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A promising Start? The Local Network Fund for Children and Young People: Interim Findings from the National Evaluation

### Original Citation

Craig, Gary, Bolton, Joanna, Garbutt, Ruth, Hayes, Gabbie, McNamee, Sally, Sturgeon-Adams, Louise, Wilkinson, Mick, White, Clarissa, Joyce, Lucy, Tarvin, Karen, Mortimer, Ed, Godfrey, Chris, Hutton, Sandra, Parrott, Steve and James, Allison (2004) A promising Start? The Local Network Fund for Children and Young People: Interim Findings from the National Evaluation. Research Report. DfES publications, Nottingham.

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# A Promising Start? The Local Network Fund for Children and Young People: Interim Findings from the National Evaluation

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Research Report

No 520

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*A Promising Start?*

*The Local Network Fund for Children  
and Young People: Interim Findings  
from the National Evaluation*

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ISBN 1 84478 200 X

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# 1 Executive Summary

## Introduction

This is a summary of the interim evaluation report of the National Evaluation of the Local Network Fund (LNF) for Children and Young People. It is based on data gathered during the first phase of the evaluation (between October 2002 to December 2003). A final report of the National Evaluation will be available early in 2005. A consortium of research organisations, led by the University of Hull and including BMRB Social Research, The University of York and the University of Sheffield were commissioned in August 2002 by the then Children and Young People's Unit (CYPU) to carry out the evaluation.

The LNF is a five-year small grants programme, totalling £150 million. It was proposed in the cross-cutting review on young people at risk, responding to the publication of the Social Exclusion Unit's report on Young People. Its aims are to take a preventative approach to poverty amongst children and young people (aged 0-19) by funding groups best able to provide local solutions to child poverty, particularly small grassroots organisations operating in the poorest communities; to reach out to children and young people most in need and who have trouble accessing services; and to help them express their own views.

Grants of between £250 and £7,000 are available mainly for one year or less; organisations are encouraged to develop new projects and activities and are required to have child protection policies in place. The LNF was rolled out in three Waves, between April 2001 and April 2003, in England. Each LNF, with an annual budget typically of a few hundred thousand pounds, is managed by a local agency, usually a Community Foundation, Council of Voluntary Service or Rural Community Council, and covering one or more local authority areas. Grants can be made under four themes:

*Aspirations and experiences*

*Economic disadvantage*

*Isolation and access*

*Children and young people's voices*

The aims of the evaluation are two-fold: to establish how effective (and cost-effective) the LNF is in directing funding to groups and activities closest to its objectives and grant-award principles; and, to find out how effective funded groups are in reaching and benefiting children and young people most in need through their LNF-funded activities.

## Methodology and Key Findings

Following a developmental phase, the evaluation involves the following components: secondary analysis of local administrative data and national data on child poverty; telephone surveys of successful and unsuccessful applicants; case studies of 8 LNFs from all three Waves (covering interviews with local administrators, outreach workers and grants panels, successful and unsuccessful applicants, actual and potential beneficiaries); tracking of a small sample of applications from Call Centre enquiry through to the outcome of the application; a telephone survey of all non-case study LNFs; and an economic analysis, based on both LNF data and on an analysis of the activities of close comparator funds. Further details can be had from the National Evaluation Team Director, Professor Gary Craig, at [g.craig@hull.ac.uk](mailto:g.craig@hull.ac.uk)

### *Interviews with policy actors*

In order to set the evaluation in context interviews were carried out with national policy, administrative and management figures within the LNF system. The key features of the LNF were identified as:

- A relatively small grants ceiling, to flag up a clear message about the key targets for funding
- Avoidance of a postcode lottery in making grants available
- A delivery structure allowing for grant-makers to be close to local communities
- A national network with central 'light-touch' oversight

- Support for local groups making applications
- Public accountability over funding
- An emphasis on inclusion and integration

Issues which emerged from these interviews and which are shaping the evaluation itself were as follows:

- Targeting: are funds going to smaller, less experienced groups (and representatives of children, young people and their communities) or to the 'usual suspects'?
- The function of outreach work: was it to help groups to cope with the application process or was it primarily to ensure child protection policies were in place?
- Did the objectives of funded groups cover all four LNF themes (see above), was there a concentration of softer objectives and would this change over time?
- Did the requirement for child protection present a serious barrier for new groups seeking funding?
- Was the national call centre, which handled all initial enquiries, seen as an unnecessary part of the application process or did it ensure some consistency across areas?
- Did the structural feature of local management of grant-giving lead to too great a degree of inconsistency across LNFs, or was this flexibility important in being able to respond to local needs?

A number of measures were identified for judging the success of the LNF including whether:

- local spend matched local needs;
- the profile of spend moved over time towards the 'harder' objectives (for example, of economic disadvantage);
- spending was effectively targeted on children and young people facing poverty and disadvantage;
- outreach helped less established groups access the LNF;
- the LNF engaged children and young people effectively;
- local voluntary sectors could come to own the LNF and ensure its sustainability;
- the LNF promoted social change amongst local communities and beneficiaries.

#### ***National telephone survey of local administrators***

This was undertaken at the end of the first phase of the evaluation and involved 42 of those 47 LNFs which were not involved in case study work. A second survey will be undertaken in the summer of 2004.

Key findings which emerged from this survey were that:

- Most local administrators had previous experience of managing grant-making.
- All areas, including the apparently more prosperous rural areas, included districts with problems of poverty and deprivation.
- The replacement of the Community Foundation Network, which had previously provided the central management of the LNF, by staff at the CYPUP, seems to have made the administration of the fund less bureaucratic.



- Some administrators were uncertain about the value of the national Call Centre, feeling that it complicated the application process.
- Most groups applying had indicated that their major goal related to the theme of aspirations and experiences.
- Face-to-face outreach work was said to be most effective.
- The requirement to have a child protection policy in place was generally only felt to be a problem for smaller groups.
- LNFs were also concerned that they might be pushed inappropriately towards ‘policing’ child protection issues.
- Initial funding applications had been dominated by ‘the usual suspects’ i.e. better-established groups although local LNFs were rarely undertaking an systematic evaluation of this. Outreach was beginning to have an impact in terms of reaching less-established groups.
- Groups representing black and minority ethnic (BME) communities and those led by children and young people were a small proportion of those receiving funding. LNFs cited a range of reasons for this but acknowledged that more work was needed to encourage their involvement.
- Most projects were applying for funding for a year or less although there was interest in second year funding. LNFs were concerned about the issue of sustainability because of the short-term nature of the LNF.
- LNFs cited a range of short-term funding impacts. Most felt the LNF had an impact in terms of poverty of well-being but that it could only have a limited impact in terms of reducing economic poverty.

#### ***Telephone survey of successful and unsuccessful applicants***

- A telephone survey is being carried out in two phases with successful and unsuccessful applicants. The first survey (carried out during the summer of 2003) included applicants in Wave One areas. A follow-up survey covering applicants in Waves 2 and 3 will be conducted during 2004.
- A total of 682 interviews were carried out, 513 (response rate 72%) with successful applicants and 169 (response rate 55%) with unsuccessful applicants.
- Just five per cent of applicants had never applied to any small grants schemes in the past and over 56% of successful and unsuccessful applicants were relatively well-established groups.
- About two in five groups (42%) were youth-led.
- About a quarter (24%) of successful applicants were led by BME groups.
- About two in five (43%) had applied under the theme of ‘aspirations and experience’.
- Two thirds of successful applicants (68%) and about a half of unsuccessful applicants (47%) sought funding for their activity from other sources than the LNF.
- Half of the applicants (46%) wanted to use the grant to run an activity, with about one-fifth (20%) wanting to buy equipment and the remaining third (33%) wanting to do both.
- About three-quarters of applicants (77%) - and particularly those applying early on - had a child protection policy in place before applying.

- One-fifth (20%) of applicants developed a child protection policy as a consequence of applying to the LNF.
- Groups with a child protection policy seemed more likely to have involved children and young people in the running of their organisations.
- Applicants were overwhelmingly happy with the advice they had received from the Call Centre, although this was less the case with unsuccessful applicants.
- 56% of successful applicants and 38% of unsuccessful applicants received some help with the application process.
- Most applicants had found the application form manageable but a minority had difficulty providing financial details about their group, or had difficulty with the child protection policy.
- Applicants' expectations about the length of time to receive a decision (target 12 weeks) was met for 59% and improved upon for 23%.
- The most common reason for being unsuccessful was that the application did not fit with LNF priorities (37%). Other reasons included that groups were already too well-funded (12%), too large (8%) or that funding had to be rationed (6%).
- Most – including both successful and unsuccessful applicants - agreed or strongly agreed both that the LNF promoted itself well and that it was an improvement on other small grant schemes.

### ***Case studies***

Among the eight case studies being undertaken, initial visits have been made to Waves One and Two areas. Further visits will be made to these and Wave Three areas during the next year.

Key issues which have emerged from these first visits include:

- The role and approach of outreach workers, and of local grant-making panels has varied across areas. Some panels appeared to reflect particular interests and specific more marginalised groups such as local BME populations, but children and young people were less well-represented;
- A generally positive perception by applicants of the performance of the National Call Centre;
- Difficulties were identified for newer organisations in completing the application form, including in respect of child protection issues;
- Variability in the level of feedback to (especially unsuccessful) applicants.
- Although relatively early in the life of the LNF, a number of impacts were identified by beneficiaries of the LNF fund (young people, parents and the wider community). These included acquiring new skills, boosting morale and confidence, networking, increasing volunteering and participation.
- Respondents generally had modest expectations in terms of the LNF's ability to address poverty.

### **Continuing questions for the evaluation**

This first stage of the evaluation raised a series of key questions which will continue to be explored by the Evaluation Team. The key ones can be grouped as follows:

#### *- The application process*

- Ensuring effective publicity

- Clarifying the role of outreach
- Helping disadvantaged groups

- *The LNF system as a whole*

- Maintaining localness
- Resolving the role of the National Call Centre
- Demystifying child protection issues

- *Targeting resources*

- *Building capacity*

- *Addressing poverty*

- *Defining impacts*

Additionally, given that they were often seen as parallel parts of the same anti-poverty strategy, both policy actors and local respondents raised important questions about the uncertain nature of the relationship of the LNF with the Children's Fund.

### **Final reporting**

The final report will be produced at the end of 2004 and will also incorporate both

- Findings from the economic evaluation which will explore the cost-effectiveness of the LNF ; and
- Comprehensive secondary analysis of the administrative data collected at national level.



## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Background

The Local Network Fund for children and young people (LNF) was proposed in the cross-cutting review on young people at risk, as a response to the publication of the Social Exclusion Unit's Policy Action Team 12 (PAT 12) report on Young People. This report identified a number of issues in relation to services for children and young people and in particular, in the context of this report, that government spending had not always been effectively targeted on children and young people living in the most deprived areas, and that policies and services had failed to consult children and young people effectively. The report argued the need for coherence in government policies towards children and young people, to be overseen by a new unit (later to be called the Children and Young People's Unit [CYPU], a non-departmental Government body).

At the same time, the government was committed to the goal of 'ending child poverty within a generation', announced in 1999 by the Prime Minister. This goal was to be achieved by a combination of three approaches: changes to the taxation and benefits systems; policies to improve the prospects of poorer people wanting to get back into the labour market; and a series of more general policies - including some area-based and national initiatives - to address the issue of wider and longer-term disadvantage. The LNF, sponsored (as we shall see in chapter 2) politically by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, emerged as part of this third broad group of policies.

In order to evaluate the value and role of the LNF, the (former) CYPU<sup>1</sup> commissioned a consortium led by University of Hull and including BMRB Social Research and the Universities of York (and, later on, Sheffield). The research began in October 2002, and will continue until the publication of the final report in early 2005. This interim report covers data mainly collected in the period between October 2002 to September 2003 together with the results of a national survey of LNF administrators undertaken late in 2003 (see chapter 3)

This chapter provides an overview of the objectives, design and conduct of the research. It is followed by five further chapters: Chapter 2 traces the early policy and political development of the LNF and considers the views of key national actors engaged in its development. Chapter 3 analyses the results of the national survey of LNF administrators in areas which were not designated as case study areas. Chapter 4 presents the evidence collected from the first national quantitative survey of LNF applicants – both successful and unsuccessful. Chapter 5 reports on the findings from the first visits to the Wave 1 and 2 case studies (Wave 3 was not up and running during the period of this early part of the evaluation). Finally, chapter 6 draws together the themes and conclusions arising from the first year of the evaluation and reflects upon the value and role of the LNF, as it currently operates.

In Appendix One, the scope of the economic evaluation of the LNF is outlined. An initial analysis of the national database of administrative data (covering all applications) was undertaken in the first phase of this evaluation. This database has now been substantially improved and will be analysed fully as part of the

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<sup>1</sup> The CYPU – Children and Young People's Unit – effectively disappeared under the reorganisation of parts of the DfES which occurred during the autumn of 2003 as a result of the appointment of a new Minister, Margaret Hodge, with responsibility, *inter alia*, for children's services. During the period covered by this interim evaluation report, the CYPU was the Unit to which the national evaluation team reported.

remaining phase of this evaluation. Appendix Two provides some sample tables to show the kinds of analysis which will be possible. Appendix Three provides an example of the kinds of topic guide used in the local case study work.

Many of the issues covered here will be returned to in greater depth in the final evaluation report, which will be available early in 2005.

## 2.2 The LNF

The LNF is (at present) a five year small grants programme, totalling £150 million. It has four broad aims:

- To reduce underachievement and the overall effects of child poverty, by raising the aspirations of children and young people between the ages of 0 and 19;
- To ensure funding reaches those groups best able to provide local solutions to child poverty – particularly those small grass-roots organisations operating in the poorest communities. Through these groups, the fund aims to strengthen communities to help themselves – bringing people together to support each other, share problems and identify solutions;
- To reach out to those children and young people most in need and who have trouble accessing services;
- To help children and young people to express their own views.

Grants are available for between £250 and £7,000 and most are for one year or less; however, provision is available for two-year funding up to £12,000 in total. Preference is given to small, embryonic groups which may have trouble accessing other funding sources and where the LNF covers the majority of project costs. Grants are not intended to be used to part-fund large-scale activities and the LNF is not intended to support applications from individuals, statutory or national voluntary organisations. The fund also aims to encourage groups to develop new projects and activities, rather than support existing activities. Another requirement of the Fund is that all applicants should have effective child protection policies and procedures in place before funding is released.

Grants are made under four themes, which are intended to ensure that the fund is directed at the target recipients. They are:

- **Aspirations and experiences** – projects that give children and young people experiences or help them achieve goals that other children and young people may take for granted.
- **Economic disadvantage** – projects that help families improve their living standards and cope with difficulties that come from being on low incomes.
- **Isolation and access** – projects that help children and young people who are isolated, alone, or have trouble accessing services.
- **Children and young people's voices** – projects that give children and young people the chance to express their opinions and give advice on matters that concern them.

The LNF is distributed through 55 local funds across England which have been ‘rolled out’ in three Waves; 25 (Wave One areas) were operational from 2001, 17 (Wave Two) in 2002 and a final 13 (Wave Three) from the late Spring of 2003. The Community Foundation Network (CFN), a national voluntary organisation, was initially appointed to manage and administer the Fund and work in partnership with voluntary organisations (e.g. Community Foundations, Rural Community Councils) to provide an experienced fund administrator in each Local Network area. In October 2002 it was decided by central Government that from April 2003, the LNF central administration would be managed in-house rather than by CFN.

Applicants wanting to apply for funding must approach the Sheffield-based National Call Centre, which dispatches application forms and guidelines. Support is provided throughout (and on completion of) the application process by outreach and support teams, located in each area. Applications are then processed and assessed by the appropriate LNF Area Office, before being passed to members of independent panels (local people with experience of issues affecting children and young people) that make decisions on funding, on the basis of their understanding of local needs.

### 2.3 Aims of the evaluation

There are two key aims of this evaluation, each relating to different phases of the programme. The first phase relates to the application and grant-approval process, whilst the second phase relates to the groups and activities funded by the LNF and how these have benefited children, young people, families and the groups themselves.

- ***Distributing the Fund:*** How effective (and cost-effective) is the application and grant-approval process in directing funding to groups and activities that are closest to LNF objectives and grant-award principles?
- ***Supporting children and young people:*** How effective are funded groups in reaching and benefiting children and young people most in need through their LNF-funded activities, and what are the (potential) longer-term benefits to children, young people, and the families and groups who support them?

In order to address these broad objectives the National Evaluation Team (hereafter ‘the team’) aimed to address the following questions:

- How does the LNF fit alongside the Children’s Fund and other schemes with broadly similar aims i.e. to address childhood poverty and encourage the development of children’s voices.
- Is the organisational superstructure effective in facilitating the goals of the LNF?
- How effective is the application process in reaching smaller and newer voluntary and community groups?
- How effective are local decision-making processes (e.g. the various combinations of local administrative staff and grants panels) in reflecting local needs?
- How effective is the outreach and promotional work undertaken by local LNF administrators in helping smaller and newer groups to apply to the LNF?
- Are deprived groups accessing the fund?

- How is the funding used?
- What are the immediate, medium and longer-term impacts of the Fund?
- What is the impact of the requirement for local groups to have in place a Child Protection Policy before applying to the LNF?
- Is the LNF leading to more participation by children and young people in community groups?
- Are local communities increasing their capacity to develop groups like those funded by LNF, as a result of gaining funding from the LNF?
- How cost-effective is grant-giving with the current structure of the LNF?

## **2.4 Design of the evaluation**

In order to understand the design, implementation and delivery of the LNF as well as to assess the feasibility of our proposed evaluation, a short developmental study was carried out by the team during the first 4 months of its work. This resulted in certain aspects of the research being redesigned. The final research design comprised the following components:

### **2.4.1 Interviews with central policy actors**

The first component involved carrying out interviews with national political/policy players involved in the creation or early establishment/management of the LNF. A total of 14 interviews were carried out during the developmental stage with national policy, administrative and management figures within the LNF system, covering both those who helped to design and establish the LNF, and those responsible for its administration and management once it was operational. These interviews were intended to provide greater understanding of the aims and design of the LNF within a wider government policy context. The findings from this element are reported in chapter 2 of this report. A second round of (re-) interviews will be held with most of these policy players in 2004.

### **2.4.2 Analysis of the Application Form data**

The analysis of the first download of data from the national database held by CYPUP was undertaken. This information was incomplete and the administrative database has been thoroughly recast and improved. As a result, the preliminary analysis of the administrative data is not reported here although some brief findings were shared with LNF local administrators through the vehicle of the regular Bulletin which is distributed from time to time to LNFs. A sample of the kinds of analyses possible are provided in Appendix Two but a full secondary analysis of the administrative data will be undertaken in the remaining phase of the evaluation. This information is taken from the application forms of all groups which have applied to the Fund, collected at the local level by the various LNFs and then forwarded to the (former) CYPUP, in order to develop a composite national database. This data analysis will provide a profile of the types of groups that are applying to the LNF, the nature and purpose of their application, as well as information about successful and unsuccessful applicants and their beneficiaries. The analysis will be able to provide information both on application forms – which provide information about the groups applying and their aspirations for the LNF -



but by the ends of the evaluation it will also be possible to analyse many end-of-grant forms, which will provide information about how the fund has been used and its impacts on the group.

### **2.4.3 Analysis of child poverty data from the Index of Multiple Deprivation**

Analysis of child poverty data from the Index of Multiple Deprivation was undertaken for all the case study areas in order to rank wards within the LNF case studies by levels of child poverty. Taken with data from the application records of local LNFs, this has enabled us to see the extent to which the funds being distributed locally are targeted towards the more deprived areas within LNF areas. A series of maps are being developed, superimposing details of applications onto wards categorised by child poverty levels.<sup>2</sup>

### **2.4.4 Telephone Survey of Applicants**

A telephone survey is being carried out with both successful and unsuccessful applicants across the three Waves of the funds. This survey explores the experience of applying for LNF funding, other funding experiences, reflections on the role and value of the LNF and (amongst successful applicants) the use and impact of the fund. The survey is taking place in two blocks. Block 1, reported in chapter 4 here, has included applicants from Wave 1 and Block 2 will take place in 2004, covering applicants from Waves 2 and 3. Both successful and unsuccessful applicants are being surveyed to get as balanced a view as possible of the grant application process.

The sample chosen in the first Block of the telephone survey was designed to be able to compare and contrast applicants according to the amount applied for, the date the application was received and the year when the group was started. The sample was drawn from the national database selecting only those applying for an LNF grant prior to 7<sup>th</sup> March 2003. A pre-notification letter was then sent out to the selected sample in advance of fieldwork.

The survey, lasting on average 14 minutes, was administered via CATI (Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing). The response rate achieved amongst successful applicants (72 per cent) was higher than that achieved with unsuccessful applicants (55 per cent). A total of 682 full interviews were actually achieved, comprising 513 interviews with successful applicants and 169 interviews with unsuccessful applicants. The findings of the survey are reported in detail in chapter 4.

### **2.4.5 Case Studies**

Case studies of individual LNF areas are being carried out to provide a detailed and comprehensive understanding of the application process, as well as the use and impacts of the LNF across different LNF areas. These have been designed to provide in-depth evidence from a number of different perspectives including local administrators, successful and unsuccessful applicants and beneficiaries.

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<sup>2</sup> Poverty mapping exercises undertaken over the past few years suggest that many people living within areas defined as deprived are not themselves in poverty, and that many people living outside the most deprived areas are subject to poverty (see, for example, P. Alcock and G. Craig [2001] 'Poverty and anti-poverty strategies' in R. Sainsbury and J. Bradshaw (eds.), *The experience of poverty*, Aldershot: Ashgate). Our local case study analysis will be able to explore the extent to which targeting of resources locally takes account of this insight.

The case study areas were selected in order to reflect different Waves (which themselves represented differing levels of child poverty in descending order from Wave 1 through to Wave 3), urban and rural contexts<sup>3</sup>, varying levels of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) populations, government regions, differences in the volume of business and a mix of delivery agents locally. In some cases we had to change our original choices due to changes in LNF administrators, or the volume of applications being somewhat lower than anticipated. A pilot case study was carried out in South Yorkshire during the developmental study. The experience from this pilot case study was used to refine the case study design for the remaining evaluative work.

