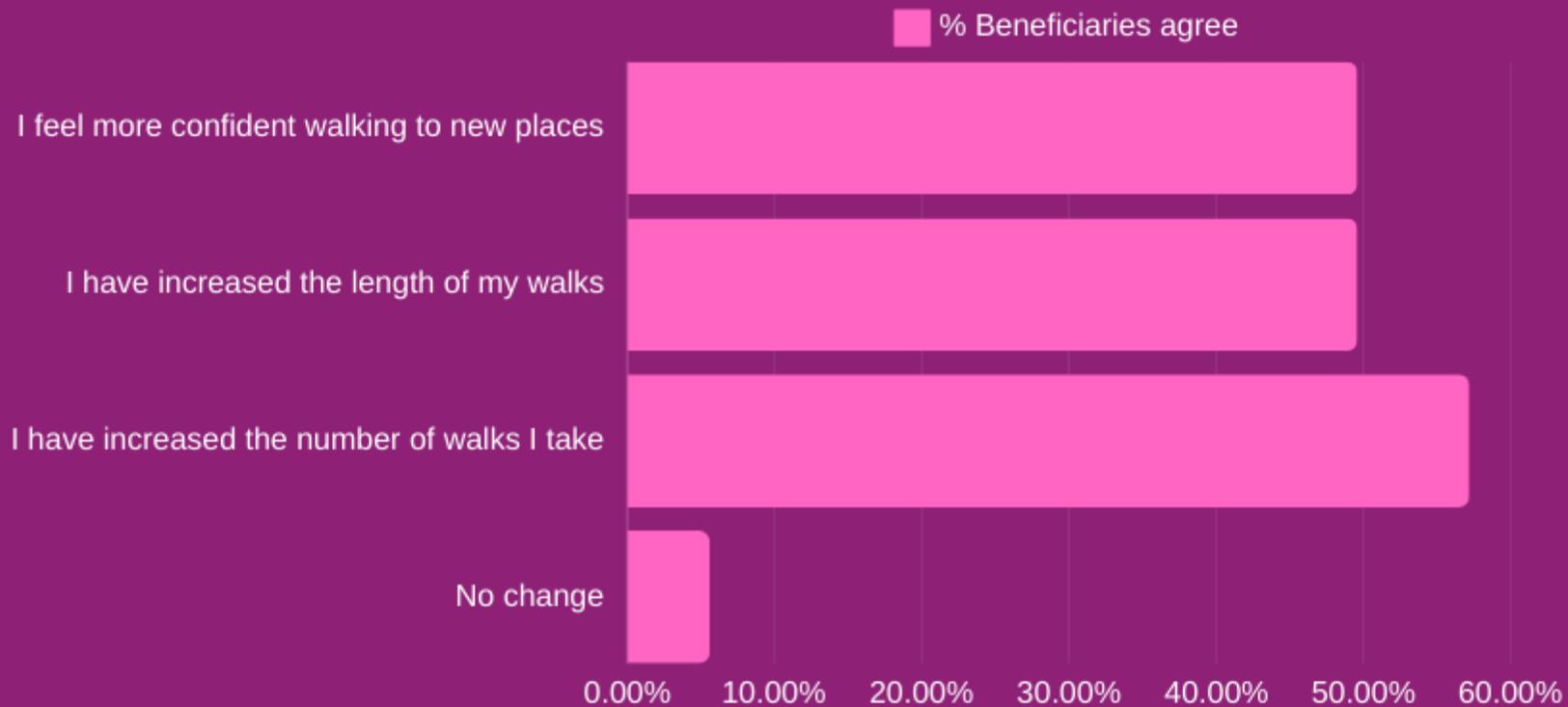
new beneficiaries

# Impact:

## Medium grants

Funded groups conducted surveys with beneficiaries at the end of the project, to assess any changes to people's walking habits.\* Beneficiaries were asked whether they agree or disagree with the following statements...

