



Covid-19 Response Programme

Information leaflet



WHO:



WHEN:

Between October 2020 – March 2021

WHAT:

During the pandemic, some groups were impacted much harder than others including young people aged 18-25, women, single parents and people from racially minoritised groups. To address this need, Turn2us and six community partners co-created a response fund that would help get money out to the people who needed it the most.

The aims of the programme were to:

1. Collectively deepen our understanding of the financial issues faced by people who are worst affected by Covid-19, and the most relevant responses to support these people
2. Work in partnership to improve the financial outcomes and wellbeing of those worst affected by Covid-19 with a particular focus on people from Bangladeshi, Black African and other minoritised ethnic communities
3. Increase people's awareness of, and access to, government financial entitlements via an integrated information campaign
4. Learn about whether and how, by working together, we can deepen our impact on people in financial difficulty

We gave out 954 grants, totalling £723,301, over six months to predominantly Bangladeshi and Black African women.

WHERE:

The partnership was based in London and Manchester.

HOW:

Key elements of the programme were:

- An unrestricted grant of £15,000 for all organisations for their involvement in the programme
- Co-designing all aspects of the programmes including the grant fund
- Facilitated and designed meetings once a month (or more) to help us make progress
- Deep listening from Turn2us to hear what would be useful and where we could add value to the integrated support work provided by partners.

Things that worked:

- **Devolved decision making.** Our partners decided who to give grants to and the best way to give it.
- **The speed and simplicity of the application process and payment of the grant.** This helped protect people's dignity and kept it simple for the partners.
- **Partnership working.** We built relationships as a partnership and developed all the processes together.
- **Non-conditional cash.** This promoted recipients' agency by allowing them to decide what they wanted, e.g. culturally appropriate goods and items.
- **Combining cash grants with personalised support from partners.** This enabled us to make deep change.

Things we should do differently next time:

- **Have a longer time frame.** Our short time frame added pressure to partner organisations and compromised service user co-production.
- **Capacity assessments.** This would help us know how much capacity we all have to work on such an intense programme.
- **Power dynamics.** A large funder working with smaller community organisations meant that they were power dynamics where Turn2us set the timeline. The other partners fed back that the volume of meetings and timeframes were challenging.
- **Information programming.** Turn2us had big ambitions about the information aspect but they didn't necessarily align with the needs of the other organisations.
- **Sustainability.** Together we created deep relationships and referral pathways which ended with the programme. How can we build programmes where we don't lose everything we created when the programme ends?

Response fund timeline

September 2020

Identifying

Turn2us conducted research which identified that the pandemic had disproportionately impacted people from Black, Minoritised and Ethnic groups.¹ We agreed to build a programme to target grants to this population.

October 2020

Design

Worked with a facilitator to co-create **foundational documents** e.g. collaboration agreements, data sharing agreements, the accountability framework, programme aims.

Turn2us held interviews with partners on barriers to financial security for their service users.

Co-created the **eligibility criteria** for the fund.

The partnership started work on the **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning framework** – how would we measure the outcomes of this programme?

What did we learn:

So much!

The interviews gave us rich data about groups of people who might not normally access Turn2us services but were they useful for the partners? By this point we were working very hard together to build trust and communications between us all. It was a lot of meetings and documents and some of the partners were overwhelmed by the time scale.

July 2021

Close

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning complete through interviews, focus groups and data analysis.

Open spaces held with all the partners to reflect on the process.

Programme formally closed.

What did we learn?

We captured much of the evaluation in a report. Partners are now exploring further opportunities to be grant makers, having seen the impact of combining grants with integrated support and having built the capacity in their organisations.

October 2020

Partner selection

Turn2us engaged with potential partner organisations working with Bangladeshi, Black African and other diverse ethnic communities. They identified nine partners.

Held an inception conversation with all the partners.

All partners went through a due diligence process.

Six partners continued with Turn2us to the design stage: Fair Money Advice, Hopscotch Women's Centre, SAWN, Toynbee Hall, Ananna and Haringey Council.

What did we learn?

Some partners dropped out at this stage and in some cases Turn2us didn't know why.

March 2021

Delivery

All the partners had training sessions and internal sessions on using the eligibility criteria for giving grants.

We started giving grants. Partners decided who would get a grant of between £200 to £1000 and Turn2us paid it into the service user accounts.

Turn2us Bengali Helpline number goes live.

There was an underspend from some partners so we were able to give others more money.

What did we learn?

We trialled different ways of giving grants, via prepaid cards, which were challenging to set up, through giving organisations money to give out grants, starting with small grants or just big lump sums. Partners found that grants gave people breathing space to engage in their other services e.g. digital inclusion support, debt advice or support leaving a violent relationship.

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