Over the course of the evaluation a total of three visits will have been made to Wave 1 and Wave 2 areas and two visits to Wave 3 areas. This report presents the evidence of the first visits to six of the eight case studies (including the pilot case study) which were carried out in 2003 in:

Wave One: South Yorkshire (Community Foundation – CF - administrator); Greater Manchester (CF); Hammersmith and Fulham/Westminster (Peabody Trust); and Nottinghamshire (CF).

Wave Two: Northumberland (CF), Staffordshire (Voluntary Action).

Two further case studies will be carried out in Essex (CF) and Cambridgeshire (Community Council) (both Wave 3 areas) during the remainder of the evaluation.

#### **2.4.6 Telephone Interviews with Local Administrators**

In order to provide an overview of the different practices operating across all 47 LNF areas all Local Administrators who were not based in case study areas took part in a telephone interview in November 2003. This involved all Wave 1 and 2 areas (with some initial material collected from Wave 3 areas – many of which had only just begun to receive applications). These interviews lasted just under an hour on average. The findings from this element of the study are reported in chapter 3. The follow-up survey phase will be undertaken in the summer of 2004.

#### **2.4.7 Tracking of applications through the system**

A small tracking study is being carried out to help us assess the value and role of the National Call Centre in the application process. This component involves a researcher observing activities at the National Call Centre, during which a random sample of 20 potential applications were selected. These enquiries will then be tracked from the first call to the Call Centre through to the outcome of their application – at whatever stage that may occur (i.e. successful completion of funded project, failure to apply, or some intermediate stage) – with a running diary kept of progress and points of difficulty or of more general interest logged and analysed. This work will also be recounted in the final report.

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<sup>3</sup> Although case study areas with large urban cores – such as Nottinghamshire – also have substantial rural hinterlands and are thus most accurately described as mixed urban/rural areas.

## 2.4.8 Economic analysis of LNF

An economic analysis is also being undertaken to ascertain whether the money being spent on distributing the fund is being spent effectively. In addition, there will be a comparison with other funds with broadly similar aims, to see how LNF performs in the way it gets money to those defined as its targets.

During the first year of the evaluation initial scoping work on the economic evaluation was undertaken, including identifying a (very limited) list of comparators and accessing information about them. This early scoping work, and the general approach of the economic element of the national evaluation of the LNF, is reported in Appendix 1. The economic evaluation, however, is dependent on the other elements of the evaluation being carried out, for data to be analysed, and was therefore less further forward than these other elements at the time of writing this interim report.

Full details of the research methods will be included in the Final Report. Until then, further details of the design, conduct and analysis of the research can be obtained from the national evaluation team on request<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Contact [g.craig@hull.ac.uk](mailto:g.craig@hull.ac.uk) or [clarissa.white@bmr.co.uk](mailto:clarissa.white@bmr.co.uk) for further information.



### 3 Starting up the LNF at national and local levels

In the first stages of the evaluation, we explored the early history of the LNF, its political rationale, its design and establishment as a working programme. We did this through analysis of relevant policy documentation and through 14 interviews with national policy, administrative and management figures within the LNF system.

In order to set the evaluation in context this chapter reflects on the findings of this phase of the work. It also presents a number of issues which will need to be explored further during the remainder of the evaluation. We return to some of these in the final chapter of this report when we discuss some of the cross-cutting questions emerging from the evaluation to date.

The findings reported have been illustrated, where possible, with the use of verbatim quotations and examples. The identity of individual respondents is, for obvious reasons, confidential but the interviews covered a wide range of informed perspectives on the early history of the LNF from inside and outside.

#### 3.1 The origins and development of the LNF

The origins of the LNF were primarily attributed by respondents to the political strategy of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, to address child poverty. An additional view expressed was that the Policy Action Team 12 Report on young people<sup>5</sup> (from the Social Exclusion Unit) which led particularly to the national Connexions strategy, was another ‘parent’ of the LNF.

In its inception the LNF was designed to involve the parts of the voluntary and community sector which were experiencing deprivation, and to be accessible to families and children in those neighbourhoods who might have difficulty accessing grants in general and government funding in particular. Whilst it was emphasised that the government was the ultimate source of funding, it was also acknowledged that the LNF would provide a means for such communities to build capacity separate from the formal institutions of the welfare state. This set of parameters made it, in the eyes of these respondents, a unique instrument of grant-giving. However, although the themes and objectives for the LNF were first announced in the 1999 Pre-Budget Report and set out in the following Expenditure White Paper, it was left to those designing the fund to work out how these goals would be interpreted in practice.

The evidence collected from these interviews suggested that the LNF has a paradoxical quality to it. Respondents felt that underpinning its design and vision was a clear desire to address child poverty, yet it was equally regarded by many as being a modest small grants scheme and unlikely – on its own – to make a significant impact to this. One explanation given for these contradictory understandings of the LNF is the notion that it should be viewed as part of a stable of initiatives which would collectively contribute to addressing child poverty. It was not felt to have a critical mass on its own and was superficial – at least in material terms - as a response to child poverty; but that its real – and added - value would come from its effective integration into local strategic approaches to combat child poverty.

Another way in which this paradox was explained by one respondent centrally involved in its design was in terms of regarding the LNF not as ‘*transformational*’ but as ‘*demonstrative*’: it would not change the world (of

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<sup>5</sup> Social Exclusion Unit (2000) *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, Report of Policy Action Team 12: Young people*, London:TSO.

child poverty) on its own but it could signal the values and commitment of the government in the critical policy arena of child poverty. In this sense it was not seen by respondents as a modest initiative.

In terms of the management of the LNF, the original model put forward by the Treasury was for there to be central oversight, exercised, once it had been established, by the CYPU, but that the day-to-day management should be vested at arms-length from the government. The justification for this model was that it did not make sense to have a government department deciding on small grants at this level and the LNF needed *to be seen* to be independent and accessible. This decision, as we shall see, was overturned in the light of early operational experience.

Also it was emphasised that the structure of the LNF was devised to ensure that the bigger national children's charities could not *'capture'* the fund or draw heavily on the money available through it; i.e. that it should be for 'new' groups – a form of capacity-building in itself – rather than a further source of funding for 'the usual suspects', groups well-versed in the techniques of raising funds at local levels. This aspect of the design appeared to have been driven by the fact that the bigger charities were well-represented in early consultations across the voluntary sector on the structure of the LNF, before the CYPU came into existence. Many of these charities had networks of local projects across the country and were felt likely to be able to exploit the LNF resources at the expense of more local organisations.

One continuing issue which was raised through the case study work is that of the position of faith groups and, in an overlapping way, of black and minority ethnic (BME) groups. The position described to us by policy representatives is that the LNF can make grants to faith groups where they are providing services, activities or facilities for a wider constituency than simply members of their faith group, but not where they are solely targeted at their own faith-based membership. However, given that the goal of the LNF is to address exclusion (or poor and deprived children and young people and their families and communities), the provision of funding for BME groups which are not necessarily faith-based but which essentially target their own communities, was questioned by some respondents. One perspective was that funding translation and interpretation, for example, might not be seen as supporting a goal of social inclusion. This clearly remains a matter of debate within the LNF, a debate which relates to the much wider context of the meaning and purpose of the community cohesion strategy currently being pursued by government and of what precisely an 'integration' project looks like.

Finally, the issue of privileging the voice of the child – another concern of the Chancellor - was given uneven emphasis by our respondents. It is best characterised – from their responses - as being part of the general ethos of the LNF but not given a very explicit or strong emphasis. It was, as one respondent put it, *'just making it a little bit more empowering for the kids'* but in a context where it was assumed there would always be an adult facilitator.

### **3.1.1 Management of the LNF**

In order to implement the model originally proposed for the management of the LNF an organisation had to be contracted to work on behalf of government, which had good links to a national network of local 'delivery points'. The Community Foundation Network (CFN) appeared to be the only plausible candidate, with its network of Community Foundations mapping onto the agreed compromise size for local delivery - the county. Even CFN did not, however, have comprehensive coverage of the country and other delivery agents

had to be brought in in a number of areas. The strength of CFN's claim was also underwritten by its close involvement in shaping the terms of the original contract.

Political and policy pressures were reported as important in ensuring that the organisational form adopted had to be run with since the political drive from government did not allow time to explore other options: as one manager put it, *'we were over a barrel and the Treasury was at our shoulder'*. It was argued to us that a little more time should have been taken to explore whether the LNF could, from its inception, be part of an integrated small grants strategy with, for example, a common application form – a debate which appears to be continuing to the time of writing – but time was of the essence.

The relationship between CFN and CYPUP was not generally a happy one and has been the subject of criticism by both parties and from outside the LNF arena. What may be helpful, in reflecting on this relationship, is to identify lessons which may be of value in the continuing work of the LNF. There is a broad consensus - in hindsight - that the CFN, despite meeting some of the important criteria outlined above, did not initially have the capacity or expertise to manage the scheme and that attempts to correct this deficiency – regardless of the competencies of the people appointed - were made too little, too late. Local Community Foundations were also uneven in their size, histories and capacity to take on the role of delivery agent for the LNF. It also appeared to some respondents that the (former) CYPUP did not have adequate capacity to cope with the contracting process in its early days.

The alleged deficiencies of the CFN confirmed some in the view that the contract should never have been outsourced. The process of agreeing the original contract was delayed by a series of concerns which related to:

- Confusion as to whether the LNF would move rapidly into a unitary grants scheme, managed perhaps by the Home Office's Active Communities Unit and/or through government regional offices, which knocked on into arguments about the timeframe for the contract both initially and when it was renewed in early 2002. This appeared to have aroused concern within the CFN network members about the short to medium-term intentions of government;
- The emergence of a strong concern with child protection which appeared, to some respondents outside the CYPUP, to have been given a rather belated emphasis and resulted in anxieties amongst Community Foundations that they would be required to police child protection (concerns which the CYPUP had to satisfy them were unfounded). Views about the emergence of the child protection policy and the extent to which it might have been a barrier to local applicants were however divided. A contrasting view was that the child protection policy was *'always there'*;
- The requirement for the CFN to manage all communication with local delivery agents appeared to have contributed to a degree of scepticism, frustration and confusion on both sides; and
- The structural tension built into the requirement that the LNF have a common set of operating rules and procedures alongside an understanding that local funds had to respond to local needs and have an appropriate degree of flexibility. This led to fears at one point within the CYPUP that the LNF was effectively becoming 55 LNFs. It was suggested that whilst the LNFs were acting perfectly professionally in administering grants appropriately, they were also being used for differing purposes including, it

appears, building the capacity not of local communities but – particularly in areas where Community Foundations were new - of the LNF delivery agents themselves.

Again, time pressures played their part in creating tensions and in the event, the initial contract with CFN – and hence with local LNFs - was signed some months after the official start-up date. This led to the official Ministerial ‘launch’ and the actual start of work on the ground being out of synch. There were differing understandings within and around the CYPFU as to what was happening operationally and how any difficulties should be resolved. Also, there were factions emerging within the CFN, including local versus national interests and staff versus management. Another contributory factor identified was that neither CFN nor CYPFU had previous experience of negotiating a contract of this kind with the type of party with which they were now contracting. Thus, for example, CFN was judging its position in the light of the rather more ‘light touch’ relationship it enjoyed with corporate donors which tended to be less prescriptive about the way money was used. Some respondents outside the government, however, also claimed that the CYPFU, was unused to dealing with a complex federal organisation in which power was diffused amongst differing groups of local and national actors and which involved complex decision-making structures.

These tensions continued well into the second year until, after what was described as an ‘*exhaustive*’ process of audit and financial assessment (and in the face of considerable reluctance from within the Treasury), it was decided to terminate the contract with CFN at the end of the financial year then underway. This decision was announced to CFN (and to the evaluation team) in October 2002. There was concern within the CYPFU about the way the voluntary sector would interpret the Unit taking back greater control of the fund’s management, (particularly as the general trend had been in the opposite direction, *viz.* to decentralise to regions rather than centralise and to regulate funds at a distance). However, it was suggested to us that these fears had not been realised and that local LNFs were content to deal directly with the CYPFU.

This shift in management responsibility had resource implications for the CYPFU with a number of additional staff required to manage contractual relationships with 55 LNFs rather than with a single central agency, CFN. Once the decision to terminate the contract with CFN had been taken, the CYPFU argued that the contract should not be transferred to another voluntary agency; and in any case there were still no plausible alternative candidates.

At a local level, some LNFs have turned out also not to meet the criteria set by the CYPFU and there have been some changes in local arrangements which have absorbed further resources. (These changes also impacted on the choice of case study areas for the evaluation – see chapter 5).

### **3.1.2 Relationship with the Children’s Fund**

One clear area of confusion that emerged from our policy interviews surrounded the relationship between the LNF and what is now known as the Children’s (Preventative) Fund. The fact that the two ‘funds’ very often in their early lives (although perhaps less so now) appeared bracketed together in public and political discourse derives in part from their common concern with child poverty. In reality, it appeared that the linkage was actually a matter of administrative – and last minute - convenience at the end of the relevant Public Spending Review when the LNF and the Children’s Fund were put together. Correspondence from the Treasury to local voluntary organisations in June 2000 talked, in line with the 2000 Budget, about ‘a national network of Children’s Funds to fund local projects providing local solutions to the problem of child



poverty.’ This correspondence, which was actually referring to the LNF, made no mention then of the Children’s (Preventative) Fund.

Differing views were reported to the team about how the LNF and the Children’s Fund were expected to operate together in practice. It was said for example that both the LNF and the Children’s Fund were seen as complementary bits of the same policy package and that there was never a suggestion that one would happen without the other at least in the short term. Indeed, it was argued that the LNF would help to build local capacity to engage with the Children’s Fund – a view that some respondents still felt, with the LNF operational, was important. Longer term, it was thought that very different outcomes might emerge, for example with the Children’s Fund being mainstreamed into local social services provision and some variant of the LNF continuing as a freestanding scheme albeit within different organisational auspices.

### **3.2 Turning objectives into an operational programme**

The key issues in shaping the organisational form of the LNF appeared, from these interviews, to the research team to be as follows:

- i. There should be a relatively small grants ceiling, to flag up a clear message about targets: these would be smaller, locally-based community and voluntary sector organisations in deprived areas with little access to other grants schemes;
- ii. A commonality of approach across the country to avoid the postcode lottery which had affected other grants schemes including, until it took some remedial action, the National Lottery Charities Board (the Community Fund);
- iii. A delivery structure which allowed the grant-makers to be as close to local communities and the problems they were addressing as possible, so that local needs could be identified locally. This resulted in a compromise between localness and cost-effectiveness, a county-based structure and what one respondent called ‘*the LSC [Learning and Skills Council] compromise*’ in terms of geographical coverage – meaning that local LNFs often covered more than one first tier authority, as LSCs also did;
- iv. A national network with central oversight and with a light touch in terms of bureaucracy;
- v. Mechanisms for supporting local groups through the application process;
- vi. A very strong concern for adequate public accountability for and control over the monies spent; and
- vii. An emphasis on inclusion and integration.
- viii. Safeguarding children and young people

### **3.3 Issues for the evaluation**

A number of issues were raised by respondents, which have implications for the design and coverage of the evaluation. These are outlined below to demonstrate the differing interpretations being made about the LNF as this has had an impact on the way the LNF has been implemented and delivered on the ground. They also reflect the ongoing development of the LNF as practices and procedures are changed in order to improve performance.

The first issue is that of targeting resources: are funds going to the smaller, less experienced groups, and representatives of children, young people and their communities in poorer areas, identified as the original core target? Initially, it was suggested to the team, there was a political expectation that this would be the case eventually. In its early days, however, the fund was expected to be captured by ‘the usual suspects’ which were able quickly to adapt to its requirements. Over time, it was argued to us, the pattern of applicants might change as, after a time lapse, smaller groups got to know about the LNF and developed the confidence and expertise to apply. However, it is not clear from our interviews as to whether this shift from ‘old’ groups to ‘new’ groups is now as clear-cut an objective as it had originally been. One respondent expressed the view, for example, that the CYPFU could now take a more relaxed view towards grants going to ‘old’ (i.e. more established) groups as long as it could be shown that this reflected an extension of such groups’ activity towards the target populations identified by the LNF (children, their families and communities in poverty).

The issue of targeting raises also some questions about the quality and robustness of administrative data, on which judgements about the effectiveness of targeting might be made. Respondents reported discussions about the extent of information on the application form, particularly for example about whether information on ethnicity, gender and disability should be included. Those arguing against including this information were concerned primarily with the issue of accessibility of the fund, where application forms might be long and complex. The counter view was that without this information, it would be difficult to assess how specific disadvantaged population groups were faring in terms of applications. Another point related to targeting concerned the quality of advertising and publicity and the hope was expressed that this might also be more effectively targeted.

The second significant issue related to the function of outreach work where again respondents had slightly differing positions. In one view, outreach was to ensure that precisely these kinds of smaller groups were enabled to access the LNF and that any difficulties they had could be eased. This might translate for LNF outreach staff into fairly intensive help in form-filling for example. One alternative view put to us however was that the function of outreach was solely to manage the child protection process; that it was *‘about child protection and not about developing structures and systems in [local] organisations.’*

Thirdly, there was a fairly widespread expectation that early applicant groups would tend to focus on the ‘soft’ end of objectives, about ‘aspirations’ and ‘experiences’, or ‘isolation and access’, but that this would and should change as the LNF bedded down into a growing focus on funding local groups with ‘harder’ objectives. These would include the promotion of children’s voices and addressing economic disadvantage. However, as the majority of early applicants ticked all four boxes in the application form, a requirement was subsequently made for them to tick the one which is the closest fit to their objectives, so as to give a better sense of the profile of applicants and beneficiaries.

There was also a suggestion that more work would need to be done centrally to shift the balance of applications towards the ‘tougher’ end of the range of objectives. Despite this, there was recognition that the sum of money, spread across these four themes, is *‘modest’* and spread *‘fairly thinly’* and that more work might also be needed to develop a more strategic approach for maximising the impact of LNF funds.

Child protection now seemed, on the basis of our interviews, to be less of an issue than it had been when the LNF started. Respondents again suggested that there had been fears that it would be a barrier to applications, particularly from small groups, where it could potentially divide organisations and be a cumbersome bureaucratic process. It was now suggested to us that local LNF agents’ attitude to it has *‘mellowed’*. Indeed, it

was suggested that the child protection policy might be the '*crowning glory*' of the LNF in that it would offer safer procedures for small organisations which had had no prior experience of it but which would benefit from having one in place.

Similarly, early anxieties about the operation of the Call Centre appear to have eased although, as we shall see, this was one area where there were a variety of views about this particular element of the system. The early concerns may, of course, simply have reflected the difficulties of starting up a new system. There were fears expressed about the way in which application forms were being administered and despatched and particularly about the lengthy script from which the Call Centre staff worked. This led fairly quickly to a much shorter and more accessible script being devised in 2002. The arguments put to us for the Call Centre were that it gives a corporate focus, a consistency of approach and, in practice, that it has worked well in tracking applications so that '*we know everyone who makes an enquiry*'. This feature was also felt to contrast positively with other comparable funds.

There appeared also to be a continuing debate about the precise meaning of flexibility within the context of a national scheme that attempts to achieve a consistency of approach. Respondents argued that differences between the approach of local LNFs were '*massive*' and that the CYPU needed to be more prescriptive about a number of issues such as grant panel membership, the precise way in which young people were involved, or even about the desirability of prescribed monthly spending targets. In order to address these kinds of inconsistencies a comprehensive LNF manual has been produced for the guidance of local LNFs.

Finally, respondents were asked how they would judge the success of the LNF. Given the tensions and differences in emphasis outlined earlier in this chapter, it is hardly surprising that there are also differences in emphasis in relation to the answers to this question. Respondents focused variously on outputs, outcomes, on process goals and on measures of the effectiveness of the system as a whole.

At one level it was said that assuming the profile of organisations is appropriate then a simple measure of output would be, as one respondent put it, '*to spend*'. This profile may, of course, take some time – several years perhaps - to become established, as spending moves from more established organisations to the newer ones which it was generally hoped that the LNF would target. This profile of organisations is, in any case, quite complex since it contains within it a range of indicators which might not be regarded as of equal weight: for example, is spending reaching small, locally-based organisations, that are 'close' to their community? What experience of grants do they have? Are they concerned with child poverty? Are they giving children and young people a voice and opportunities to participate? And are they addressing local needs?

One respondent described the issue of success more specifically and perhaps challengingly as '*does the LNF reach those targets which are deprived, especially in the more affluent areas*'. A systematic measure was characterised simply as wanting to '*see the LNF as best practice in grant giving*' although that of course begs a number of questions as to how best practice might be defined.

Individual measures of success described by respondents included, in summary, the following:

- *poverty*: is the profile of local spend closely related to local needs? (output);
- *development*: does the profile of spend shift away from 'soft' targets and goals towards the 'tougher' goals? (output);

- *targeting*: is the fund reaching groups addressing children and young people facing poverty and disadvantage (output)?
- *outreach*: has outreach helped less-established groups access the fund (including dealing with form-filling and new procedures such as child protection) (process);
- *ownership*: does the voluntary sector own the scheme? (outcome);
- *children's participation*: does it engage children, allow them into the mainstream ('get onto the radar' in the words of one respondent) and engage in experiences on a systematic basis, which in turn allow them to engage more widely outside the LNF, and thus empower them? (outcome);
- *capacity*: does the LNF reach newer groups which then continue on a sustainable basis (outcome)?; and
- *social change*: what (sustainable) difference does the LNF make on the ground in the view of local communities and beneficiaries? (outcome).

Elements of all these measures can be seen, albeit unevenly, in the accounts given to us in case study areas, described in chapter 5 below. This interim report is however, concerned more with process than with impacts and we would expect the question of medium to longer-term impacts to be a key element in our final reporting next year.