\*data from 11/12 funded projects



# Outcomes

## Reported benefits for participants

- Improved fitness levels
- Reduced pain for people living with health conditions
- Increased confidence in walking abilities and leadership skills
- Increased knowledge on the benefits of walking and wheeling
- Spending more time outdoors
- Being able to visit the countryside for the first time
- Increased knowledge of public and green spaces
- Increased knowledge of local walks
- Feelings of relaxation and calm
- Improved wellbeing and mental health
- New friendships made
- Reduced social isolation
- Strengthened community bonds
- Spending more time with children
- Improved social skills for children
- Increased awareness of other VCSE services and activities



# Outcomes

## Reported benefits for funded groups

- Increased awareness and number of people using organisations other services and activities including a food club, nappy service and youth club
- Increased membership numbers
- Increased volunteer numbers
- Built and strengthened connections with other VCSE groups and services
- Improved staff mental health and wellbeing
- Developed stronger relationships with communities
- Upskilled volunteers
- Strengthened relationships with specialist workers e.g. a local nature walk leader



# Wider outcomes

- Support for local businesses and economies e.g. community cafes and venues used in projects
- More interest in physical activities beyond walking e.g. yoga, using the local gym
- More people had access to free breastfeeding support
- More free support for carers
- One participant was signposted to a domestic support service
- One beneficiary set up a support group for parents of neurodivergent young people who now run their own walking group
- Improved social integration and community cohesion



# Quotes from beneficiaries

"Joining the walking group has not only improved my physical health but also given me a new group of friends"  
Syngesis

"The Winter Wonderland walks have been a fantastic experience for both me and my daughter. It's great to see her having so much fun outdoors and learning new things. Plus, it's a wonderful chance for us to bond as a family"

## Sparks of success

"We have realised that it is safe to walk in the countryside, nobody cares that we wear hijabs, dogs do not pounce on us, some people even said "Hello" when we went to Belmont Hikes"  
Changing Life Directions

"BOOBS have been great in getting me and baby out, active and chatting. The support has been great, and seeing other mums has been invaluable!"

## Visit From the Stork

"Since joining I have increased my walking and my general health is much better"  
Timperley Sports Club

"Thank you for providing us all with the waterproofs – I've not got that expense and I can save money by not doing lots of washing after coming to group"

## CommUNITY Little Hulton

"I never used to get much exercise, but exploring the city on foot with this group has been fantastic. Not only do I feel so much more energised now, but I've also learned a tonne about hidden gems in my own neighbourhood. The best part? I've met some amazing people who share my love of walking and discovery. We're already planning our own adventures together – thanks Walking Tours!"

Europaia



# Videos



Hover over the photo to get the link to watch Breathchamps video



Hover over the photo to get the link to watch Rochdale Connection Trust's video

Listen to a beneficiary from Syngesis's project



Watch Pursuing Individual Excellence walking project. The rain isn't stopping them!

Please note, this video has no sound

# Case study

## Changing Life Directions

The majority of the women Changing Life Directions supports do not drive and are often stuck at home during the day. The group received a grant of £2,180 to deliver walks in their local area, which would help empower the women, build their confidence and support them to walk independently. They walked to places such as their local GP, library, local shops and out in the nearby countryside.

One participant on the walks was Mrs S, a 59-year-old woman who suffers with arthritis and type 2 diabetes. Mrs S was referred to Changing Life Directions by her doctor through social prescribing.



At first Mrs S was reluctant to participate in the walks but the other ladies told her more about the walking group and the benefits of walking at a Coffee and Chat session and encouraged her to attend. Mrs S had never been to the countryside before and liked the idea of going on these types of trips however she was worried about walking.