## 4 National Survey of Local Administrators

In order to provide an overview of the different practices operating across all 47 LNF areas all Local Administrators (LAs) who were not based in case study areas took part in a semi-structured survey in November 2003. During this first stage of the work 42 LAs (out of 47)<sup>6</sup> were interviewed by telephone using a prepared interview schedule lasting between 45-60 minutes. to explore some of the issues identified in depth and to update the background. This next chapter reports on the findings of these interviews.

The areas covered by these LNFs were, of course, geographically and demographically very different. They included large inner city conurbations, ex-coalfields areas, seaside areas, sparsely-populated rural areas and combinations of all of these. Within these areas, there were both areas of affluence and of poverty, sometimes closely situated, although the distribution of poverty across the areas varied significantly.

### 4.1 Role of the LA

Across different areas, the role of the LA was reported as involving similar activities. Their primary role was, not surprisingly, to administer the fund. This involved the management and planning of the LNF, dealing with all associated paperwork (e.g. application forms, monitoring forms, financial returns to [former] CYPUs etc.), some face-to-face work with groups and some outreach activities (publicity and support). Even where there were outreach workers based in other organisations – usually the case - the majority of LAs still had face-to-face contact with at least some of the groups applying for funds and some LAs themselves also visited some applicant groups.

All LAs interviewed had extensive previous experience in a relevant area related to grant-giving, such as other work in the Voluntary and Community Sectors (VCS), administering other grant streams, managing projects, or previous employment in a Community Foundation (CF) or similar organisation. Most LAs had been working with the LNF since it had started in their area.

The majority of LAs were employed by the Community Foundation in their area. However, a minority were employed by the Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) (or equivalent) or a Rural Community Council (RCC) (or equivalent). This was typically the case in areas where there was no CF, or where the CF was only embryonic and did not have the capacity to manage the fund.

Where outreach of the LNF was not carried out 'in-house' (the latter being relatively unusual), other organisations, mainly CVSs (but also sometimes RCC and other similar organisations) were contracted to be outreach partners. The outreach partners used their existing networks, mailing lists and forums to publicise the LNF and to provide support to groups.

Since the start none of the LAs felt that their role had significantly changed, except for an increase in work due to expansion. The only changes noted were the withdrawal of the CFN (see also chapter 2), minor increases in staffing due to expansion, and some changes in budgets (again, through the expansion of the work).

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<sup>6</sup> 2 areas out of the remaining 5 were no longer delivering and while every effort was made to contact and interview the other 3 areas, due to sickness, absences and other reasons, this was not possible.

## 4.2 Views about the withdrawal of CFN

In general, most LAs seemed positive about the change from CFN to the (former) CYPUs as the central administrative body. Key reasons for favouring the withdrawal of the CFN were that it was felt to have made the management of the fund more streamlined and less bureaucratic,

*The CFN were there for help and assistance but now we have CYPUs. It has cut out the middle man. We have all learnt an awful lot. The system has become easier, it is evolving.*

*Yes, the Community Foundation Network has gone. This has made a positive difference. The CYPUs are very approachable and non-‘civil servant’. They have been very helpful and approachable. We are on the same wave-length. I think some of them have Voluntary and Community sector experience.*

*It is positive in that CYPUs have streamlined things. We are not having to produce monthly financial returns, we are doing everything quarterly, that is very useful and much better. We don’t seem to be having as many networking meetings that is a shame. In terms of delivery things have not changed.*

Where concerns were voiced about the withdrawal of the CFN these seemed mainly to relate to the length of time it took to access funds from the (former) CYPUs:

*It has made a terrible difference, it is awful. The process of getting money out of CYPUs is traumatic- the people in the ivory tower don’t understand this is somebody’s wages and the only opportunity for a small group to do something.*

*Money has been delayed. They don’t realise the importance of getting money in advance particularly in relation to wages. It is a shame. When it was the Community Foundation Network the finance officer was brilliant whereas this one is not very helpful.*

In one case an LA emphasised the costs and benefits to the withdrawal of the CFN:

*It means that we deal directly with CYPUs now. There are advantages and disadvantages. If you have a query you get the response straight from the horse’s mouth. On the other hand you don’t have a go-between/ intermediary and this can make the relationship more sensitive. There is nobody you can speak to confidentially or discreetly. I now speak to the network of grant administrators instead when I need to talk about difficulties.*

## 4.3 The Application Process

### 4.3.1 The National Call Centre

Although specific questions were not asked about the Call Centre, some LAs nonetheless raised concerns about whether there was a need for a National Call Centre. In these cases it was said that the idea of having a National Call Centre went against the ethos of the work of the Community Foundation (or equivalent managing organisation) which should be local. Also, using the Call Centre often meant that the CF (or equivalent) which did the outreach work would have to pass the groups they spoke to onto the Call Centre, before they then received the application form back from the group. This was seen as an unnecessarily complicated process. One area also pointed out that, in the experience of groups from their area, the Call Centre was not very patient with people who did not speak English very well. LAs suggested that it would be useful to have some LNF application forms themselves to give out, especially when they were at funding fairs and other such events:

*I think having the capacity to issue an application is another route to building relationships with Community and Voluntary sector groups. I know we get it in a roundabout way through the Call Centre. I think it would be better if LAs could undertake that function.*

*The one thing for me I think does not work is the Call Centre. In the local area people know us, we are the face of the community but we can't give out the application forms. I think it is absolutely against the principle of what the Community Foundation does in the local community. I think the money they spend on the Call Centre they could give some to the Community Foundations for them to do it. You are putting one more barrier in the way of hard-to-reach groups. They are not used to asking for money. It also adds to the delay factor.*

*The Call Centre in Sheffield- a lot of our groups are put off by this. I do not see why there can't be a system why we can't have forms with us. I think it wastes time. I don't think it is particularly user- friendly. I don't think we can afford to put anybody off. If people want a form we have to tell them to ring Sheffield.*

*The Call Centre is a definite barrier to people coming forward. They phone us wanting a form and we say we can't send them one. It seems crazy. It is a continuing gripe.*

It was, however, generally recognised that even if there had been some teething problems with the Call Centre during the early days, it was now working well in terms of its remit.

### **4.3.2 Complex forms**

Discussion about the application forms revolved around the difficulties that some of the smaller hard-to-reach groups have completing them:

*It is the most complicated funding we have to administer. It is even more difficult than ESF funding. It is so hard for the groups. We had one woman in tears because she couldn't understand what was being asked from her.... We manage a funding stream called Global Grants which works very well and lots could be learned from their system.*

*The form is off-putting so the outreach is vital...For small, hard to reach groups the application form is off putting. If it weren't for the outreach workers they wouldn't be applying for grants.*

*Some groups are put off by the form*

*Administration is a nightmare, there is so much that is unnecessary. For example, the form asks what is the month and year that your organisation was established. Why do you need the month? It doesn't ask 'when was it funded'? All these boxes people have to tick, it makes it seem like a bureaucratic government form.... They should change the form and make it more pleasant. You don't need to ask for such evidence of illegitimate organisations, you should rely on the LA. If we know them before, we know they exist.*

### **4.3.3 Grant Panels**

In all areas, the LNF grant panels appeared, from the response of LAs, to comprise experienced people. The experience of the members is usually in terms of previous grant-making, working with children and young people, knowledge of local area or experience in the voluntary and community sector (VCS). In some cases the members of the groups that had been funded were encouraged to sit on the panel and this worked well as they had first hand experience of the LNF. Usually there appeared to be a mix of experience, a mix of geographical representation on the panel and a mix of VCS and statutory sector representation. The structure

of grant panels varied, however. Some areas had a 'pool' of members and drew on a few of them for each meeting. In some areas there was just one grant panel and in others there was more than one, each grant panel handling different geographical parts of the area and this was either because the area was large and would be too big for one panel or because of specific local characteristics. For example, one area comprises a number of diverse localities - a city; a former mining community; coastal areas; poor rural areas; and affluent areas- and had 3 panels in place.

#### **4.3.3.1 Decision-making process**

The decision-making processes were more or less the same in all areas, that is: information about applications (application forms and/or summaries) was sent out to all the panel members in advance, sometimes with prescribed grading systems, prioritisation guidelines or scoring sheets included. The panel would meet and decisions were made about the applications. Sometimes the summaries would include recommendations or reports from LAs/outreach workers, but in all cases the final decision on any application was made by the panel as a whole. Sometimes the groups were visited by members of the panel, the LAs and/or the outreach worker. Sometimes outreach workers sat on the panel, an issue that will be discussed more fully below (see Section 4 on 'Outreach').

There had been various attempts by different areas to involve young people on the grant panels. People had tried different structures such as, a separate young people's panel; young people actually on the panel alongside adults; consultation with young people; or using existing young people's Forums to consult with. It was clear, however, that different structures worked with varying degrees of success and no particular model of involvement of young people worked more successfully than others. The reasons for this are not clear but may depend on the level of previous consultative work undertaken with young people locally. Some people commented, for example, that it was difficult to retain young people because they grow older and move onto other things, such as going to university, although this may be a relatively rare event since the LNF was not in general targeted on more able young people. Others thought that young people felt that the work of the panels was boring and were not, therefore, interested in participating in them.

#### **4.3.3.2 Training of members**

Usually the members were given some training about LNF (mainly an induction session, one-to-one training or 'on the job' informal training) but it was frequently pointed out to us that all the members of the panels have a lot of expertise anyway. For this reason, there were very few cases of actual structured training programmes. The following comments are representative of a very large number of comments on this issue:

*To be honest it is not rocket science and all the people deal day to day with issues affecting young people. I often feel that if you select the right people why do you need training? It is common sense. We are only talking about £7,000! If you gave more training you would probably scare them off. I would take that as a personal insult if that was me ... They are all fairly competent and used to this kind of thing.*

*Most people [on the panel] are experienced in this kind of work anyway.*

*I think at the moment the level of training we have got is probably OK for the members. They are all professionals and therefore have a sophisticated way of approaching assessing and making decisions.*



*If there was something to be offered by CYPU [e.g. additional training] and offered to everyone and giving consistency across the UK that would be good.*

*But each person brings their own individual experience and skills about the local area.*

*We give informal training rather than formal. They have had experience of dealing with grants before the LNF. They didn't need training about this.*

Where there was training provided, it was usually around the structure and criteria of the LNF, rather than about grant-making or young people's issues *per se*. It is conceivable, however, that this lack of training about issues affecting young people might impact on the recruitment and retention of young people on panels and on the decision-making process itself in relation to new groups (see above). This issue may be explored further in the ongoing case-study work.

#### **4.3.3.3 Problems and difficulties**

In general, very few areas stated that there had been any difficulties with the grants panel. Where there were difficulties, these were generally said to be very minor, and were around issues such as having too much information to read and coming to decisions as a group. The following two quotes exemplify this:

*The only thing that has affected one or two members of the panel is quantity of information, that is, too much reading. We asked if they wanted it summarised but they agreed they needed all the information, but it makes it a lot to read. People have busy lives and don't have much time to read it.*

*The only difficulties that are encountered are in trying to decide to what extent the project is going to make a difference - e.g. If it is a new group how much risk is the panel prepared to take?*

However, while the latter example might account for any lower success rate experienced by embryonic groups, this difficulty was not highlighted for most areas. As seen by the LAs at least, grant panels in all areas were functioning well with relatively few difficulties.

#### **4.3.4 Spread of applications**

In most areas the highest percentage of applicants for an LNF grant applied under the theme 'Aspirations and Experiences' in the grant application form. In the rural areas, unsurprisingly, Isolation and Access was also a popular theme. The themes of Economic Disadvantage and Children's Voices appeared far less often in applications. Although exactly why there is this spread needs to be explored further in the second telephone survey and the case study work, some explanations were voiced by the LAs. The main reason given for the popularity of 'Aspirations and Experiences' was that it was broad enough to cover many types of project.

*Aspiration and Experience is so broad, the other themes are more specific. That is why it is easier to fit into them.*

*It is an uplifting theme [Aspirations and Experiences] - everybody wants to think that is what their project is going to achieve.*

An additional explanation for the popularity of this theme relates to issues of the sustainability of the work (see Section 3.6 below). The LNF criteria focus on projects that are new and one-off to a large extent. This

may have the effect of encouraging applications from projects that are more linked to one particular experience rather than lasting over a long period of time.

However, many people felt the themes were not all that helpful and many applicants ticked more than one box on the application form because the project they were applying for didn't fit into just one theme. The LAs themselves also reported that they did not always keep a breakdown of the themes, largely again because they found them unhelpful and uninformative. The following quotes are a few of a very many responses we elicited on this issue:

*Some people don't tick the box or they tick two or 3 boxes. To an extent they are right- you could have a project that addresses all four, or 2 of them.*

*My personal view is that the themes aren't all that helpful. I don't think the applicants take too much notice either.*

*Most people feel they can fit into all the categories and want to put more than one. Some are quite confused by the themes. Sometimes I don't see the point of the themes.*

*I don't think the themes are particularly useful because each project is individual. We have our own categories e.g., Arts, training, pre-school.*

*It is just a tick box exercise. It is not particularly useful.*

However, a handful of people did feel the themes were helpful. For example:

*The themes are probably helpful ... they guide applicants to think about what they are achieving. Some people are so involved in their work but they might not often categorise it- it makes them think about what their aim is and what they want to achieve. But sometimes it is more jargon.*

Nonetheless, comments such as this were relatively rare.

A few explanations were offered for the low application rates to specific themes. One LA suggested that the 'Economic Disadvantage' theme was not chosen very often because people did not like to class themselves as economically disadvantaged as it could have a stigma attached to it. One reason for the low number of groups applying under the 'Children's Voices', was offered by several people. They commented that this theme was simply not understood or its meaning taken quite literally:

*Maybe they don't understand this term. They might think it means choirs or something.*

*I think Children's Voices is a complicated theme. People don't understand what it means. We have had people phone us up and say 'we are a children's choir, does that count?'*

Another LA commented that applications under the Children's Voices theme might have been low because it needed specialist skills to run a group under this theme:

*Children's Voices are low, probably because you need an area of expertise to run that kind of project, which a lot of projects don't have.*

Although there were general concerns that this theme had differences in interpretation, there were, nonetheless, some examples of given groups applying for LNF funds that were led by children and young

people, albeit these were relatively few (see discussion in Section 3.5). One LA suggested, in response to the unequal spread of applications, that if targets were set for the distribution of funds under themes then a wider spread might be achieved:

*I don't know the spread of applications- it is not something we dwell on- the themes have been drawn so widely. The themes are not particularly useful. They are not specific enough. Little weight is given by CYPU. There are no targets for them, no one really pays much attention to them.*

This issue might be important to explore with respect to increasing the profile of children and young people-led projects (see Section 3.5 below) and will additionally be explored further in the second telephone survey and continuing case study work.

#### **4.4 Promotion of LNF and outreach work**

In all areas, outreach had both an advertising role and a support role. There was consistency across all areas in this, although most projects, as noted, contracted out to other agencies to do outreach, mainly the CVSs (or their rural equivalents) in the area.

The method of outreach that was seen as most successful in all the interviews was face-to-face outreach, that is, a recognition that the personal touch is important. The following examples are just a few of very many examples that indicate this:

*Human contact seems to stimulate people more than the printed word. You need emphasis, enthusiasm and encouragement in your speech, this is more effective, there is more colour in it, more human touch.*

*We get statistics from the Call Centre about how people have heard about it- I think word of mouth and flyers are most effective.*

*One of our outreach workers went to [the] carnival and got quite a few people there. Word of mouth and being a presence are important.*

Successful outreach means being accessible, and offering support and development. Outreach workers were at the 'coalface' of the outreach work and made initial contacts with groups. The face-to-face contact continued after they had applied for funding i.e. an outreach worker would make the contact, follow it up with a visit, help with any specific tasks (e.g. creating child protection policies etc) and give the group support throughout the process as and where needed. The outreach workers therefore were said to recognise how important this face-to-face contact was.

The least effective forms of outreach identified by LAs were national media, flyers without any personal follow up, leaflets through doors and trying to reach hard-to-reach groups. Some areas said that they had done large mail-outs, but this had not resulted in more people applying for funding. One LA (who had had an unusually bad experience of an outreach worker) stated simply that the least effective form was,

*... sitting in an office not doing anything- having a drop in centre and not doing anything.*

This experience was not, however, replicated in most other areas. Most areas felt that their outreach was effective, particularly if it involved face-to-face, personal contact and the LAs were happy with the progress of their outreach workers i.e. the more outreach they did, the more people they had applying for funding.

Most LAs also said that the majority of groups applied for funding as a result of face-to-face outreach than from any other form of outreach although there is, as yet, no quantifiable measure to underpin this claim.

Conversely, not many LAs felt that there were particular obstacles or opportunities to their outreach work. The following represent only a few minor examples that were given and relate to the specific social and geographic characteristics of the local areas, suggesting the continued importance of recognising diversity within the LNF (see Section 3.1 above).

*An obstacle we have is weak VCS infrastructure in the area. Also, the money we have available for outreach would not pay for a full-time person. That is always a weakness.*

*An obstacle is that we are a sparsely occupied county. It is very hard to get groups together. It is not a major problem, but it is more person-power intensive. You have to go round a lot in order to get everybody.*

Opportunities were similarly conditioned by local factors

*The local CVSs almost certainly have events for the VCS- these are good opportunities for outreach- e.g. We have a stand and talk to people at coffee time ... a barrier is that a lot of the emerging groups are not necessarily at these events.*

*In terms of opportunities there are funding fairs. They have some value- an opportunity for people to ask questions.*

In fact, besides the role of the outreach workers themselves, funding fairs were indicated by many people as being especially useful in relation to publicising the fund, giving support and networking.

#### **4.4.1 Integrating outreach into wider organisational structures**

The integration of outreach workers into the local organisational structure of the LNF varied substantially. During the pilot stage of the evaluation, having outreach workers employed by the organisation actually making the grants appeared to have been a contentious issue but the practice appeared to have become rather more common by the time of this survey, a year later. Indeed, within some LNFs, the outreach workers actually sat on grant panels and this was seen as useful to the process; in others they did not sit on grant panels as this was still seen locally as a conflict of interest. Some LNFs had outreach workers based within the office of the managing organisation (i.e. usually the CF), whilst, for others, their outreach workers were based at an office away from the managing organisation (particularly if the outreach worker was based in a CVS/RCC as part of a contracted-out arrangement, for example). For those based within the managing organisation, this was seen as an advantage as it meant that there were close working links with the LA. For those based away from the office of the managing organisation (e.g. in another organisation), this was also seen as an advantage as it meant that the outreach worker had many links with groups through the networking of the CVS mailing lists and structures. It also meant that the LA's time was freed up to concentrate on other things as the outreach worker was being supervised by the organisation in which they were based.

In all cases, there were close links, good communication and good feedback mechanisms between the outreach worker and LA in relation to flow of information and, given the variation above, it would seem that, once more, the ability of LAs to have flexible responses to local conditions is important.

## 4.4.2 Characteristics of a good outreach worker

In answer to the question, ‘aside from personality traits, what 3 characteristics do you see as key to a good outreach worker’ there was an interesting variety of responses. Most LAs stated that they felt personality was a key factor and that this should be recognised, for example:

*Personality is a key factor for us - I am sure she gets on really well because of her personality.*

A wide variety of other characteristics was noted, but with no other trait consistently identified:

*... knowledge of groups out there- being involved in groups in the past so you know what it is like for the groups, understanding the groups, having a friendly face, being mobile and being able to visit them.*

*... listening skills, being approachable- they are the friendly face of the LNF. But he also needs to be realistic and to tell people about the restrictions of the LNF and to be organised and to know the information about LNF. Needs to be very flexible. Needs broad minded- you can get applications on paper that are very different to the reality of it.*

*... very knowledgeable about, not just the LNF, but other funds, knowledgeable about how the fund can be used to advantage- e.g. Is this actually the best fund to be applying for? Ability to listen and help people order their thoughts into a project. Be patient and approachable- this is important.*

*... communication skills, knowledge of local community, local need, well connected.*

*... analysis, ability to assess where a group is coming from, competence in giving the right advice, impartiality.*

*Probably they need to be proactive, informed, good grasp of how the funding system works, empathetic- near enough to VCS to know and really understand what it is like for a small group sitting around a kitchen table contemplating setting up a project.*

## 4.5 Child Protection policies

Although LAs were not asked directly about child protection policies, given that other data collected during the first stage of the evaluation had suggested there were few problems in this respect, some LAs did spontaneously raise concerns about the issue. There was, for example, a mixed response about the requirement for Child Protection policies in the first place. Most LAs felt that this was putting off many small and emerging groups because the groups felt that it was a difficult thing for them to do, even with support from the outreach workers. It was felt by the LAs to constitute a significant barrier for such groups:

*The Child Protection policy is particularly putting off groups- it is way beyond the scope of some of the small new groups....One objective of the LNF is to ensure children are safe but it discourages people to apply.... a lot of the groups in [...] are really struggling to meet the existing criteria. They are finding they have done a Child Protection policy for another funder but it doesn't meet our criteria. One group I know has 3 Child Protection policies for 3 different funders who are all asking for different things. It must be frustrating for volunteers with little time to have to do this.*

*The Child Protection policy is frightening and makes people think they do not have the capacity and can't do it.*

*Child Protection, it is a big issue to us. The trainers in Child Protection are stretched in dealing with statutory bodies. I think we need a dedicated person to work on Child Protection in the Voluntary and Community sector. This is a significant problem in this area, although we are working on it. We don't have the capacity for all the training. The edict is to have Child Protection policies, but there is no remit about how that will be achieved.*

Furthermore, several LAs were unhappy about the position that they found themselves in, of potentially having to police the Child Protection policy. They felt that this should not be their role as they were not professionally trained as police or social workers.

*I have a bee in my bonnet, and so do some other administrators that I know, about the Child Protection policy and our role as administrator. Our role is to support people and organisations to have a Child Protection policy. We insure people have the policies, but we are not there to police the Child Protection issues. I worry about that. We are not social workers or police. We direct people to agencies if they do not have a policy, but we cannot play a role beyond that. It is not our profession or training. We have no legal status to do this. We need clarification on that.*

*There is a lot of 'jumping through hoops' for the fund and that is putting groups off, especially the Child Protection policy, although I think that is essential ... the groups do find the Child Protection thing onerous ... How much do we police Child Protection? That is not our role.*

However, besides these problems of implementation, some of these LAs did nevertheless see the benefit of child protection policies and suggested that, by creating a policy, groups are then in a better position to apply for future funding. They thought that it built up awareness of Child Protection issues and put it high on the policy agenda, as these examples show:

*We think LNF could go down in history as the fund that put Child Protection issues forward as a means of addressing child poverty. Poverty is seen in a different way that addresses the needs of the child. There is a changing of attitude towards children. Once you get to that level as a baseline this will have an effect.*

*Yes it has had an impact, particularly in terms of the networking that goes on around Child Protection, and the awareness that comes from that, particularly amongst BME groups. We have had discussions on [female] circumcision in particular, which wouldn't have happened before- it has made it OK to talk about it.*

#### **4.6 Target population and successful applications**

Very few LNFs were doing, or had plans to do, a separate evaluation of their work in terms of identifying the target populations for successful applications. Reasons given for this were: not enough money or time to do it; they hadn't thought of it; there is ongoing evaluation in any case (i.e. the present evaluation); and the feedback from the groups which had received funding was positive anyway. The most common reason was lack of time, as the following example shows:

*Other than the LNF grant end of report, I haven't got time at the moment and I am not planning to do any. It might be quite instructive. I might be able to do it next summer. We tend to have a lull in applications during the school holidays. So I might have time.*

The projects which received funding varied widely of course, but in most cases people said that initially it was the 'usual suspects'. However, now, after a year or two of running the fund in most cases (this element of the study was undertaken halfway through the first year of Wave Three LNFs, i.e. 30 months after the LNF had

started to operate), they were getting more of the new and emerging groups. The following are examples of many comments on this issue:

*You do get the usual suspects, but not so much, it was mainly in the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> year.*

*It is hard to say. I think to begin with it was usual suspects because they were the groups we were familiar with and they knew us as a Council for Voluntary Service- they were the first to come forward. We have had more new and emerging groups recently.*

Several people felt that, although the fund was supposed to be targeted at small and emerging groups, in some areas (particularly rural areas) people were comfortable about larger groups also having some of the funding. It was felt that such groups had the experience and capacity to deliver the project, for example:

*We get both usual suspects and emerging groups. We don't mind too much. In a county like [...] which is huge geographically but has a small population, we are happy for bigger organisations coming to us. Sometimes they are the better way of delivering a service in a remote rural area because they have more resources, more staffing, are more competent, have more experience etc. It can be better for the young people. In [...] there are not many facilities for young people.*

This highlights once more the importance of flexibility - i.e. of understanding and responding to local social and geographic conditions, to the effectiveness of the LNF.

However, in some instances the obstacles to more embryonic groups making a successful application raised issues of process. Some LAs felt that it was more difficult, and took longer, to get the smaller projects up to the required standards of the LNF:

*If there is a genuinely new group the panel try really hard to approve the application but it is more difficult to score well as they don't have all the systems in place to scrutinise fiercely.*

Despite such examples, the main reasons stated by the LAs for groups being unsuccessful in accessing funding was that they did not meet LNF criteria in relation to eligibility and the application process. Typical of the reasons given here were:

#### **Ineligibility:**

the group is too large; it has too high an income; it is outside the geographic area; the group is getting money from elsewhere; LNF is not the main funder; the group is asking for continuation funding for the same project: they are asking for match funding; they are wanting salary costs; the beneficiaries are not seen as disadvantaged; it is a national group; it is a faith group; the group is asking for funding to cover other activities not related to young people.

#### **Poor application:**

it is not filled in properly; there is lack of evidence that children and young people have been involved in the application; there is poor budgeting; the group is not actually formed; the need for the grant is not convincing; the group is asking for funding for running costs; the group has a lack of policies [but usually LNF LAS said they will provide support and assistance to get these so they can put in an application next

time]; the group has not done enough research; the application is too vague; the group haven't taken care of past money; the group is not quite ready; or there is a lack of understanding of the aims of the LNF.

#### **4.6.1 BME representation**

In the majority of cases, the number of members from BME communities on the panel and the number of grants going to BME groups was said to be representative of the area i.e. a low percentage of BME in the area meant low representation of BME panel members and low numbers of BME groups receiving grants. One reason given for the lack of BME groups accessing the funds in some areas was that individuals from BME communities did not formalise themselves into a group, for example:

*The problem is that they are very small communities and the chances of them becoming constituted groups are unlikely, that is, they are informal groups, not formal.*

This was particularly pertinent in rural areas where there were a low percentage of groups applying from BME communities. Usually, within the rural areas, BME communities were small and sparsely populated, meaning that there were not enough numbers of individuals to form a group, or that they lived too far apart. However, in these areas, LAs did feel, based on their reviews of applications received, that individuals from BME communities were always included within 'mixed' groups. In the feedback from outreach workers and through their monitoring systems, LAs also had knowledge that many groups were including people from BME communities. They suggested that this was because groups had equal opportunities policies and that they were aware of the need to have an ethos of inclusion.

*A lot of groups have BME attending, but they are the minority within those groups.*

*All our groups do equal opportunities and awareness of BME, and can include BME.*

*A lot of groups are non-ethnic specific e.g.. Inclusive*

*It is difficult to find BME groups in [ ... ]. The groups are often mixed.*

#### **4.6.2 Projects led by children and young people**

Several respondents felt that there was some lack of clarity about the heading 'projects led by children and young people' on the application form. This was not really understood and meant different things to different people.

*Not all that many [groups] are led by children and young people – it's another one of those ticks on the form that is a bit misleading. Some groups have young people who are very active and involved but are actually led by youth workers.*

*This is a really difficult question- many tick that box, but are not actually led by children and young people ... the definition of 'led' is vague.*

Some people stated that, whilst there was often consultation with the children and young people, the projects could often not be defined as being led by children and young people:

*Most of our groups have adults leading them and consulting with children and young people (about 90%), very few are led by children and young people (10%)*



*I wouldn't say they were led by them, but I would say about 40% have children and young people involved in the development of the project.*

Some LAs claimed that children cannot lead the projects in legal terms, and they cannot sit on management committees, for example:

*They can only have so much involvement under the age of 18 because of legal issues. I think there are a lot of applications from groups where children make decisions about what they want to do e.g. activities. We have had a few with involvement at management level.*

Other reasons given for the low percentage of projects led by children and young people included, lack of motivation by children and young people, children and young people move on, for example, and to go off to university, although this latter is, as we have indicated, unlikely to be a very significant reason, given the targeting of the LNF. Another reason given was that you can not have very young children running a project, as the following example illustrates:

*The panel looks for who has actually come up with the idea - who is driving it, so in the older age range there is a higher proportion of grants go to young people-led projects. In the younger age, I am not sure how you can really have projects run by a 2 year old for example, but there are projects with young children where they have been consulted.*

Other LAs suggested that the reason the percentage of groups led by children and young people was small was because there was a general lack of experience in the community to encourage these types of groups:

*The type of group that is eligible is a small group and the small groups don't have experience or expertise to do child led things.*

Finally, in one area, the LA felt that the children and young people did not have the motivation to set up their own group and that they were too busy in relation to their school work:

*I don't think young people in [ ... ] have a bent toward community work ... Few are determined enough to go out and set up their own group ... kids are under pressure academically. A lot have never had to do anything for themselves - it is often handed to them.*

### **4.6.3 Other target groups**

Common responses to the question, 'are there any groups who are not accessing the fund but could benefit from it?' included, in addition to concerns about BME groups noted earlier, a range of other more excluded groups, specifically: asylum-seekers' and refugees' children, travellers, really small groups, transient groups (e.g. again, often, asylum-seekers/ refugees). In addition, it was noted that there might also be groups of which the LNF was not aware, groups who did not know of the LNF as a result of insufficient/missed outreach/publicity; some specific, perhaps less numerous, BME groups; very small groups; groups in rural areas; community and faith groups; and children who have parents in prison. The following extracts reveal some of this range:

*The more rural ones are not coming in as much. There is isolation in rural areas, but not as much poverty, so they can't tick the poverty box.*

*Those not accessing the funds include children who are affected by their parents being in prison. We have prisons in our area. We have funded things like a contact centre for children affected by parents in prisons. We haven't cracked it yet, but we are aware of it. There are some difficulties in doing this.*

*I think most of the larger groups would know of LNF by now.*

Some people commented that the reason for some groups not applying was that they did not consider themselves to be disadvantaged enough,

*... there are some groups who don't think they are eligible. They ask 'are we disadvantaged enough?' It is a big stumbling block for so many, they define themselves as excluded from it.*

*I think there are some, yes. I think some have applied for forms but haven't completed them. I think they make their own decisions that they don't qualify, for example, in terms of not being disadvantaged enough. That decision may not be correct.*

This reason was reiterated several times among the LAs, particularly in relation to the parts of their areas that were seen as more affluent. This suggests that a working definition of 'disadvantage' needs to be developed which can be used by LAs and outreach workers.

Overall, it was felt that it was too soon to tell whether any trends were emerging in terms of the kinds of groups accessing the grants. Only a few LAs felt able to comment on this issue:

*The obvious trend is that most groups apply for a lot of money, for example, nearer £7,000 than the £250. That doesn't surprise me.*

*I think next year there will be a trend in out of school clubs because their funding from the New Opportunities fund [in this area] has now gone.*

*I am not sure what you mean by trends. I think the money will be given more to repeat applications, who have a lower priority but if no one else wanted the money they would get it. Also it will go to more dependent groups, or projects that are unpopular and we might be the only source of income.*

Any further comments on emergent trends will have to be explored in the follow-up survey.

## **4.7 Capacity-building and sustainability**

In most Wave 1 & 2 areas there were not a substantial number of projects putting in bids for a second time. Many LAs were, however, in favour of second time bids:

*Originally you weren't allowed to fund a project twice. It was ridiculous. You could give them 2 years money! I argued that they were a different group of kids each year- you can get round the problem. It is going to increase as time goes on. I am prepared to fight my corner on this.*

*Yes we have quite a lot of projects putting in bids for a second time. It is not something that we refuse. Some have difficulty finding funding elsewhere.*

*We do not get many second time bids because we don't promote it but we get a small handful, but they are for different projects or for the benefit of different young people. The panel are made aware that it is a second time bid. They are no longer a priority category. If we run out of funding they are not the priority.*

For Wave 3 areas, the issue had not arisen yet as they had not been delivering the fund for long enough.

#### **4.7.1 Impact/increasing local capacity**

In general, LAs felt that impact was difficult to measure, but there were many examples of positive feedback from the groups and from children and young people reflected within their monitoring processes, such as the following:

*We get monitoring reports back from the groups. A lot of them are telling me that without the grant they would not have been able to do the projects, especially the newly-established groups.*

*We have had feedback on End of Grant reports that say that groups, because they got funding from LNF for a pilot project, have gone on to get more substantial funding from elsewhere. As a result of a photography workshop for example, a youngster went on to study photography at college. This has a massive impact for someone from a disadvantaged area.*

*The information and feedback we get is very positive. The children and young people write their reports. Long-term I am not sure.*

*Yes it is definitely making an impact. Purely by the monitoring I have done I know this. The groups have waiting lists- they are overwhelmed by the success.*

Many LAs felt that the impacts of projects such as the memories of trips and the use of equipment would be important for individuals involved in projects, but they could not provide many concrete examples of the impact going beyond the groups themselves and into the wider community. They believed, however, that, in the long-term, there might be some wider impact in the community, such as the reduction of anti-social behaviour:

*On the wider community it is improving different areas, for example, a youth centre on a council estate- generations of kids may have somewhere to go.*

*Possibly [it will have an impact] as it encourages people to meet more in a general sense, and to socialise, that is from my personal experience. I think it increases contacts between groups and events that involve different groups. They feel they are part of something bigger and make more contact.*

Additionally, many people felt that, because the fund was helping the smaller groups which otherwise would not access funding, it was therefore building capacity locally, that is, building up the skills of the more fragile groups. The following examples illustrate this:

*It will definitely increase local capacity. Some groups have wanted to start projects for a long time, it has been really effective, especially in rural areas, among BME groups, in areas of economic deprivation, and in groups that increase community participation.*

*It has increased local capacity. We have been able to fund a lot of new groups who wouldn't be able to get funding elsewhere. We offer a lot of support and this increases their capacity.*

*It will increase local capacity, that is, starting up new groups ... increasing people's confidence that they can access funding. They gain from the process. They say, 'we can do it' ... more and more groups are getting Child Protection, health and safety, financial matters, constitutions- they are being made to think through these things.*

Some people felt that the impact was particularly apparent in rural areas,

*I think it may have done [i.e. had an impact] in the more rural areas where it has given us much more of a presence and has given them money. Where you are talking about [...] which is awash with government money, it is more difficult to say whether LNF makes a difference. It is hard to say which money affects the communities. Maybe it is a combination of things that has an impact. Where there is not so much going on then you can say that it has had an impact.*

*It will definitely have an impact. There are now at least 10 new youth groups in rural areas where there was nothing for young people, there are activities offering services in other age groups. In some areas it might be the only meeting place they have out of school, so it is really important.*

In sum therefore: although lacking any substantial evidence of long-term impact, many people felt the LNF would definitely make a difference in their communities and indeed argued that their commitment to their job was as a result of this firm belief:

*I think I have made a difference to the lives of child and young people. We are sowing seeds that germinate in the future for young people. If I didn't think that I wouldn't do the job. I do believe it is making a difference. It gives me a reason to get up in the morning.*

*I would resign if I didn't believe that in some small way it didn't make a difference to someone. I think it must have some kind of impact.*

*I think it must have an impact. A lot of groups would say they wouldn't have been able to do what they did without the LNF.*

*In some cases, yes, it will have an impact, especially circumstances where those disadvantaged people are given opportunities where they would not have otherwise e.g. Creative activities- music, theatre, art, or visiting other areas and seeing what cities are like, swimming lessons etc. I think the long-term benefits will be to individuals rather than to communities.*

There is as yet, however, little quantifiable illustration of impact although the team expects to be able to comment on this in its final reporting. A note of caution was sounded in any case by several LAs who argued that the issue of sustainability would affect the capacity of the LNF to have any long-term impact,

*Without continuation funding I will be surprised if it will make an impact. Yes it is helping small groups get off the ground but they will not be able to get more money to sustain the projects. They are tired of having to recreate themselves, they are tired of having to be creative and innovative all the time. They just want to do what they are doing, which they know works well and for which there is a need, rather than having to create new things.*

It is to the issue of sustainability that we now turn.

## 4.8 Sustainability

The short-term nature of the LNF funding was considered a problem by many LAs. Some people stated that although some of the projects which had been funded would become sustainable, by getting financial help from other funds the short-term nature of the LNF went against its ethos of having a long-term impact in the community. This contradiction was particularly apparent in the aspiration to encourage new and emerging groups. Such groups may not have developed sufficient capacity, within the timescale of the LNF funding, to be confident to apply for further funds. Some rural areas also noted that it will be more difficult to sustain their projects because there are not enough children to support them. The following extracts are a few of a very many comments on this particular issue. In general, as we noted above, LAs felt sustainability was a key issue and they expressed very real concerns over the long-term security of the groups that had been supported via the LNF:

*None of the projects in our area are sustainable. There is no obvious alternative source of funding for the things that we do. A lot of the organisations are enjoying it. They are making hay while the sun shines but they know the rain will come.*

*There are some projects that won't be sustained. For example, we bought computers. The digital deficit is not going to exist in the same way for much longer.*

*It is short term (only for a year at the moment). None of the projects are social enterprises so they don't generate their own funding. They will have to apply for further funding and dress it up again.*

*I think the LNF idea is for volunteers to take over. I think that would very rarely happen. Where we have funded equipment that may be sustainable because they would get revenue funding from elsewhere. Not many will be sustainable.*

*I have an issue over this, especially now that they won't fund core costs. It is only project funding. The government are setting people up to fail, unless a group is a community enterprise where they have something to sell or are bringing in an income. These groups can't generate their own income. The service they provide cannot be sustainable. This is a problem also if you only fund new projects. I think it is crazy. I think the government should listen to the sector. It is so short-sighted. It is ludicrous. We have been saying this for years. The users are the ones that lose out.*

It was only one or two people who felt that, by building capacity alone, the groups had more chance of becoming sustainable, for example:

*We demand quite a lot from groups in terms of setting up their groups and procedures, but this does help them in terms of accessing other funds - and they are better prepared. LNF helps promote sustainability in that way. It gives them some tools, especially because we have the outreach to support them on this.*

In addition, the issue of sustainability was also raised with respect to the security of the LNF itself. Some LAs expressed the view that this lack of security affected the managing organisations, the long-term plans and the security of their own jobs. This feeling was particularly acute where there had been organisational change locally.

*If a new organisation [e.g. ...] took on LNF and relied on it a lot then they would be very vulnerable because the LNF is insecure.*

*Our only concern at the [ ... ] is about knowing if we will be administering the fund for the next 2 years. We would like a prompt decision from the CYPU about this. It is difficult to make any long term plans or to undertake expenditure on stationery, expenditure if you don't know what is happening with the fund itself.*

In general, LAs felt that the LNF was meeting its objectives, but perhaps not fully. First, some suggested that although the LNF was a good fund, it was not a long-term fund and therefore this affected the extent to which its objectives could be met, for example:

*It is probably making some disadvantaged children and young people feel happier but it may not be changing their situation of disadvantage. It's like redecorating the terminal ward in a hospital, it makes the patients feel happier but doesn't make any difference to their illness. I think we should be more proactive in targeting the issue of child poverty. £7,000 isn't much to tackle child poverty. It can't do much more than 'redecorate the hospital ward'. I like to think of the LNF as an experimental fund, and I am hoping that maybe in one or more projects we will find the key to really tackling child poverty that we could do in other areas. I think it is doing as much as it can. I don't think it is going to eliminate child poverty in a generation.*

*I think it probably is [meeting its objectives] except I don't know what they want as a long-term thing out of it. Do they want to see young people issues solved? The way the fund is at the moment this will not happen because it is not sustainable.*

In terms of the objective of 'funding small groups', several LAs felt that this was also generally being achieved:

*If its objective is to fund small groups working with children and young people then, yes, it is meeting its objectives.*

*Yes, it is getting money to disadvantaged groups locally which is good. It is using LAs who already know the groups etc. They have the local knowledge. They are using agencies who are independent which is good. We are not a government organisation so we have no other agendas.*

However, the following example suggests that there is still some way to go in terms of targeting new and emerging groups:

*If its objectives are to target money at disadvantaged children then it is meeting that to an extent. If it is more specifically trying to target new groups, smaller groups and young people-led groups then it is not quite there yet.*

Several people commented on the usefulness of the fund in areas where funding streams had been relatively rare:

*I think it is meeting its objectives. It is a good fund. It is useful for us to put money into areas that haven't had funding before, for example, rural areas.*

In terms of the wider aim of the LNF of reducing child poverty, most people felt that, although the LNF contributes to giving young people opportunities and increasing their experiences, which helped in relation to 'poverty of well-being', that actually the LNF would only have limited impact in reducing economic poverty:

*Its objectives are to eliminate child poverty. If you look at poverty in its widest sense of 'poverty of well-being' then yes, it is meeting its objectives. It is not really tackling economic poverty because you are not giving money out to people directly.*

*I think it must be achieving. If the rest of the country is like here it is doing well. Setting out to tackle child poverty in local areas, this is happening well.*

*It is like watching a desert blossom. It is quite amazing to see it in this area.*

*What are their objectives? Oh yes, about reducing child poverty. It depends what poverty is. 50 years ago you would be talking about whether someone had shoes or not and now they have shoes. It is all relative. It depends what you are measuring poverty by.*

*It is not big enough to eliminate poverty, but in terms of giving young people wider opportunities, it has gone a way to making a significant difference.*

## **4.9 Other Problems**

Despite some operational difficulties, some feelings of insecurity about the medium- to long-term future of the Fund, and reservations about its ability to meet its major objectives, LAs generally expressed a high level of satisfaction with the Fund. However, there were a few specific additional problems that were highlighted. The following are some comments that were made about problems identified by the LAs about the LNF in general:

### **4.9.1 Money can only go to small groups/core funding**

Many people commented that the limitation on only giving funding to small (i.e. less well-resourced) groups should be more flexible, e.g.:

*The £75,000 is limiting. We also get various requests for minibuses, particular in rural areas but we can't fund them. It is frustrating. Some of the bigger charities deserve some of the money for small projects. I understand why the ruling is there, but I think sometimes the larger groups can be better at starting some small projects off. Sometimes parents don't want to run groups and feel better for other organisations to run things.*

*I know we want to encourage small organisations, but the bigger ones are suffering as well.*

*We find the restrictions around size of group are difficult to work with. There are some bigger groups that could do with accessing the money but can't.*

*They are better-established groups who have the capacity to deliver, so they should have a chance.*

*The restriction on the £75,000 income is restricting here. The bigger groups are excluded. It takes time for newer groups to get going.*

*Its objective to give to small groups I think it is misfiring a little. What small groups really need is their core funding continuous for 3 years, even if it is only £1,000 a year- it would make a big difference. By the end of the 3 years they would be a sustainable group ... I think in some areas it is the larger organisations that need more funding because they are the ones doing it and with the experience - particularly in rural areas.*

There was also a problem with restrictions on funding for core costs and salaries. This was highlighted as a general problem in the VCS and a problem of which the LNF is a part.

*Perhaps they ought to look at core funding, it is always an issue. The small groups are struggling to find core funding.*

*Much of LNF is about innovation and around here lots of groups want just funding to run what they are doing anyway ... I would value the flexibility to use some of the LNF to maintain existing projects because it is a huge struggle, particular in rural areas and with limited resources, or very deprived areas where they haven't got other income e.g. money to get bills paid or annual costs for a youth worker.*

#### **4.9.2 Networking of Local Administrators**

There were many LAs which felt that there should be more networking among LAs to share good practice and networking. They felt that this should be organised by the (former) CYPUs since locally the LAs had very little time to organise meetings.