“The volunteers said they will hold my hand and I can have one or even two women to help me walk if I want, they were very helpful and reassuring, I had never been anywhere nice outdoors, same things every day, wake up, cook, clean etc. They said outdoors will be good for my mood. So, I said I will go for a little bit. We went in a group of 10 it was nice chatting with each other, I did get tired so we stopped for a break and a tasty bite, drink and a biscuits. It was actually ok the walk, the fresh air felt nice, nobody was rushing it was slow and relaxing. I made it all the way and felt so happy, we went on the swings and I laughed so much. I forgot about all my problems and felt free. We stayed in the park for one hour enjoying ourselves. I could not believe what I did on that day, it was the best day. I have been on seven walks with the group so far and soon will be going to Wales. At the weekend me and my friend who I met at the centre go for a walk or in the evenings, sometimes four or five times a week. We don't feel worries anymore.”

# Links to health and care priorities

All funded groups that returned their end-of-project reporting forms had clear links to our health and care priorities in that they worked to improve the physical, mental and social wellbeing of their members.

Those that explicitly demonstrated they had links to the health and care system did this by working with and receiving referrals from a social prescribing programme, linking in with Children's Centres and GPs to promote the walks, starting their walks at GPs and local hospitals, and connecting with midwives, health visitors and other health professionals.



# Sustainability and future plans

We asked medium grant recipients about their plans for the project beyond the lifetime of the grant.

All project beneficiaries said they would like to do more organised walks in the future.

3 groups have secured new funding to continue their walks.

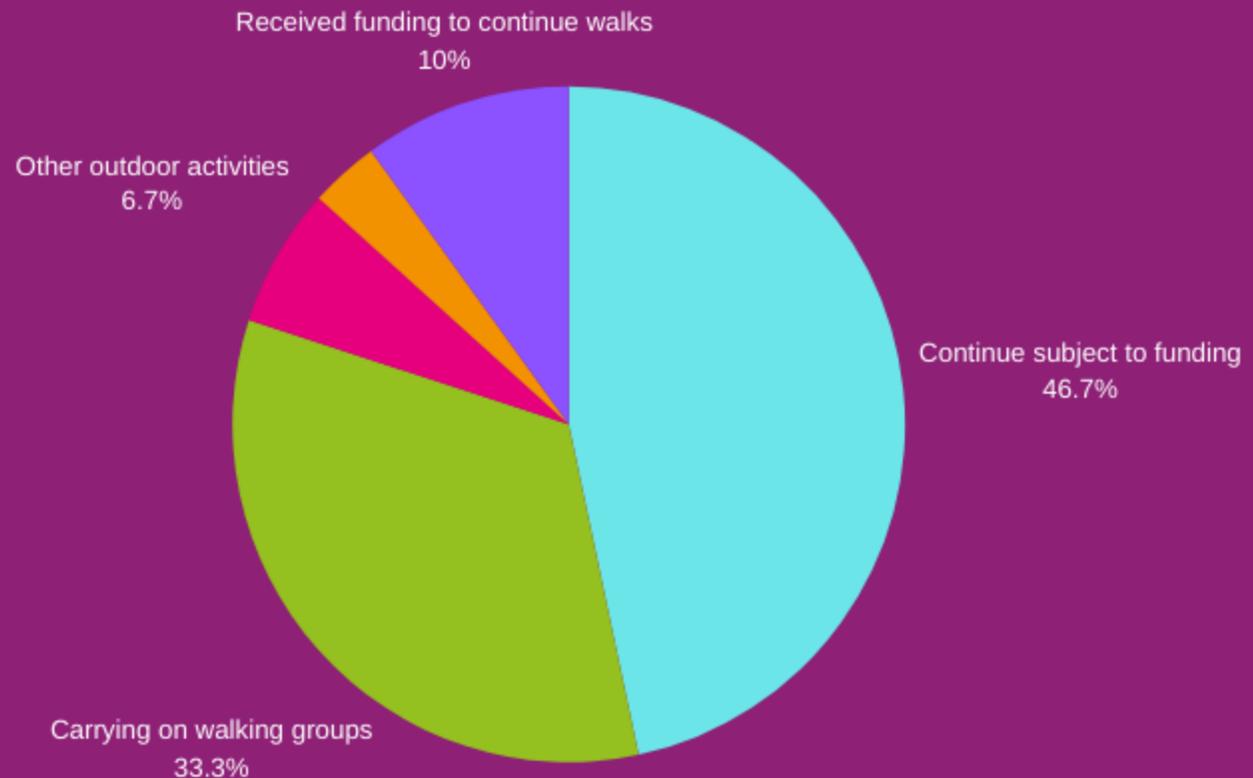
5 groups told us their walking champions will continue delivering their own walking groups.