*I think there should be more structure within the LNF system to network the LNF administrators, rather than feeling you are out on a limb somewhere.*

*We do need more get-togethers and more involvement from LAs ... You can feel like you are working in isolation at times. My nearest colleagues are 60-70 miles away. We do get together informally as a regional network, but it needs organising- we are all busy.*

*It would be nice to have more meetings of administrators. It is really helpful to swap ideas and experiences, so useful, and to see what other people are struggling with and things people are doing well. It is good to have networking. I haven't had time to visit anybody else.*

*Sharing best practice would be a very useful exercise, and sharing other people's statistics ... It would be useful to share things with others. You run hard on your own, but don't know how the rest of the race is going.*

#### **4.9.3 Too much administration/bureaucracy**

Many LAs also felt that the financial returns form for the LNF was quite complicated and that they did not always receive enough support in filling it in.

*I think the fund is administratively top-heavy. They require a lot more administration than any other fund we do. That causes us some difficulties- we have had to put in additional systems. We are working to full capacity as a team. Some of the administration stuff is completely over the top, especially the assets register - it is ludicrous and I don't see the point of it. This year it has gone stupid.*

*I do think it is in danger of becoming paper-heavy. We are constantly regurgitating for different statistics. It is over-burdensome now. It is in danger of becoming like other funds but it is supposed to be different.*

Many LAs indicated, however, that the use of the DIGITS statistical system had been helpful.

#### **4.9.4 Concerns over late funding**

There were also a few comments about money from CYPUs arriving late. This was causing some difficulties in terms of cash flow for the LAs and for the groups they were funding:

*Our funding wasn't coming down on a timely basis last year and bits of this year - some of it was the system had been complicated but we have got the hang of it more now. We were using reserves to tide us over when payments have been late - that is illegal! But we had no other choice.*



Broadly, this first survey of the views of LNF administrators, suggests a fairly high level of satisfaction with the LNF both in terms of its general goals (albeit with an agreement that these goals had to be understood in a more modest sense), and in terms of the structure that was created to deliver on those goals. That said, there are clearly issues - and some of these will be returned to in subsequent chapters - which need to be explored in greater depth. These include the variability in practice at a local level in terms of the various elements of the local systems, such as the operation of outreach and the role of grants panels, access to the LNF for marginalised groups including BME groups and populations, anxieties about the sustainability of the LNF itself and the groups it was funding, and some of the limitations placed on funding. Not all of the views expressed by LAs accords with the views expressed by other key actors, such as beneficiaries. In chapter 6, we will attempt to bring together these, at times, contradictory accounts but it is likely that a longer view will be needed (for example in our final report) before a rounded account of many of these issues can properly be developed.



## 5 Telephone survey of applicants

This next chapter reports the survey evidence collected from LNF applicants. As noted in the first chapter the survey was designed to compare and contrast successful and unsuccessful applicants' experience of applying for the LNF and assess the short term impacts of the grant on both the group and the local community<sup>7</sup>.

The survey was administered during May 2003 over the telephone using CATI (Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing) and interviews lasted approximately 14 minutes on average. A total of 682 full interviews were carried out, 513 with successful applicants (a response rate of 72 per cent) and 169 with unsuccessful applicants (a response rate of 55 per cent). Further details about the design, conduct and analysis of the survey can be obtained from the team as noted earlier. Standard conventions have been applied in the reporting of the survey findings<sup>8</sup>

As will be seen the results of this first telephone survey suggest that LNF application process was broadly considered to be straightforward by previous applicants. Unsurprisingly, successful applicants were more satisfied than unsuccessful applicants, and this was true of most stages of the process. However, even a reasonable proportion of unsuccessful applicants were positive about their experience.

### 5.1 Who did we speak to?

The applicants selected to take part in the survey were representative of the total population of LNF applicants according to the following indicators:

- Just over half – 56 per cent - of successful and unsuccessful applicants' groups had been established in the 1990s or earlier;
- Approximately two-fifths (42 per cent) of the successful applicants were youth-led groups. However, there seemed to be greater variation between the survey sample and the total population in terms of the number of unsuccessful applicants (32 per cent) that were youth led;
- 24 per cent of successful applicants were BME-led, compared to 32 per cent of unsuccessful applicants.
- the amount that unsuccessful applicants applied for (which tended towards the upper end of the amounts)
- the amount that successful applicants applied for

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<sup>7</sup> This survey is taking place in two blocks. Block 1 covered applicants from wave 1 (the results of which are covered in this report) and block 2 will take place in Spring 2004, covering applicants from waves 2 and 3.

<sup>8</sup> In tables and charts, the following conventions have been used:

- Percentages for single response questions do not always add to exactly 100 per cent due to the effect of rounding;
- A '\*' symbol denotes a percentage of less than 0.5 per cent;
- A '-' symbol represents zero;
- All figures are quoted as percentages unless stated otherwise, but the reader should be aware of the small base size in some cases.
- Bases marked with a '\*' represent a small base of between 51 and 100. Bases marked with '\*\*' represent very small bases of 50 or less and have not been analysed.

- the LNF Fund theme applied under (with over two-fifths opting for the aspirations and experiences theme); and
- the amount approved for successful applicants (which tended towards the lower limits).

In addition, survey respondents were also asked what the purpose of their grant was. Results showed that, the most popular reason for applying to the LNF was to raise money to run an activity. Nearly half of all respondents (46 per cent) stated that this was the purpose of their grant application. The 169 unsuccessful applicants (55 per cent) were more likely than the 513 successful applicants (43 per cent) to apply for a grant for this reason. One-fifth (20 per cent) applied for a grant to buy equipment, with the remaining third (33 per cent) applying for a grant to cover both of these purposes.

### **5.1.1 Presence of child protection policy prior to application**

Three-quarters (77 per cent) of applicants stated that they already had a child protection policy in place before making their application. As not having a child protection policy is a reason for an application being turned down, it was surprising that there was no significant difference between successful and unsuccessful applicants.

The longer ago that a group applied for the grant the more likely they were to have already had a child protection policy in place (82 per cent of the 140 respondents applying in 2001, 78 per cent of the 319 respondents applying in the first half of 2002 and 71 per cent of the 223 respondents applying after this date). One explanation for this difference is that more established groups were the first to apply to the LNF.

With regard to previously having a child protection policy in place, it was interesting to note that there was no significant difference between those applicants specified as youth-led groups in the national database and those specified as non youth-led groups.

### **5.1.2 Involvement of children and young people in group**

Just over half (52 per cent) of the sample of applicants said that young people were involved in the running of the group before their application, with no significant difference between successful and unsuccessful applicants. Due to the high level of involvement with children and young people in these groups, it was unsurprising that the presence of a child protection policy was directly related to responses to the question. The 521 respondents who had a child protection policy prior to applying to the LNF (56 per cent) were more likely than the 154 respondents who did not have one (41 per cent) to state in the questionnaire that they involved children or young people in the management of the group.

One-third (34 per cent) of those who stated on their application form that their group was youth-led said that children or young people were not involved in the running of the group before their application. There are three possible explanations for this: groups could have involved children or young people in order to improve their chances of getting funding; there could be inaccuracies in the sample frame (i.e. the LNF application database) or there could have been some misunderstanding of the questions.

## 5.2 Awareness of the LNF and CYP

All respondents were asked about their awareness of the LNF and the Children and Young People’s Unit.<sup>9</sup> Their suggestions about ways to publicise the fund in the future are addressed later.

### 5.2.1 Awareness of the Children and Young People’s Unit

Awareness of the Children and Young People’s Unit was low with just under a third (31 per cent) stating that they had heard of the CYP. The 169 unsuccessful applicants (35 per cent) more likely than the 513 successful applicants (29 per cent) to say yes.<sup>10</sup>

The date of application also made a difference to the likelihood of having heard of the CYP. The 140 respondents who applied in 2001 were more likely than the 542 respondents who applied after this date to be aware of its existence (40 per cent and 28 per cent respectively). This may be due to the initial publicity surrounding the Unit when the LNF first started or that these groups have been working in the sector for longer and have therefore had more opportunity to come across the CYP.

Of the 207 respondents who had heard of the CYP, one-third (35 per cent) stated that they were aware that the LNF was linked to the Unit (11 per cent of all respondents). Again there were no significant differences between successful and unsuccessful applicants.

### 5.2.2 Sources used to find out about the LNF

At the start of the interviews all respondents were asked how they found out about the LNF. Table 4a gives the most frequent responses to this question.

**Table 4a:** Percentage of applicants responding about sources they had used to find out about the LNF

Response	Overall (682)
<i>CVS/Community Foundation</i>	28
<i>Word of mouth</i>	26
<i>Leaflets/Flyers</i>	11
<i>Development/Outreach worker</i>	10
<i>Local press</i>	7

The most commonly cited source of awareness about the LNF was through the CVS (the local voluntary and community sector umbrella organisation) or Community Foundation (over a quarter of respondents mentioned this source).

<sup>9</sup> These interviews were carried out before the work of the CYP was absorbed into a new structure within the DfES and comments about respondents’ perceptions of the CYP have therefore largely been overtaken by events. However, given the changing relationship between the centre and the local LNFs, and the fact that funds come ultimately from a government department, some of these comments have still some resonance.

<sup>10</sup> This difference is significant when tested using a standard z-based test, but not significant when using a chi-square test.

A further quarter (26 per cent) found out about the LNF via word of mouth. Other less commonly cited sources mentioned included leaflets/flyers (11 per cent), a development/outreach worker (10 per cent) and the local press (seven per cent).

### **5.3 Experience of the application process**

The experience of the application process was explored from the initial call to the national Call Centre to the submission of the application.

#### **5.3.1 Contacting the Call Centre**

Just over two-thirds (68 per cent) of respondents reported having contacted the Call Centre. The remaining third will have made contact with the Call Centre through a third party, whether this was a Local Administrator or another representative of the group that was applying. Of those who did contact the Call Centre, the overwhelming majority (92 per cent) were happy (70 per cent were very happy and 22 per cent were fairly happy) with the advice/help that had been given. Only two per cent reported being not at all happy with the advice given.

Unsurprisingly, successful applicants were happier than unsuccessful applicants with the service provided by the Call Centre. The greatest difference reported was between those who said that they were very happy (82 per cent of the 345 successful applicants compared to 39 per cent of the 117 unsuccessful applicants).

There were no significant differences in the way the Call Centre advice was appraised when analysed by date of application. That said, six per cent of those who had made the call themselves (a total of 29 respondents) said that they were not happy with the advice/help given by the Call Centre. Although they were asked why they were unhappy, the base size was too small to analyse in detail for this report. However, to give an idea of the main issues, there were a small number of common themes that came out. For example, some respondents had not received an application form at all after ringing the Call Centre and some had received the wrong one.

*I had to call three times before we got an application form. When we actually got the form there was no return address so we had to try again to get the address.*

Also, a number of respondents felt that the information given was inaccurate.

*It wasn't correct. I was led to believe that I was able to apply for funding but it turned out that I didn't fit the criteria.*

#### **5.3.2 Help with the application process**

Just over half (51 per cent) of the groups that had applied before 7 March 2003 received some form of help from the grant provider. If this figure is grossed up, it is possible to say that somewhere between 2540 and 2950 of the 5395 groups that applied before 7 March 2003 received some form of help from the grant provider. The 513 successful applicants (56 per cent) were more likely than the 169 unsuccessful applicants (38 per cent) to have received this help.

There were two main ways in which an applicant could receive help from the grant provider. These either involved the grant provider offering help to a group, or an individual proactively seeking help from the grant provider.

**5.3.2.1 Help that was offered**

After receiving the application form 56 per cent (392 respondents) of all respondents reported having been offered help (Table 4b). Successful applicants (63 per cent) were more likely to report this than unsuccessful applicants (38 per cent).

**Table 4b:** Percentage of applicants responding whether they had been offered help by the grant provider, broken down by application status

Response	Application Status		
	Successful (513)	Unsuccessful (169)	Overall (682)
<i>Yes</i>	63	38	56
<i>No</i>	32	53	38
<i>Don't Know</i>	5	9	6

Those who felt that their application had been processed more quickly than expected were more likely to have received an offer of help from the grant provider (64 per cent of 160 applicants, compared to 42 per cent of 110 applicants who thought it was processed more slowly than expected).

Of the 392 respondents offered help, three-fifths (62 per cent) took them up on their offer. As a proportion of all respondents, this means that 35 per cent did actually receive help from the grant provider. Successful applicants were more likely than unsuccessful applicants to have taken up this offer of help (64 per cent of 326 successful applicants and 51 per cent of 66 unsuccessful applicants).

Virtually all (98 per cent) of those who received help from someone at the grant provider were happy with the help that had been given, including four-fifths (82 per cent) who said that they were very happy. Just two per cent (five respondents) said that they were not happy with the help given.

Again, successful applicants were particularly happy with the help given, with 99 per cent reporting this (including 89 per cent who said that they were very happy). The low number of unsuccessful applicants asked this question (32 respondents) means that it is not possible to make reliable comments about this group.

**5.3.2.2 Help that was requested**

After receiving the application form, one-fifth (19 per cent) of respondents reported seeking clarification about some part of the application process (see Table 4c). Of these (132 respondents), nearly two-fifths (38 per cent) had not previously been offered any help from the grant provider. This means that in total, seven per cent of all respondents had to make the first move to contact the grant provider with their query.

**Table 4c:** Percentage of applicants responding whether they had asked the grant provider for clarification about the application process, broken down by application status

Response	Application Status		Overall (682)
	Successful (513)	Unsuccessful (169)	
<i>Yes</i>	19	20	19
<i>No</i>	80	76	79
<i>Don't Know</i>	1	3	2

Whilst there seemed to be no difference between successful and unsuccessful applicants who sought clarification, there were differences noted in relation to the presence of a child protection policy prior to applying.

As can be seen from Table 4d a range of different people were approached for clarification about the process.

**Table 4d:** Percentage of those who did ask for clarification about the process responding which sources they went to for help

Response	Overall (132)
<i>LNF/Contact at grant provider</i>	36
<i>Local organisation/centre</i>	17
<i>CVS/Community Foundation</i>	11
<i>Local Council</i>	5
<i>Other</i>	26

Just under a half (47 per cent) had asked someone at the grant provider. A further 11 per cent stated that they sought help from the CVS/Community Foundation, which could also be the grant provider. However, it is unknown exactly how many respondents were referring to the grant provider here and therefore they are not included in the analysis of this section or the analysis on help received. The remainder sought help elsewhere, seventeen per cent asked a local organisation and five per cent their local council.<sup>11</sup>

### 5.3.3 Difficulties completing the application form

The overwhelming majority of applicants did not report any difficulties with the application forms. Of the 10 per cent who reported experiencing difficulties the only difference which could be discerned was that unsuccessful applicants (16 per cent) were more likely than successful applicants (eight per cent) to mention this.

The difficulties faced by these 66 respondents are shown in Table 4e. It should be noted that respondents were prompted to mention all difficulties faced, and so the total adds up to more than 100.

<sup>11</sup> As there are only 47 respondents who received help from the grant provider there was little scope for analysis. When block 2 fieldwork has been completed, we may be able to do a more detailed analysis.



The provision of financial information about their accounts was reported as a difficulty by over a quarter of respondents (26 per cent). A quarter stated that they had experienced difficulties with the child protection policy. Other than providing information about the activity (12 per cent), no other response was given by more than one in twelve respondents.

**Table 4e:** Percentage of those who did have difficulties providing information asked for on the application form responding what these difficulties were

<b>Response</b>	<b>Overall (66)</b>
<i>Financial information</i>	26
<i>Child protection policy</i>	25
<i>Information about the activity</i>	12
<i>Information about volunteers</i>	8
<i>Information about the constitution</i>	7
<i>Details of a referee</i>	6
<i>Information about staffing</i>	6
<i>Information about other sources of funding</i>	5
<i>Other</i>	25

**5.3.4 Whether additional information was required**

All respondents were also asked whether the LNF grant provider asked for any additional information that they had not included on their application form. Over a quarter (27 per cent) stated that the grant provider had requested additional information. There were no significant differences between successful applicants and unsuccessful applicants. Results are shown in Table 4f.

**Table 4f:** Percentage of applicants responding whether the grant provider requested any additional information, broken down by application status

<b>Response</b>	<b>Application Status</b>		<b>Overall (682)</b>
	<b>Successful (513)</b>	<b>Unsuccessful (169)</b>	
<i>Yes</i>	28	23	27
<i>No</i>	70	72	71
<i>Don't Know</i>	2	5	3

Thirty one per cent of 351 applicants who received some form of help from the grant provider were asked to provide additional information, compared to one-fifth of the 331 applicants who had not.

Two-fifths of the 66 applicants who stated that they had experienced difficulties with the application process were asked to provide additional information. This compares to just a quarter of the 611 applicants who had not experienced difficulties.

Where additional information was requested (see Table 4g) this tended to be concerned with the child protection policy (30 per cent of respondents) or additional financial information (29 per cent). As these two areas were also ones that many applicants experienced problems with (see Table 4e) it suggests that there may be a need for further clarification about these aspects of the form.

**Table 4g:** Percentage of those who were asked by the grant provider to supply additional information responding what this information was

<b>Response</b>	<b>Overall (185)</b>
<i>Child protection policy</i>	30
<i>Financial information</i>	29
<i>Information about the activity</i>	14
<i>Information about the constitution</i>	11
<i>Information about other sources of funding</i>	6
<i>Information about volunteers</i>	4
<i>Information about staffing</i>	3
<i>Other</i>	15

**5.3.5 Role of LNF in development of child protection policy**

One of the tasks that the local administrators face is to help those groups without a child protection policy to develop one. Therefore, those who did not already have a policy in place were specifically asked if the grant provider had given them any support/advice with developing a policy. Results are shown in Table 4h.

**Table 4h:** Percentage of those who did not already have a child protection policy responding whether they were given support/advice from the grant provider with developing one, broken down by application status

<b>Response</b>	<b>Application Status</b>		<b>Overall (154)</b>
	<b>Successful (120)</b>	<b>Unsuccessful (34)**</b>	
<i>Yes</i>	57	29	50
<i>No</i>	42	68	48
<i>Don't Know</i>	1	3	1

\*\* very small number of respondents

Half (50 per cent) of those who did not already have a policy in place said that they had received some support/advice from the LNF.

Fifty-seven per cent of successful applicants received support/advice with developing a child protection policy. Due to the fact that only 34 unsuccessful applicants did not have a child protection policy in place before applying to the LNF, it was impossible to draw conclusions about this group.

The 79 respondents who did receive support/advice from the grant provider were asked how useful this was. Virtually all (95 per cent) of those who had received support/advice felt that it had been useful. This included 81 per cent who felt that it had been very useful. Just one person said that the support/advice had not been at all useful.

The 34 unsuccessful applicants who did not already have a child protection policy were asked whether they did actually go on to develop one as part of their application. Sixteen of them stated that they had not developed a policy (including five that worked with youth-led groups), therefore explaining (at least in part) the reason for their unsuccessful application.

As a proportion of the total sample this means that 92 per cent of all respondents had developed a child protection policy either before applying to the LNF or as a result of applying to the LNF (the remaining eight per cent were all unsuccessful applicants).

In total, one-fifth (20 per cent) had developed a child protection policy as a consequence of applying to the LNF. If this figure is grossed up, it is possible to say that somewhere between 930 and 1250 of the 5395 groups that applied before 7 March 2003 have developed a policy as a consequence of applying to the LNF. Successful applicants (23 per cent) were more likely than unsuccessful applicants (10 per cent) to have developed a policy due to their application to the LNF.

**5.3.6 Timescale of process**

The LNF aims to make a decision about each application within 12 weeks of submission. If an applicant has been informed of this timescale then this will presumably drive their expectations.

To measure performance in relation to applicant expectation, all respondents were asked to reflect on the time taken to process their application. Results are shown in Table 4i.

**Table 4i:** Percentage of applicants responding what their expectations of the timescale were, broken down by application status

Response	Application Status		
	Successful (513)	Unsuccessful (169)	Overall (682)
<i>More quickly than expected</i>	29	8	23
<i>In the length of time expected</i>	57	64	59
<i>More slowly than expected</i>	13	24	16
<i>Don't Know</i>	2	4	2

Four-fifths (82 per cent) of applicants have had their expectations at the very least met and in some cases exceeded. Of these, nearly three-fifths (59 per cent) felt that their application had been processed in the length of time that they expected. A further quarter (23 per cent) felt that it had been processed more quickly than expected. Successful applicants (29 per cent) were more likely than unsuccessful applicants (eight per cent) to express this view. However, 16 per cent of all respondents stated that their application had been processed more slowly than expected. Unsuccessful applicants (24 per cent) were more likely than successful applicants (13 per cent) to feel this way.

### 5.3.7 Reasons for application being turned down

Unsuccessful applicants<sup>12</sup> were first asked whether the LNF grant provider actually told them the reason for their application being turned down. Nearly three-quarters (72 per cent) of the 169 unsuccessful applicants said that they were told this information. A further 23 percent said that they were not told this information, with the remaining five per cent stating that they did not know whether they had been told or not. Table 4j shows the most frequently mentioned reasons for why an application had been unsuccessful.

**Table 4j:** Percentage of unsuccessful applicants who were given a reason for their application being turned down responding what this reason was

<b>Response</b>	<b>Overall (123)</b>
<i>Activity does not fit in with funding priorities</i>	37
<i>Group/ activity already too well funded</i>	12
<i>Organisation/group too large</i>	8
<i>Not enough funds to go around</i>	6
<i>Not directly beneficial to children and young people in need</i>	5
<i>Insufficient/ no volunteers</i>	5

As can be seen, the most common reason given was that it was due to the activity not fitting in with funding priorities/LNF themes (37 per cent). A further 12 per cent stated that they had been told that their group/activity was already too well funded and eight per cent had been told that the organisation/group was too large.