Groups who are continuing walks are having to reduce the frequency of the walks they can deliver.

One group is planning a community walking festival to build on their project's success.

*“Many said they’ll miss the walks on Thursdays, now that they will no longer be running.*

*For some of the older participants, it’s the only thing they would do that whole day”*



# Learning 1: How to encourage walking

Groups used a range of approaches to encourage people to walk more often over the winter months, including a warm drink at the end of a walking session and opportunities to socialise and make friends. Below are some other ways groups encouraged beneficiaries to attend walks:

- Asking respected figures in the community to advocate for walking helped get more people to engage.
- Providing weather appropriate clothing, footwear and equipment as required. For example, one group gave Nordic poles to the walkers when the weather was icy.
- Providing a social aspect to the walk.
- Giving beneficiaries time to build strong relationships with the walk leader, volunteers and other participants.
- Having a knowledgeable walk leader to keep beneficiaries engaged during the walks.
- Free walks.
- Offering a wide range of walks for all abilities.
- Having a café stop.
- Clear communication channels for people to find out about walks and any changes to the date, time, location or travel arrangements.

“My husband has been diagnosed with dementia and I feel the social aspect of being with a friendly group, although he has difficulty verbalising, has been very good for him. Needless to say, I have also benefited tremendously from the social aspect. Joining this group has been extremely good for us. Thanks to all involved in organising it and long may it continue.”



## Learning 2: Accessibility and inclusivity

People have very different abilities, experiences and requirements when it comes to walking. Groups that understand and accommodate these factors are more likely to have a stronger impact. For example:

- Groups considered individual mobility levels and health needs when creating routes, which helped with attendance rates as beneficiaries felt confident in their abilities and were engaged in the walks.
- Groups found it useful to start and end walks at well known and accessible community venues and spaces.
- Some groups created flyers in different languages and recruited bilingual walk leaders and volunteers to promote walks and ensure they were accessible to members of their community.
- One group offered 1:1 support to people with complex needs; however, to continue this more funding would be required.
- Depending on their community some groups ran gender-specific walks and made changes to walks around religious holidays e.g. during Ramadan walks were shorter and the dates of walks changed to enable everyone to be able to attend.
- Some groups signposted people to mental health support where appropriate, providing wider benefits beyond the walks themselves.



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حول المشي من أجل صحة و رفاهية والتعرف على الشرق الأمانة في بوري.

Funded by GM Walking and Wheeling Fund

## Learning 3: Recognising cultural differences

- It is important to recognise the cultural and socioeconomic reasons why people might not walk regularly. People also have different levels of education about the benefits of walking.
- One group told us they found it harder to engage women on low incomes in their walks compared to women in affluent areas. They felt if they had had more time to engage and empower these women they would have had higher attendance rates in these areas.
- One group told us there were cultural reservations in their community about women walking outdoors or mixing with other genders, so they chose to offer same sex walking groups.

LEAF Language Library told us it was important to help members of their community understand that walking can be a positive experience - a fun activity with wide-ranging mental and physical health benefits. In their reporting, they said:

‘A family remembers the two-day walk they had to do in order to be by the sea and be on a boat to travel safely to the UK. Walking in the UK is a positive attitude but for us it is survival.’

“.....walking in some parts of Africa is a sacrifice to find water, food, shelter, going to work, to cook, to go to school. It is a journey of hours and in our countries, we are not used to walking for wellbeing.”

**Beneficiary, LEAF Language Library**

The group told us they are helping their community understand there is more to walking and that it can be a tool to spend time with others, feel better and learn about your local area.