Six per cent of respondents had been informed that there were not enough funds to go round, despite this not being a valid reason according to the CYPU.

It is interesting to note that the 16 applicants who did not develop a child protection policy did not state that this was the reason given for their application being turned down. The responses of these applicants were spread across the answers in Table 4j.

Virtually all of the 38 respondents who were not told the reason why their application had been unsuccessful indicated that they would have liked to have been told this information.

### 5.4 Other funding applications

In many cases both successful and unsuccessful applicants sought funding from other sources than just the LNF for the activity in question. The survey evidence found that two thirds (68 per cent) of successful applicants and about a half (47 per cent) of unsuccessful applicants sought additional funding for their

<sup>12</sup> Due to the smaller number of interviews (169) completed with unsuccessful applicants the scope for sub-group analysis was more limited than for successful applicants.

activity. In the case of successful applicants the amount approved was directly related to whether they sought funding from elsewhere, with 40 per cent of those who received a grant of £7,000 or more stating that the LNF was not the only funder compared to 25 per cent of those who received a grant of less than £3,000 (See Table 4k). This suggests that groups that applied to the LNF in its early stages were more likely to be looking to fund larger activities.

**Table 4k:** Percentage of successful applicants responding whether LNF was the only funder of the scheme, broken down by size of grant

Response	Size of grant		Overall (513)
	Under £3,000 (149)	£7,000+ (106)	
<i>Yes</i>	75	59	68
<i>No</i>	25	40	32
<i>Don't Know</i>	-	1	*

A wide range of funding sources were mentioned by successful and unsuccessful applicants with some applicants mentioning multiple sources. The most popular source amongst successful applicants was local authority funding (30 per cent had received funding from this source). The two most frequently mentioned responses by unsuccessful applicants were local authority funding (29 per cent) and a private company/charitable trust (27 per cent). Local authority funding is clearly a major source of funding for the type of group applying to the LNF in Wave 1. The other most commonly mentioned sources are shown in Table 4l.

**Table 4l:** Percentage of applicants whose activity was also (to be) funded by other sources responding what these sources were, broken down by application status

Response	Application Status	
	Successful (162)	Unsuccessful (82)
<i>Local authority funding</i>	30	29
<i>Private company/ charitable trust</i>	19	27
<i>Community Fund – Awards For All</i>	10	10
<i>Fundraising/ Parental contributions</i>	10	3
<i>Neighbourhood Renewal – Community Chest</i>	8	7
<i>Large grant-giving organisation (e.g. BBC Children in Need)</i>	7	14
<i>Local charities</i>	5	13
<i>Other lottery funding (non-Community Fund)</i>	5	3
<i>Church/faith-based charities</i>	4	-
<i>SRB funding</i>	3	6
<i>Other</i>	24	21

Unsuccessful applicants were additionally asked about whether they had actually secured funding from these sources for all/part of the activity. Just over half (52 per cent) of the 169 unsuccessful applicants did manage to secure funding from elsewhere. Of the group of 84 applicants who were relying on the LNF alone to fund their activity, just over a third (36 per cent) actually managed to secure alternative funding.

The 88 respondents who did manage to secure alternative funding were then asked what the source of this funding was. Responses were very similar to those given for the planned funding sources. Again, the two most popular were private companies/charitable trusts (31 per cent) and local authority funding (28 per cent). The only other two funding sources mentioned by more than one in ten respondents were Community Fund – Awards for All (14 per cent) and Neighbourhood Renewal – Community Chest (11 per cent).

#### **5.4.1 Previous grant applications**

To gain some insight into the frequency with which LNF applicants use other funding sources, all respondents were asked about their past use of other grant-giving organisations.

Respondents were asked two questions: firstly which other grant-giving organisations they had applied to whilst working *with* their current group and, secondly, which small grant schemes they had applied to *before* working with their current group. They were given a list of the most common small grant schemes and were also given the opportunity to give alternative responses.

By combining the above answers, it is possible to calculate the proportion of applicants who had ever applied to each grant-giving organisation. Table 4m shows the proportion of respondents who had applied to other small grant schemes at various stages.

In terms of the proportion of respondents who had ever applied to each grant-giving organisation, the distribution of results was very similar. Local authority funding had been sought by nearly 68 per cent respondents at some point. This was closely followed by private companies/charitable trusts (62 per cent) and Community Fund Awards For All (58 per cent). Half of all respondents had also applied to local charities (53 per cent), large grant-giving organisations (e.g. BBC Children in Need) (49 per cent) and Neighbourhood Renewal – Community Chest (49 per cent).

It was clear from these results that applicants to small grant schemes tend to apply to several schemes and not just one. In fact, just five per cent of respondents had never applied to any small grant schemes in the past. If this figure is grossed up, it is possible to say that somewhere between 190 and 360 of the 5395 groups that applied before 7 March 2003 have never applied to any other small grant schemes in the past. However, it is impossible to ascertain whether this is the first time that an applicant had ever applied for funding as the number of times that they have applied to the LNF itself is unknown.

Unsuccessful applicants (169 in total) were significantly more likely than successful applicants (513 in total) to have applied to several other funding sources. These were: a private company/charitable trusts (71 per cent v 58 per cent), local charities (60 per cent v 50 per cent), large grant-giving organisations (e.g. BBC Children in Need) (59 per cent v 45 per cent) and other lottery funding (non Community Fund) (54 per cent v 40 per cent). These differences may be explained by the fact that some unsuccessful groups were turned down because they were already too well funded (see Table 4j).

It was immediately clear that respondents were more likely to have applied to small grant schemes with their current group than previously. Some respondents may not have worked with this type of group previously and this could explain the difference in response. However, the pattern of organisations applied to was similar for both questions.

**Table 4m:** Percentage of applicants citing other small grant schemes they had applied to

<b>Response</b>	<b>Applied to with current group (682)</b>	<b>Applied to in past (682)</b>	<b>Ever applied to (682)</b>
<i>Local authority funding</i>	62	25	68
<i>Private company/ charitable trust</i>	56	23	62
<i>Community Fund – Awards For All</i>	51	16	58
<i>Local charities</i>	48	20	53
<i>Large grant-giving organisation (e.g. BBC Children in Need)</i>	43	17	49
<i>Neighbourhood Renewal – Community Chest</i>	43	12	49
<i>Other lottery funding (non-Community Fund)</i>	35	16	44
<i>SRB funding</i>	30	12	36
<i>Church/faith-based charities</i>	20	9	24
<i>Other</i>	13	4	15
<i>No other small grant schemes</i>	8	62	5

**5.4.2 Frequency of application**

Bearing in mind the large proportion of respondents who had applied to each of the small grant schemes mentioned above, it was clear that there were some who were applying to several. Table 4n gives the proportion who had applied to multiple small grant schemes.

It was clear that applicants to the LNF have often made many applications on previous occasions. A third (34 per cent) had applied to anything up to three other small grant schemes and, as discussed previously, this includes just five per cent that have only ever applied to the LNF. A further two-fifths (41 per cent) have actually applied to between four and six other small grant schemes in their time. A quarter of all respondents have actually applied to seven or more small grant schemes. It is worth noting that this only reflects the number of different schemes applied to and not the number of different applications which is likely to substantially exceed this number.

Successful applicants were more likely to have applied to fewer schemes. Two-fifths (37 per cent) of successful applicants had applied to anything up to three other small grant schemes compared to just 27 per cent of unsuccessful applicants. Conversely, unsuccessful applicants were more likely to have applied to more small grant schemes. A third (31 per cent) had applied to seven or more of them, compared to just 22 per cent of successful applicants.

**Table 4n:** Percentage of applicants who have applied to different numbers of small grant schemes, broken down by application status

Response	Application Status		Overall (682)
	Successful (513)	Unsuccessful (169)	
0	6	4	5
1-3	31	23	29
4-6	41	42	41
7+	22	31	25

## 5.5 Administering the grant to successful applicants

When the application form has been processed and a decision reached, successful applicants will then receive their grant. This section looks at the grant provider's role in administering the grant and also what the grant means to the group itself.

In some cases when the grant has been awarded, the grant provider continues to play a role. For example, outreach and support workers can offer assistance with getting the activity started or with buying the equipment if this was the purpose of the grant. All successful applicants were therefore asked about this. Ten per cent of successful applicants stated that they had been offered help with getting an activity started or obtaining equipment.

The size of the grant was directly related to the likelihood of an applicant being offered help from the grant provider. Seventeen per cent of the 106 respondents who received a grant of £7,000 or more were actually offered help from the grant provider, compared to just three per cent of the 149 respondents who received a grant of less than £3,000.

Of those who were not offered help only three applicants had asked the grant provider for help. This suggests that the outreach and support workers were meeting applicants' needs at this stage.

### 5.5.1 End-of-grant form

All successful applicants are asked to complete an end-of-grant form at the end of the period of funding, in order to provide information about how the fund has been used. Two-thirds of successful applicants said they had actually received an end-of-grant form. However, as some of the grant applications were only made in March 2003 some of the discrepancy may be due to the forms not having been issued at the time of the interview. It was therefore no surprise that the 118 respondents who applied in 2001 (75 per cent) were more likely than the 156 respondents who applied after July 2002 (56 per cent) to report having received an end-of-grant form. Even so, one in four (25 per cent) of those who applied in 2001 reported not having received a form by Spring 2003.

Amongst the 341 applicants who had received an end-of-grant just over half (51 per cent) had completed it. As would be expected, applicants who had applied in 2001 were more likely to have completed it than those who applied after this time (with 73 per cent of those who applied in 2001 having filled the form in compared



to 52 per cent of those who applied in the first half of 2002 and 23 per cent of those who applied from July 2002 onwards – with bases of 89, 165 and 87 respectively).

Those who had actually completed the form were then asked whether they had needed any help with doing so. In view of the fact that only six per cent of the 171 respondents who had completed the form had needed help, it would appear that the form did not pose problems for recipients.

**5.6 Impact of the grant**

To gain insight into the impact of the grant, successful applicants were all asked what they thought was the single most important difference that the grant had made to their group. As can be seen from Table 4o just under one-fifth (18 per cent) of successful applicants mentioned that the main difference was simply that they received funding for their activity. This was followed by the fund enabling them to develop a project (16 per cent), support existing activities (15 per cent) and provide funding for equipment (12 per cent). Other than those shown in Table 4o, all other responses were given by fewer than one in twenty successful applicants.

It is also interesting to look at the answers given by those who had stated that the LNF was the only funder of the activity. The main difference made to these groups would therefore have been solely down to the LNF grant. Results were very similar to those shown in the above table. Of the 332 respondents whose activity was only funded by the LNF, 18 per cent stated that the main difference was receiving funding for an activity. A further 16 per cent stated that they had been able to develop a project, 14 per cent stated that it supported existing activities and 12 per cent that it provided funding for equipment.

Successful applicants were also asked what they thought was the main impact that the grant had made on their local community. Again, they were asked to state one impact only. Twenty nine per cent of successful applicants felt that the main impact on their local community was that the grant had provided a new service or amenity. A further fifth (20 per cent) mentioned the involvement of children and young people and a similar proportion (19 per cent) that it had extended an existing service or amenity. The only other impact mentioned by a reasonable proportion of successful applicants was that the grant had enabled the development of new skills (12 per cent).

**Table 4o:** Percentage of successful applicants responding what the main difference made to the group was

<b>Response</b>	<b>Overall (513)</b>
<i>Funding for an activity</i>	18
<i>Developed a project</i>	16
<i>Support existing activities</i>	15
<i>Funding for equipment</i>	12
<i>Enabled recruitment of children and young people</i>	8
<i>Secure funding for project</i>	5
<i>Improved quality of life for beneficiaries</i>	5
<i>Other</i>	21

Of the 332 respondents whose activity was only funded by the LNF, over a quarter (27 per cent) stated that the main impact of the grant on their local community was that it had provided a new service or amenity. A further fifth stated that the main impact was the involvement of children and young people and that it extended an existing service or amenity (22 per cent and 20 per cent respectively).

**5.6.1 Impact of having a child protection policy**

The development of a child protection policy is a crucial element of the LNF application process, as a group can not receive funding until they have a policy up and running. Some groups had a policy before applying while others were helped to develop one by the grant provider. Whatever the timing of acquiring the policy, all applicants who did have a child protection policy when a decision on their application was made were asked about the long-term effects of the policy.

As can be seen from Table 4p, half (50 per cent) of those who did have a child protection policy stated that developing one had helped the work of their group. Successful applicants (53 per cent) were more likely than unsuccessful applicants (43 per cent) to agree with this statement. In addition, youth-led groups (58 per cent of 264 respondents) were more likely than non youth-led groups (46 per cent 402 respondents) and minority-led groups (60 per cent 179 respondents) were more likely than non minority-led groups (47 per cent 487 respondents) to feel this way about developing a policy.

The 138 respondents who did not have a child protection policy prior to applying (65 per cent) were more likely than the 521 respondents who did have one prior to applying (47 per cent) to state that the development of the policy had helped the work of the group. This shows how important respondents felt the help with developing the policy actually was.

Forty-four per cent said that developing a child protection policy had made no difference to the work of the group, and just five per cent of those with a policy said that it had actually made the work of the group more difficult. Unsuccessful applicants (10 per cent) were more likely than successful applicants (three per cent) to feel that developing a child protection policy had made the group’s work more difficult.

**Table 4p:** Percentage of applicants, responding what effect development of a child protection policy has had on the group, broken down by application status

Response	Application Status		
	Successful (513)	Unsuccessful (169)	Overall (682)
<i>Helped the work of the group</i>	53	43	50
<i>Made no difference to the work of the group</i>	43	46	44
<i>Made the work of the group more difficult</i>	3	10	5
<i>Don't Know</i>	1	1	1

### 5.6.2 Impact on role of children and young people in group

The LNF aims to give children and young people a greater influence within groups. Therefore, those who had not involved children or young people in the running of the group before their application were asked whether the experience of applying to the LNF had led to any involvement of this type. Those who did involve children or young people already, were asked whether the experience of applying to the LNF had led to them involving more children or young people in the running of the group. Results are shown in Table 4q.

In total, two-fifths (42 per cent) stated that applying to the LNF had led to more children or young people being involved in the running of the group. If this figure is grossed up, it is possible to say that somewhere between 2040 and 2440 of the 5395 groups that applied before 7 March 2003 have involved more children or young people in the running of the group. Successful applicants (51 per cent) were more likely than unsuccessful applicants (18 per cent) to have involved more children or young people.

In addition to the 42 per cent of respondents who involved more children or young people in the running of their group as a result of applying to the LNF, a further 24 per cent already involved children or young people (but did not involve more as a result of their application). Therefore, a total of 66 per cent of respondents actually involved children or young people in the running of their group. This means that a third (34 per cent) of all applicants do not involve children or young people in this way.

**Table 4q:** Percentage of applicants responding whether applying to the LNF has led to more children or young people being involved in management of group, broken down by application status

Response	Application Status		Overall
	Successful (513)	Unsuccessful (169)	
<i>Yes</i>	51	18	42
<i>No</i>	49	81	58
<i>Don't Know</i>	*	1	*

### 5.6.3 Plans for the future

Successful applicants who had not just received funding to buy equipment were also asked about their future intentions for the activity (a total of 404 applicants). Nearly half (49 per cent) said that the activity would definitely continue. A further 39 per cent said that the activity would continue providing they could acquire further funding, but 11 per cent said that their activity would not continue after LNF funding.

Those whose activity will/might continue after LNF funding were asked what their plans for future funding were. Again, they were asked to mention all sources that they planned to use. Results are shown in Table 4r.

Two-thirds (60 per cent) of those whose activity will continue after LNF funding stated that they planned to acquire funds from other grant-giving organisations. In addition, a quarter (25 per cent) suggested that they would fund the activity through fundraising and one in ten (11 per cent) favoured parental/beneficiary contribution.

Unlike some other grant-giving organisations, LNF funding is not generally given to the same activity on more than one occasion (apart from grants given specifically to cover a two-year period). However, perhaps this message needs to be communicated to successful applicants as 16 per cent stated that they planned to fund their activity with more LNF funding.

**Table 4r:** Percentage of successful applicants whose activity will continue after LNF funding responding where future funding for the activity will come from

<b>Response</b>	<b>Overall (354)</b>
<i>Funds from other grant-giving organisations</i>	60
<i>Fundraising</i>	25
<i>LNF funding</i>	16
<i>Parental/ beneficiary contribution</i>	11
<i>Existing funds within organisation</i>	10
<i>Other</i>	9

**5.6.4 Unsuccessful applicants’ future use of LNF**

To help to determine the intentions of unsuccessful applicants with regard to the future, they were first asked whether they had been invited by the grant provider to re-apply to the LNF. In total, a third (34 per cent) of the 169 unsuccessful applicants asked said that they had been invited to re-apply.

Perhaps a better reflection of future plans was given by asking the unsuccessful applicants whether they planned to re-apply to the LNF in the future. Table 4s shows a breakdown of results.

In total, a third (35 per cent) of unsuccessful applicants said that they would definitely re-apply to the LNF in the future. Including a further 14 per cent who stated that they would probably apply, this means that just under a half (48 per cent) said they were likely to apply again in the future. Only one-fifth (21 per cent) of unsuccessful applicants said that they would not be re-applying to the LNF in the future.

**Table 4s:** Percentage of unsuccessful applicants responding whether they will re-apply to the LNF, broken down by whether asked to re-apply

<b>Response</b>	<b>Whether asked to re-apply</b>		<b>Overall (169)</b>
	<b>Asked to re-apply (57)*</b>	<b>Not asked to re-apply (93)*</b>	
<i>Definitely</i>	42	30	35
<i>Probably</i>	23	9	14
<i>Possibly</i>	21	37	29
<i>No</i>	14	22	21
<i>Don't Know</i>	-	3	1

*\* small number of respondents*

Of the unsuccessful applicants that were actually asked to re-apply, a higher proportion were likely to do so (65 per cent, made up of 42 per cent saying definitely and 23 per cent saying probably). Just 14 per cent stated that they would not be re-applying.

## 5.7 Reflections on the LNF

Both successful and unsuccessful applicants were then invited to reflect on the role and value of the LNF. This was assessed through general attitudinal questions as well as asking them whether they would recommend the LNF to other potential applicants.

### 5.7.1 How experience has affected likelihood of recommendation

Generally, a group that has successfully applied to the LNF is not encouraged to re-apply for further funding, although, 16 per cent of successful applicants did actually intend to apply again (as shown in Table 4r). Therefore, to measure overall feeling towards the experience of applying to the LNF all respondents were asked how likely they were to recommend another group to apply for funding. Table 4t shows a breakdown of results.

**Table 4t:** Percentage of applicants responding how likely they are to recommend another group to apply for LNF funding, broken down by application status

Response	Application Status		Overall (682)
	Successful (513)	Unsuccessful (169)	
<i>Would recommend another group</i>	98	60	87
<i>Would not recommend another group</i>	1	13	4
<i>Unsure whether would recommend another group</i>	1	27	9

Results were very positive, with the vast majority of respondents (87 per cent) stating that they would recommend another group to apply for LNF funding. Of course a positive experience of the process is likely to have a great bearing on a response to this question. Therefore it was unsurprising that successful applicants (98 per cent) were more likely than unsuccessful applicants (60 per cent) to state that they would recommend another group to apply for LNF funding. However, even 60 per cent of unsuccessful applicants stating that they would recommend the LNF to another group is relatively positive.

The length of time taken to process an application was also related to the likelihood of future recommendation. Ninety five per cent of the 160 respondents who thought application was processed more quickly than expected and 73 per cent of the 110 respondents who thought their application was processed more slowly than expected, would recommend the LNF to others.

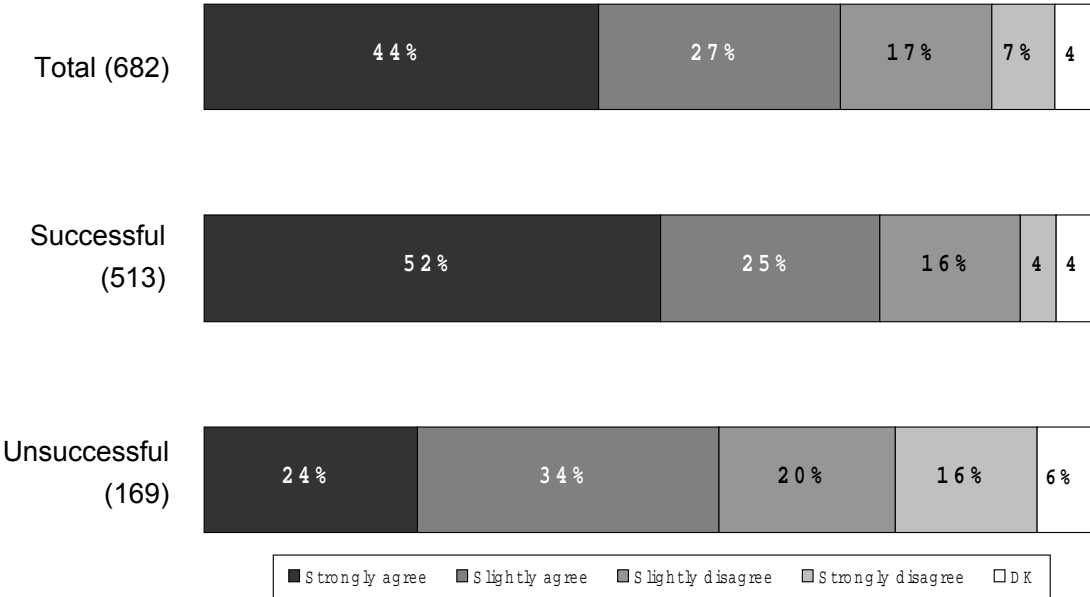
In addition, the 269 respondents working with youth-led groups (93 per cent) were more likely than the 413 respondents working with non youth-led groups (84 per cent) to state that they would make a recommendation.

Just four per cent stated that they would not recommend another group to apply for LNF funding.

### 5.7.2 Attitudes towards the LNF

All respondents were also presented with two attitude statements that concerned important elements of the application process. These elements were promoting the LNF and ease of assessing eligibility. The statements were read out in turn and respondents were asked whether they strongly agreed, slightly agreed, slightly disagreed or strongly disagreed with each one. The first statement given to respondents was “The LNF scheme does a good job of promoting itself to potential applicants”. Results, broken down by outcome of application, for the statement concerning promoting the LNF are shown in Figure 4a

**Figure 4a:** Percentage of applicants responding whether they agree with the statement “The LNF scheme does a good job of promoting itself to potential applicants”, broken down by application status



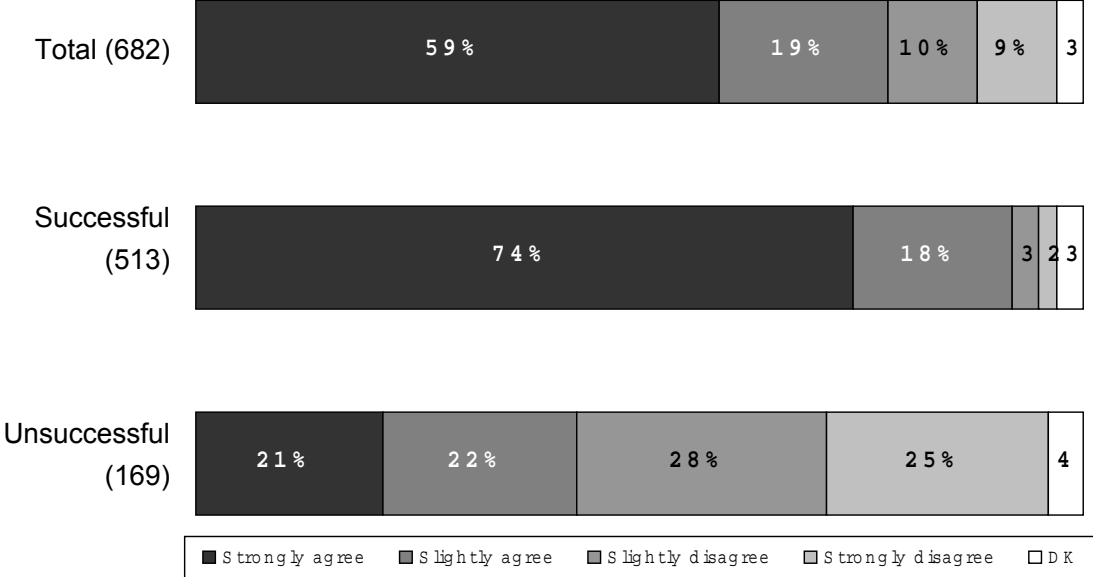
In total, three-quarters (72 per cent) of all respondents agreed (slightly or strongly) with this statement, including 44 per cent who stated that they strongly agreed. There was a significant difference between successful and unsuccessful applicants. Four-fifths (77 per cent) of successful applicants compared to three-fifths (58 per cent) of unsuccessful applicants agreed that the LNF scheme does a good job of promoting itself. There were also significant differences between the proportion strongly agreeing (52 per cent and 24 per cent respectively).

Those who applied in 2001 were also more likely to agree with the statement. Four-fifths (80 per cent) of the 140 respondents who applied in 2001 were in agreement compared to less than three-quarters (69 per cent) of the 542 respondents who have applied since 2001. Again, it may be that a time effect is at work here since a long time period may lead to better and more widespread knowledge of the LNF.

Minority-led groups (80 per cent of 182 respondents) were also more likely than those who are not minority-led (69 per cent of 500 respondents) to agree that the LNF does a good job of promoting itself.

The second statement was “Potential applicants can easily assess whether they are eligible for the scheme”. Results, broken down by outcome of application, for the statement concerning promoting the LNF are shown in Figure 4b.

**Figure 4b:** Percentage of applicants responding whether they agree with the statement “Potential applicants can easily assess whether they are eligible for the scheme”, broken down by application status



In total, four-fifths (78 per cent) of all respondents agreed that they could easily assess their eligibility. This total includes 59 per cent who stated that they strongly agreed. However, this is a statement for which we would expect to see a wide variation between the views of successful and unsuccessful applicants.

As expected, there was a significant difference between successful and unsuccessful applicants. Virtually all (92 per cent) successful applicants agreed with the statement, with less than half (43 per cent) of unsuccessful applicants agreeing. This wide variation was also reflected in the proportion strongly agreeing (74 per cent and 21 per cent respectively).

Over four-fifths (84 per cent) of the 269 youth-led group applicants agreed that they could easily assess whether they were eligible for the scheme, compared to 74 per cent of the 413 applicants whose group was not youth-led.

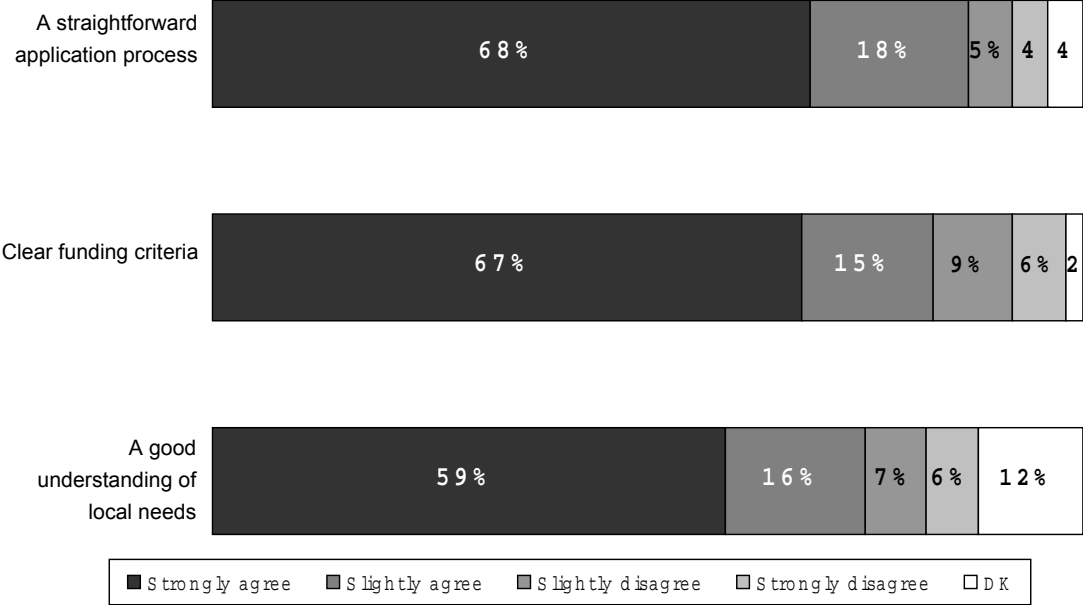
**5.7.3 Attitudes in relation to other small grant schemes**

All respondents who had previously applied to other small grant schemes were also presented with a further three attitude statements. They were asked to rate the LNF by comparing various elements of the process to those experienced with the other small grant schemes applied to. Figure 4c shows the results for each statement.

The first statement that respondents were asked to respond to, by comparing the LNF to other small grant schemes, was “A straightforward application process”. In total, 86 per cent of those who had applied to other small grant schemes agreed that the LNF had a straightforward application process when comparing it

to other small grant schemes to which they had applied. Nearly seven in ten (68 per cent) strongly agreed with this statement.

**Figure 4c:** Percentage of applicants who has previously applied to other small grant schemes (646) responding whether they agree with the statements in relation to other small grant schemes



As expected, there was again a significant difference between successful and unsuccessful applicants. Virtually all (93 per cent) of the 484 successful applicants who had applied to other small grant schemes agreed that the LNF application process was straightforward, compared to 68 per cent of the 162 unsuccessful applicants. The difference was also apparent in the proportions stating that they strongly agreed (80 per cent and 40 per cent respectively). Just four per cent of all respondents asked strongly disagreed with this statement.

The second statement which respondents were asked to consider was that the LNF had “Clear funding criteria” compared to other small grant schemes. Four-fifths (82 per cent) of those who had applied to other small grant schemes agreed that the LNF had clear funding criteria compared to other small grant providers that they had applied to. Two-thirds (67 per cent) said that they strongly agreed with this statement.

Again, it was expected that successful applicants would be more positive about the funding criteria than unsuccessful applicants. Virtually all (93 per cent) of the 484 successful applicants who had applied to other small grant schemes agreed that the funding criteria for LNF were clear. This compares to just 55 per cent of the 162 unsuccessful applicants. Clear funding criteria present a slightly larger problem than ease of application, as the proportion of unsuccessful applicants strongly disagreeing with the statement was 17 per cent.

The final statement presented to respondents concerned the important issue of understanding local needs. Again, in comparison to other small grant schemes applied to respondents were asked whether the LNF had “A good understanding of local needs”.



The proportion of respondents that did not know how to answer this question was reasonably high, at 12 per cent. This was not entirely surprising as, unlike the application process which everyone has gone through, many respondents may not know the extent to which the LNF was, in fact, locally based.

Three-quarters (75 per cent) of those who had applied to other small grant schemes agreed that the LNF had a good understanding of local needs. Of these, 59 per cent said that they strongly agreed with this statement.

Again, there was a significant difference between successful and unsuccessful applicants' views. Virtually all (88 per cent) of the 484 successful applicants who had applied to other small grant schemes and had a view about this statement agreed that the LNF had a good understanding of local needs, compared to just 44 per cent of the 162 unsuccessful applicants. Again, unsuccessful applicants were far more likely to strongly disagree with this statement. Just under one-fifth (18 per cent) said that they strongly disagreed that the LNF had a good understanding of local needs.

Overall, the LNF was viewed very well compared to other small grant schemes and as expected, successful applicants were more positive than unsuccessful applicants.

## **5.8 Improving the LNF grant application process**

At the end of the questionnaire, all respondents were asked whether they could suggest any improvements to the LNF grant application process. Responses varied between successful and unsuccessful applicants, with the latter being generally more critical than the former. A breakdown of the most popular suggestions are shown in Figure 4d.

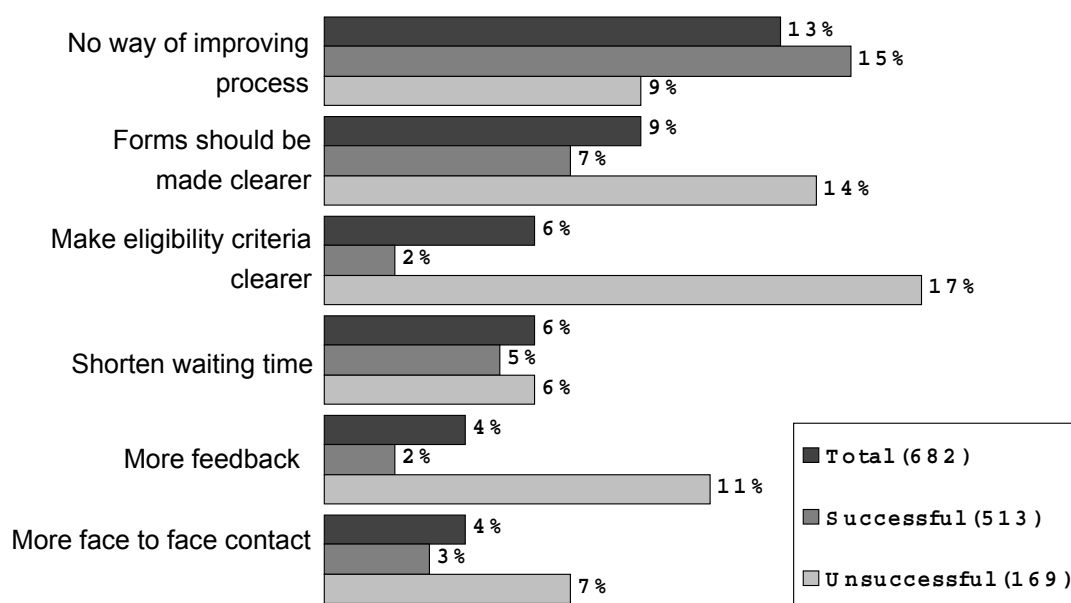
Promisingly, the most popular response overall was that there was no way of improving the process. This was mentioned by 13 per cent of all respondents, with successful applicants (15 per cent) more likely than unsuccessful applicants (nine per cent) to give such a positive report. In addition, over four-fifths (44 per cent) of those asked did not give any answer to this question. Unsuccessful applicants (74 per cent) were more likely than successful applicants (48 per cent) to give an answer to this question.

There were also a number of comments that did suggest improvements to the LNF scheme. The most common response of this type was that forms should be made clearer/more straightforward/shorter. Just under one in ten respondents (nine per cent) felt that this would improve the process, with unsuccessful applicants more likely than successful applicants to question the current application process (14 per cent and seven per cent respectively).

In view of the number of requests for additional information, there may be a need for further clarification about the child protection policy and financial information requirements, although only six per cent suggested including making the eligibility criteria clearer. Another potential area to improve on is ensuring that all unsuccessful applicants are given full feedback on their application and four per cent requested this. This was an area which could potentially help them in the future and leave them feeling happier with their experience. Also it was suggested that respondents should have more face-to-face contact between the LNF and the groups (four per cent). In all these cases suggestions were more likely to be mentioned by unsuccessful applicants.

Other than shortening waiting time (six per cent), which was equally as likely to be mentioned by both successful and unsuccessful applicants, there were a number of other suggestions. However, none of these

were mentioned by more than two per cent of respondents. But this may be due to the fact that the sample is so heavily weighted to successful applicants that it masks the fact that a reasonable proportion of unsuccessful applicants are actually criticising the process. **Figure 4d:** Percentage of applicants responding what improvements they would suggest, broken down by application status



### 5.8.1 Views on future publicity

**Table 4u:** Percentage of applicants responding what they think would be effective ways for the LNF to make itself known

Response	Overall (682)
<i>Local press</i>	22
<i>Newsletters</i>	18
<i>Mailout through post</i>	17
<i>Leaflets/flyers</i>	17
<i>Events/ local seminars</i>	15
<i>Internet</i>	11
<i>Development worker</i>	7
<i>In public places (e.g. doctors surgery)</i>	7
<i>Going out into the community</i>	6
<i>Recommendation of groups who have received funding previously</i>	6

In terms of the types of groups that are applying for LNF funding it is clear that over half – 56 per cent - of successful and unsuccessful applicants were established in the 1990s or earlier than this. This suggests that there is still more work to be done reaching out to newer and less established groups.

The CVS or Community Foundation and word of mouth were by far the most common ways that groups found out about the LNF. However, when asked which methods would be effective ways of the LNF reaching community groups, suggestions made by these respondents were varied. Most had the common theme of direct contact with local groups. Of these, the most popular was local press (22 per cent), which did feature on the list of sources that were actually used to find out about the LNF, but was only mentioned by seven per cent of applicants. The local press is therefore one possible method of effectively publicising the LNF to potential applicants.

A number of other methods were suggested by a significant number of applicants and these were not ones which seem to be used with any great frequency at the moment. These methods were newsletters (18 per cent), mailouts through the post (17 per cent), leaflets/flyers (17 per cent), events/local seminars (15 per cent) and the Internet (11 per cent).



## **6 Case studies: A closer look at the LNF and those it benefits**

This chapter presents the findings from the first case study visits undertaken in Wave 1 and Wave 2 areas. These were carried out in South Yorkshire, Greater Manchester, Fulham/Westminster, Nottinghamshire, Northumberland and Staffordshire. Second phase re-visits and first visits to Wave 3 areas are ongoing at the time of the publication of this report and findings from the whole of the case study work will be presented in the final evaluation report. To recap, the case studies were based on interviews with local administrators, outreach workers and grant panel members, together with observation of panel meetings; interviews with successful and unsuccessful applicants (drawn from local databases), with beneficiaries (including children, young people and adults) and with potential applicants who had heard of the LNF but had not applied to it.

The findings reported have been illustrated, where possible, with the use of verbatim quotations and examples. Any conclusions drawn in this section should, of course, be interpreted with caution until they can be supported by the remainder of the qualitative evidence.

### **6.1 Profile of applicants**

Based on the case study evidence a diverse range of groups and organisations had made applications to the LNF for sums of money ranging from £588 to the full £7,000. The amount applied for varied according to the particular needs and aspirations of projects. Applicants included both new and existing groups/projects. In some cases groups seemed to rely entirely on LNF funding, whereas others also received funding from other sources, including a range of other funds, such as the Community Fund, Children in Need.

As would be expected from the LNF eligibility criteria volunteers were typically involved in running groups and delivering the service to young people in their spare time. However, it was clear that amongst some of the smaller groups that volunteers were often solely responsible for the setting up and running of projects. For instance, parents who ran sports clubs, such as football teams; local residents who organised residence association entertainment events and mother tongue classes; and refugees who ran a range of projects for children and young people from their community, to enable them to learn about their country, build friendships and share experiences.

Across case study areas, BME populations were reflected to different degrees depending on the nature of their demographic profile in each area. Successful applicant groups which focused on BME populations were reflected in four of the case study areas visited including Nottinghamshire, Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire and London. For example, in London there were groups for people from Iran and Kurdistan; in Nottinghamshire a Vietnamese group was included; in South Yorkshire a Yemeni group, Asian disability group and Somali group; and in Greater Manchester a Somali group was visited. In Staffordshire and Northumberland the lack of BME applications had been noted by the local administrators and they were working towards increasing BME applications by, for instance, making links with the Racial Equality Council.

In order to demonstrate the range of groups that the LNF is supporting throughout the country we have outlined six examples of projects that have received LNF funding. These groups or projects provide a reasonably representative picture of the types of activity funded through the LNF:

*An adventure group* - this is a new project which has been established by a core group of volunteers who aim to take a group of up to 50 young scouts on a yearly camping trip. This year, the group was supported by approximately 20 volunteers who attended the camp in order to take care of the young people. The £7,000 from the LNF was used to pay for adventure activities for young scouts including the costs of the campsite, hire of tents, food, transport and trips out.

*A social exclusion project* - this is an existing group (associated with a school) which runs anger management courses for young people. The aim of the project is to use £5,220 from the LNF to take socially excluded young people away on residential courses in order to enable them to take part in activities and thus learn cooperation and communication skills, as well as leadership and group work.

*Residents association* - this is an existing association which has become involved in establishing activities for young people in order to prevent them from becoming bored and vandalising their local community. The LNF has been used to purchase motor bikes and biking equipment (to the value of £7,000) for children aged 11 and upwards. Some of the young people have special needs, disabilities and/or drug-using parents.

*A youth project* - this is an existing project which provides youth clubs and detached youth work for young people. The LNF has provided £5,350 in order to develop a youth forum to get young people to mix with other young people and take an interest in topics and issues that affect their lives. The Forum will consist of a cross-section of young people who will undertake consultation, advocacy and work with local agencies on issues such as youth crime, drugs, the environment etc.

*A parent and toddler group* - this is a new group which has been established by a church management committee which takes place within the church building on Friday mornings each week. The group is run by an ex-teacher who plans activities for the children on a term by term basis and who is assisted by 8 volunteers. The group received £2,000 from the LNF which was used to purchase toys and equipment for the group. Approximately 40 children are registered with the group.

*A steel band* - this is an existing group which aims to establish a steel band for young people over the age of 14 who no longer have the opportunity to play in a band at school. The band is run by 10 volunteers and the LNF provided £7,000 for steel pans and stands. At present, there are 8 young people regularly involved with the band.

## **6.2 Awareness and understanding of the LNF**

### **6.2.1 Promotion of the LNF**

Despite a range of different promotional approaches being adopted by local administrators the LNF was mainly disseminated through the CVS in urban areas, and the RCC in rural areas. Typically this involved employing the services of their outreach workers (see next section) to promote the fund amongst the local community via word of mouth and additionally the CVSs and RCCs also produced promotional material which they distributed via newsletters, emails and promotional fairs.

In addition to the 'official' outreach service, local administrators reported that the fund was also being informally promoted via other groups and individuals in the local area, such as through the local Connexions service and by local volunteers and community-based workers. In some areas, the local administrators were able to tap into pre-existing promotional networks to promote the fund, whereas in other areas, this type of

network was said to be new and evolving. For instance, a local administrator explained how they were beginning to make contacts and links with other people and organisations, which they believed was gradually helping them to promote the fund in the area. Promoting the fund through local networks was thought to be an effective way of reaching people at grass roots level.

## **6.2.2 The role of outreach and support**

As already noted, across the case study areas, the official LNF outreach role tended to be carried out by the local CVS or its rural equivalent the RCC and informal outreach was carried out by many of the LNFs themselves. In addition, outreach was also being carried out by other organisations. In the case of one area, unusually, outreach was being carried out by the Community Foundation which was administering the fund. This situation had arisen because it had been unable to identify a suitable outreach organisation in its area of benefit.

The role and remit of outreach staff varied across and within case study areas. For the most part, outreach workers performed a dual function - to promote the fund and also to provide support to clients with their application. However, the emphasis placed on each of these functions differed, with some outreach workers focusing jointly on both promotion and support; some focusing on the promotional aspects of the role; and others on the supportive aspect of their role. In some cases, the role adopted was dictated by local circumstances. For example, in one area, the local promotional network was said to be so effective in generating demand for the fund that the outreach service were contracted to focus primarily on supporting applicants.

The style and approach adopted by outreach workers also varied. In some areas the outreach workers actively promoted the fund through, for example, sending out information in newsletters and emails; running promotional fairs; and also by telling people about the fund via word of mouth. They also sought out clients to assist with their application by pro-actively contacting those who had contacted the Call Centre to ask for an application pack and also simply by offering assistance to those who made enquiries about the LNF, or any other funding.

In contrast, other outreach workers were more reactive and only mentioned the fund if they were asked about it, or if they felt the clients' requirements met the criteria of the LNF. There were, however, local administrators who were critical of the latter approach as they maintained that the outreach workers should promote the fund to all groups working with children and young people regardless of their enquiry. These differing approaches were said to be a consequence of a number of factors, including the individual personality of the outreach worker and the importance placed on the LNF by the outreach organisation.