“My mood is better, I meet new people, new beautiful places in Manchester to walk and I and my family are starting to like walking. We have to leave the past memories and tragedies in the past and be here, now when we do the meditation and walking meditation. I enjoy it because I can see the trees, birds, the canal, my shoes, my clothes and I feel safe.’

**Beneficiary, LEAF Language Library**





## Learning 4: Weather

### Rain, rain - go away!

**Bad weather** - 24 out of 32 groups told us bad weather discouraged people from attending walking groups. Groups noted lower attendance when the weather was bad and saw increased attendance when it was warmer or drier. Some groups also told us certain routes they had planned were inaccessible due to large puddles.

There were a number of ways groups tried to overcome this and keep people engaged despite poor weather:

- Providing weather appropriate clothing and footwear for participants.
- Indoor stops, ideally with hot drinks and food provided.
- Indoor walking alternatives if possible. One group even delivered a walking session in a swimming pool!
- Rescheduling walks.

A longer delivery period or delivering projects during the spring/summer months would help address some of the challenges around weather.

# Feedback on process

We asked funded groups to provide feedback on the grant process. Of the 15 groups that responded, all 15 would apply to the fund again.

Other positive feedback included:

- The application process was straightforward and the form easy to complete.
- The guidance was clear and useful.
- The application process was flexible and there was good communication throughout.
- The staff at Salford CVS and GM Moving very helpful, friendly, quick and professional.

“...all support and contact (with Salford CVS staff) has been amazing.”

“The support from the Salford CVS Grants Team and GM Walking was valuable in shaping our project plan.”

In terms of what groups felt could be improved:

- Timescales for decisions were longer than expected for some groups. More clarity on when projects could start would be helpful for planning.
- Decisions in December meant some groups could not start delivery until January.
- Some groups would have appreciated guidance and application materials in BSL and easy-read formats being available without having to request these.

# Review of Meet the Funder and reporting sessions

As part of the grants process, we ran two Meet the Funder events and one end-of-project reporting session.

The **Meet the Funder** sessions were delivered by Salford CVS and GM Moving to give groups an opportunity to find out more about the aims and priorities of the fund. We delivered two sessions, one in the daytime (2.00-3.00pm) and one in the evening (6.00-7.00pm). In total, 32 people attended the sessions - the evening session was the most popular with 27 out of 32 people attending.

We also delivered an end-of-project reporting session to support groups to prepare and plan for completion of their reporting forms. During this session we encouraged groups to submit photos and videos and gave easy to follow to tips on how to do this. Eight groups sent videos with their reporting during this round, compared to one group in the 2022/23 round.

*".... I found the reporting meeting helpful. It was nice to see others who are also running programmes."*



GM Walking Fund: Impact Report: July 2024

*"The Meet the Funder prior to application was extremely useful. The meeting was very relaxed, somewhat informal, and very informative."*

*"The webinar and the contact between the team has been amazing and made the application of one the smoothest bids we have applied for."*

# Reflections on fund design

**Decision-making timeframe.** Groups are always eager to start planning and delivering their projects after receiving the good news that they have been successful. To avoid delays to projects getting started it may be beneficial to avoid decision-making in December or around busy holiday periods.

**Project delivery.** A longer funding period (such as six months) would allow funded groups more time to finish planning and promoting their projects and recruiting and engaging beneficiaries. This may also push their activities into the warmer spring months which may increase participation and retention during the projects.

**Qualitative monitoring and evaluation methods.** Groups deliver successful and engaging projects and often demonstrate this by sharing quotes, photos and videos; however, not all groups have the time or skills required to capture case studies with participants. Groups should be encouraged to factor in time and budget for capturing participant stories at the application stage. Practical training and support for funded groups has also been shown to support them to develop their knowledge and skills in this area.



This report was prepared for GM Moving by Salford CVS.

For more information about the GM Walking and Wheeling Fund, or the contents of this report, please contact the Grants Team at Salford CVS.

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