The priority attached to promoting the LNF also varied across areas with some outreach workers solely concentrating their energy on promoting the LNF. Conversely other outreach workers indicated that their main contractual obligation was to promote other funds in preference to the LNF. In one area, it was reported that the main contractual obligation between CVS and the local Community Foundation was to deliver outreach for the Community Chest, rather than for the LNF, who had purchased fewer hours.

The working relationship between the outreach worker and the local administrator was also deemed to be important in determining the degree of involvement outreach workers felt they had with the fund. It also helped them to be more pro-active in their approach. In circumstances where the outreach worker and the

local administrator were reported to share information, such as the Call Centre data or feedback regarding applications, and liaise with one another over potential applicants and applicants in need of support, then the outreach provider was more proactive in their approach. This, for example, had ensured that an outreach worker had been able to provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants and thereby help them to improve their future applications.

The relationship between outreach workers and the local administrator was also thought to have been affected by their geographical proximity to one another. For instance, in circumstances where outreach workers were in a different location from the local administrator, then this had sometimes resulted in them feeling less involved with the fund. As a consequence they felt they had not exerted as much effort in their outreach role. This seemed to be particularly true in LNFs that covered large geographical areas.

In contrast, other local administrators felt that they had improved outreach work by increasing the involvement of the outreach worker in the LNF process overall; they had achieved this by employing them to recruit members for the grant panels and in some cases, had been asked to sit on the grant panels (in an advisory capacity) themselves.

Despite recognition that the promotion of the fund had been slow initially, as a result of it taking time to build awareness, outreach workers seemed to be positive about the way outreach was reaching groups and promoting the fund effectively, as well as supporting clients with their applications. In contrast, some of the local administrators questioned how well outreach services were being delivered due to the low number of applications that had come through the outreach organisation.

### **6.2.3 Applicants' sources of awareness**

*It's by word of mouth and there's no better way than people passing it on'*

Typically applicants became aware of the LNF through word of mouth passed on via a range of informal and professional networks, largely within the voluntary sector. Professional networks included colleagues, grant panel members and advice passed on from other projects, or organisations who had previously been successful in obtaining funding. Informal sources primarily consisted of friends.

In addition, the CVS and outreach was cited as another primary source of information regarding possible funding streams identified by project leaders. In London and Staffordshire, for example, applicants reported that they had become aware of the LNF by CVS newsletters. Groups in Manchester expressed the view that the LNF was being promoted well in their area and they had heard of the fund from a variety of sources including outreach workers, CVS and other successful projects.

It would appear that local knowledge and relationships are crucial to the dissemination of information about the Fund. In this way, leaders of LNF projects who were working in a voluntary capacity, but were also in paid employment within other agencies helped to disseminate information across groups. For example, in Nottinghamshire and Northumberland, several of the successful applicants had become aware of the LNF through the agency in which they undertake paid work, and had used this information to make an application to the LNF as part of a voluntary community group.



## 6.2.4 Understanding of the LNF

In general, applicants seemed to be clear about the purpose and remit of the fund even if frequently they were unable to describe it in detail. They understood that the target group of the LNF was children and young people, although there was some confusion regarding the age group to which the fund should be applied. Groups were also aware that the fund is focussed on disadvantage and poverty within the local community. Examples of some of the varying descriptions made about the LNF included the following:

*They were trying to reach children and young people in terms of poverty and terms of exclusion, whether that was social exclusion or geographical exclusion.*

*I suppose it's, you would think it's there to help groups that haven't got money to be able to do you know, do activities.*

*It's about giving money to the local, I mean ours was for the local children.*

## 6.3 Experience of the Application Process

We now turn to an examination of the application process, which was the main focus of the first wave of interviews. Here we discuss several aspects of the process: using the Call Centre; completing the application form; contact with local administrators; the Grants Panel process; and the communicating the outcome of applications.

### 6.3.1 Using the Call Centre

#### 6.3.1.1 Applicants views

Successful and unsuccessful applicants' recall of contacting the Call Centre was fairly limited. However, when prompted there was some recollection of being asked the eligibility questions. This lack of recall might suggest that there are (at least for applicants) no problems with the Call Centre, as if there had been problems it is likely that they would have been remembered when prompted in the interview.

Applicants who could recall the experience sufficiently were positive in their assessment of the Call Centre indicating it had '*been fine, no problem*'. It was also said that the application form had arrived promptly, usually taking between two or three days to arrive. One successful applicant said '*Yes, yeah, yes, it was fine, yeah, and it [the application form] was quite prompt coming through*'. An unsuccessful applicant said '*I'm not aware of any problems [with the Call Centre. I was quite satisfied with the process of getting the pack]*'.

Call Centre staff were said to be efficient, friendly and helpful. One successful applicant said that the Call Centre staff had asked for an idea of what the project was and then had advised whether it fit the criteria. More exceptionally, there were reports of applicants having to re-contact the Call Centre as the application form had not arrived.

#### 6.3.1.2 Administrators' views (LA and outreach)

By contrast with the experiences of the applicants, local administrators expressed mixed assessments about the Call Centre. In some cases it was felt to be an effective model for distributing application forms as it reduced their workload, whereas other local administrators and outreach partners believed that it was '*an*

*unnecessary level of bureaucracy'* and felt it would have been more effective if they had been able to distribute the forms themselves.

It is not, however, that local administrators believed the Call Centre to be ineffective in distributing the application packs *per se*, rather some local administrators and outreach staff felt it would be prudent to hold some application packs themselves to enable them to distribute them to potential applicants directly on request, rather than having to re-direct the applicant to the Call Centre. Re-directing potential applicants to the Call Centre was seen as problematic as they believed this might deter some people from applying as a result of the general effort involved in doing this without support - particularly the smaller, more embryonic groups.

According to some local administrators and outreach workers, it was simply felt to be easier for applicants to obtain an application pack directly through them if initial contact had already been made and it was thought that this approach may reduce the likelihood of potential applicants falling out of the process at this stage.

*the more established [groups] all they need is the number of the Call Centre but the Call Centre does put off a few of the smaller groups.... the fact that they've got to actually [phone up], and if I feel that that's going to be a barrier I, I ring up on their behalf and, and then when they come I've got the form there, they don't really know that they've been to a Call Centre at all you know.*

(Outreach worker)

*And it's a barrier. And people are frightened of phones. People don't like phones. Y'know, groups don't want to phone up. If they phoned us once, they're not going to phone somebody else. It's not the Call Centre people, they're lovely.*

(Local Administrator)

Additionally, local administrators felt they were often in a better position to support the potential applicant if they distributed the packs, as they would have more direct contact with applicants at the early stages of their application.

However, this view was not borne out in the few interviews carried out with potential applicants - both those who had and who had not called the Call Centre. Our data shows that potential applicants do not see the Call Centre as a barrier to making an application. Rather, reasons for not making applications were cited as lack of time, or simply forgetting to do it. The dissonance between views of administrators and applicants about the Call Centre is an interesting preliminary finding and would benefit from further examination in the next phase of research.

Having to use the telephone was not the only barrier to applications that administrators mentioned. In addition there was a concern expressed about the impersonal nature of the Call Centre which may be alienating to people with language barriers or who would be more comfortable with a local focus. It was said by one administrator that:

*for a small group, perhaps English isn't your first language, perhaps you don't use speech as your form of communication, perhaps ... perhaps you're just a bit nervous, you've never applied for funding before - you don't want ... 0845 number. You want to [call a local number] They're numbers they know. The region knows. 0845 ... is*

*impersonal. Erm, and the outreach partners do agree with that. And they often phone on behalf. There are plenty of organizations [the LNF are] not having access to.*

It appears from this and similar comments that there was limited awareness of the interpreting facility available at the Call Centre. To conclude, whilst administrators and outreach staff are divided in their opinions of the usefulness of the Call Centre, applicants and potential applicants (who have contacted the Call Centre but not submitted an application) appeared to be united in their view of it as being helpful and efficient.

### **6.3.2 Local Administrators' views about the application form**

Concern about the design and content being accessible for certain types of applicants seemed to be the main issue that local administrators raised about the application form. Particular applicants for whom this was felt to be an issue for included children and young people, applicants with ESOL (i.e. those for whom English was not a first language), and applicants with literacy problems and visual impairments.

*[they have got to] tackle the application form itself, which is utterly appalling! I showed it to a friend of mine who works with the RNIB and has a visual impairment herself and she just laughed at it, I think that sort of says enough. It is dreadful. It really is appalling. And until recently it hasn't been available in large print, there isn't an audio version, it's only available in English.*

(Local Administrator)

*Accessibility is not just about being able to see it, read it, hear it. It's about is the question understood. And for the people who we want to target the fund to, who probably don't have a great background in education probably struggle a little bit with the written word, won't have English fluently ... these very ambiguous questions aren't that good.*

(Local Administrator)

It was suggested that the language used may have possibly have discouraged children and young people (CYP)-led applicants from applying and this is an issue that the research should seek to explore in later stages.

### **6.3.3 Completing the Application Form**

The previous section discusses local administrators' opinions on the application form. As we shall see in this section, their views differ in some respects from the views of applicants (although these people may not be as representative of the applicant groups who are described above). That said, the application form and the guidance notes were viewed positively by both successful and unsuccessful applicants. Indeed, where respondents had experience of applying for other funds the LNF application was viewed as simpler to complete.

*I would have to say the whole process was great, it was quick, it was simple, the application form could have maybe done with a few hints of what to put down, what, what was wanted for the question, but all round, no I think it's okay.*

(Applicant)

However, where comments were made about the form they related to the following issues:

- There was insufficient room on the form either to present budgetary<sup>13</sup> information and this was mentioned in relation to both the old and new forms. Also there was felt to be a lack of space to provide proper account of plans about how to empower young people.
- Some of the questions had been difficult to answer. This was, for example, the case when applicants were unsure of the answer, such as when calculating how many young people they thought would benefit from the group. But also difficulties were reported when applicants found it difficult to select a theme under which they were applying as they felt the options presented on the form overlapped.

Respondents said that forms generally took between a couple of hours and a couple of days to complete, including gathering the appropriate information and calculating the budget. Differences seemed to result from the amount of previous experience applicants had of completing application forms, with those who were more experienced taking much less time.

Related to their previous experience was the amount of preparatory work that applicants had to do to complete their forms. Some groups already had much of the information they needed for the form prepared, as a result of doing it when applying for other funds. In these cases they could simply cut and paste information, such as details about the organisation or type of beneficiaries they worked with. In addition, some groups had run similar projects before and were able to easily calculate the details of their budget, whereas other groups had to research this. Also the length of time varied according to the amount of additional information that applicants were supplying. For example, some people completed extra sheets of information that went into great detail about a number of different questions, particularly the nature of organisation and the background about the purpose of the funding, and some people included a detailed breakdown of the budget on an additional sheet.

In conclusion, it was clear that some of the applicants were very experienced in applying for funding and as a result found the process very straight forward,

*I found it [filling in the form] easy, probably because I had done so many before ... a group who isn't professionally doing stuff like this might find it quite difficult.*

(Successful Applicant)

Indeed in one organisation the secretary had produced a whole file of funding applications for the current year which had helped her successfully to apply for funding. It remains to be seen how these findings will compare with the experiences of newer groups who have not previously applied for funding.

#### **6.3.4 Contact with Local Administrators and outreach staff**

Local administrators will make contact with applicants during the application process for a number of reasons including: acknowledging receipt of the application form; requesting additional information, such as a Child Protection Policy, budget or to discuss/clarify aspects of their application, as well as providing feedback to

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<sup>13</sup> The initial form has been replaced by a revised form which provides more room for budgetary information.

un/successful applicants (which is discussed later). In one case, an application was initially turned down, but the LA called the applicant and encouraged the applicant to reapply and gave advice about how to refocus the application. Her second application was then successful.

*We want to see accounts. A lot of small organizations don't have full accounts, they'll just have sort of financial statements, but we need to see that and we need to see recent accounts. And if they can't produce some form of financial accounting system from the last six months then, y'know, we're perhaps a little concerned. And that's when we might go out to an organization.*

In some cases the local administrators visit projects in person. For example, in one area, the LA reported that she routinely visited one in seven of the applicants, and telephoned one in ten applicants before making a decision about an application.

Applicants were generally positive about any contact they had with the local administrator throughout the process - although few applicants reported either having had contact or remembered having contact with a local administrator. There were, however, reports of administrators contacting applicants for extra information relating, for example, to the budget. This was mainly in terms of 'tightening up' the budget.

Among the unsuccessful applicants there were comments made about the way Local administrators appraised applications:

*I had some contact during the eight week turnaround mind you. Somebody rang me up and went through the, the project on the phone. It was a sort of mini appraisal. I'm used, when I make applications, for significant funding, and I mean this was part of the significant project, you know ... I'm used to getting an interview, and an opportunity to discuss the application in depth. A ten minute phone call does not do it. How can it? I don't think that, anybody could make a value judgement of what the project's about on the basis of ten minutes on the phone.*

Unless applicants had already established a relationship with the outreach worker/organisation before applying for the fund; or had heard about a specific worker through word of mouth, they tended not to mention having received any support regarding their application. This lack of support may not simply be a reflection of the outreach service provided, rather it may be a result of the types of groups applying for the fund, some of whom were more established and experienced grant applicants and may not have been in such need of outreach. This picture might change if the profile of applicants changes.

### **6.3.5 Developing a Child Protection Policy**

The findings of the case study support those of the survey<sup>14</sup>, which suggests that well over half of the applicants already had a CPP in place. As most of the successful applicants were from established groups, this finding is not surprising but it may change as more newer and/or smaller groups access the fund. As a consequence, applicants generally had no problems with this aspect of the process. More exceptionally, awards were made conditional on a CPP being in place, and in such cases, outreach workers had helped to develop the policy with applicants. In these circumstances, rather than supplying applicants with a default

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<sup>14</sup> Survey findings suggests 70% of applicants already had a CPP in place.

CPP, outreach workers and local administrators would use workshop sessions and training to assist applicants in developing a policy for their own group/organisation.

*Just to say 'You must have a policy' will do nothing at all in terms of raising awareness and best practice in the region. So what we try to do is talk to people about safer working care, working practice, and ... the child protection trainer will travel out to see that group, or the management committee, in the venue that they meet at a time that is suitable for them. Evenings, weekends, whenever is appropriate. And will work with the group and the management committee to write a child protection policy and procedures that is appropriate to that group. Because if we just say 'You've got to have a policy' we're gonna see the same policy come backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards. And our outreach partners have openly said they're not qualified to deliver this level of child protection training. So in addition to that, we also run child protection training days, these kind of things. So that's slightly aside, but that's how we deal with the child protection policy.*

This could be seen as another form of capacity building and may be a result of LNF policy. This point will be further explored in future interviews.

The following section of the report moves on to discuss another part of the application process - the Grants Panel.

### **6.3.6 Grants panel process**

Perceptions of, and practice in the way grants panels were making funding decisions appeared to vary across case study areas. This seemed to be as a result of local circumstances as well as being based on differences in understanding of funding regulations.

The number of grants panels run in each area varied; for the most part separate panels were set-up for each geographical area to ensure, as far as possible, that decisions were made by local people with extensive combined knowledge. For example, Staffordshire has three panels set-up in the South-West, South-East and the North of the county, as a consequence of the size of the region. In contrast, although Northumberland covers a large geographical area, there is only one grants panel. Nottinghamshire had increased the number of panels it held from three to six on the request of panel members, who felt they were assessing applications from areas and groups of which they had little knowledge. In contrast, other areas had fewer grant panels in operation.

When visited, the South Yorkshire LNF had only one panel, covering four large metropolitan areas. From January 2004 this area will have one panel in each borough (four panels in total) meeting six-weekly. In addition, the Sheffield panel will have "two sittings" as there are so many applications to get through - although it should be noted that the panels do not just consider LNF applications but applications for other grant schemes also.

Panel members were recruited through a variety of sources, including umbrella voluntary sector organisations like the CVS, officers working for local authority children's services, and through word of mouth, local contacts and through the internet. The number of panel members sitting on each panel ranged from around five to ten and local administrators generally liked to have in excess of ten panel members lined up for each session to allow for drop out.

*On that particular panel there are, I'm guessing I have to say, there's about 15 names of people whom we have on there. The average number who actually come to that panel are about ten people and I'm actively recruiting constantly to get more people.*

(Local Administrator)

In areas where they had larger panels, the membership was rotated so as to allow for drop out and to ensure more people were involved in the decision-making process. Although the reasons for rotating panel members was understood and viewed positively by local administrators, some panel members thought it made the process difficult on occasions. In these circumstances it was said that panel members were not always familiar or up to speed with applications - especially applications that were deferred from previous sessions. Where there were fewer panel members, this opened the possibility that members might feel overloaded especially in the busy times leading up to panel meetings when applications had to be assessed and, on occasion, visited.

Panel members had generally received training provided by the local administrators. This usually took the form of a half or full day training session, during which the local administrators or grants officers provided general information on the LNF and outlined the application and grants procedures in detail, for instance, what being on the panel involved, how projects would be scored and assessed; and what procedures were followed if a conflict of interest arose.

Prior to the panel meetings the local administrators from all the areas sent out packs to the panel members for them to read. However, the type and depth of the information received varied across areas. Panel members generally received a copy of all the applications, which was said to enable them to read the applications and in some cases score the applicants prior to attending the panel. Some packs also included additional information about the project; however, some local administrators had decided not to include this information as they felt it was too much for the panel members to read and became confusing. In these cases the local administrators sometimes brought the additional information to the panel, so the panel members could look at it if they desired at the appropriate point of the meeting.

In one area, the outreach worker attended the panel in a purely advisory capacity, to provide information on the projects they had assisted with. Although there had been some objection to this by other grant panel members, as they felt it gave these groups an unfair advantage, the outreach worker felt it was fair as all groups were, in theory at least, given the opportunity to seek their advice and support. Where the LNF organisation was also performing the outreach function, there were some sensitive boundary issues to negotiate to separate outreach from assessment tasks effectively and transparently.

In another area, panel members did not see the application forms at any point during the process; instead they were given a summary of the application written by the local administrator. The local administrator suggested that some applications, despite being good projects, were poorly written and consequently they felt seeing the application forms would unfairly influence the panel's decision. Instead of seeing the applications they felt it was fairer for the panel members to make a decision based on their own summary of the projects. This practice was also previously carried out in another area; however, this changed as panel members requested more information.

*I wouldn't call it a grant assessment panel. They don't make assessments. They make assessments on the report I've written. But they're not really assessing the applications. And they don't see the applications, and, to be honest, we wouldn't want to get into that role either ... because if they see ... well, a lot of the applications are not well-written. They're really not well-written. They're coming from small groups, who, as I say, may not be good on the written word, may not have English as their first language.*

(Local Administrator)

In addition to receiving information regarding the applications, panel members were usually sent refresher information about the criteria of the grant, the panel procedures and how to score applications.

*So we send out to panel members the letter saying when and where the panel is meeting. We send out a copy of the scoring matrix, we send out the criteria just to refresh their memory.*

(Local Administrator)

The local administrators generally felt that grants panels were operating effectively in their areas. They felt the panels comprised a good mix of people, from a range of voluntary and statutory agencies, with experience and expertise in a wide range of areas. In addition, black and minority ethnic groups were represented on some of the panels as well as amongst some of the young workers and volunteers.

*And our grant panels are made up of local people, they are not the great and the good. They are people who otherwise have never done anything like this. Some are, we do have some people I hasten to add, we do have some people like the chief exec of the [...]. So we get a mix of people with skills. We do have a high number of people who represent BME groups. We have people who represent organisations, we have young people who volunteer on that panel.*

(Local Administrator)

However, some local administrators felt the BME representation on the panel in no way reflected the local BME population and was in some sense simply tokenistic. Moreover, some local administrators found it difficult to keep young people on the panel, as they believed young people who volunteered or worked in this capacity were in demand and often over-committed. This resulted in them sometimes not turning up to meetings. One LNF area was beginning to draw young people who had been previous grantees into the work of the assessment panel.

Local administrators were also positive about the decision-making process, which they generally felt was working effectively and equitably. Panel members were said to be utilising their knowledge of children and young people and the local area effectively; they were adhering closely to the ethos of the fund; filtering out larger organisations; and trying to find projects that were children and young people-led.

Furthermore, the local administrators felt some grant panel members were inadvertently promoting the fund at a grassroots level by raising awareness and trust of the fund in the local community. This was thought to be occurring as a result of their high profile and good standing in the local community. For example, in one area, a grant panel member had passed on details of the fund to her co-workers, they subsequently made a successful application.



However, there were some problems noted with the grants panel process by panel members and also by researchers during their observations of the workings of the panels. The key issues here were as follows and it is perhaps worth observing that these are not uncharacteristic of the workings of both voluntary organisations and grant-making organisations more generally.

**Alternative agendas** – It was felt that some panel members had their own agenda either politically, or they were thought to have an interest in particular groups. Although panel members did not highlight any conflicts of interest, it was sometimes felt to create tension and may have influenced the decision reached by the panel.

*Some of the Panel members aren't appropriate – in that they've got political agendas, it might be people who I don't feel are as impartial as I would like them to be – so at this moment in time we are undertaking a massive review of all the problem areas, we are reiterating the importance of confidentiality and of declaring either a negative or a positive conflict of interest ... We have had people making quite venomous remarks and the Panel can't ignore those remarks – in one case we deferred it until we got to the bottom of all the issues and then we took it back to Panel. So there are politics and egos in these boroughs and it's sometimes difficult to cut through.*

(Local Administrator)

**Dominating the panel** – Some panel members had domineering personalities and clearly swayed the decision made. This kind of process issue, to do with the dynamics of the group, seems almost unavoidable and goes with the territory. It may only be dealt with by effective chairing or having counterweights on the panel.

**Decision-making process** - Some unsuccessful applicants raised concerns about the decision-making process which they believed was unclear, potentially unfair and - according to some at least - lacking in transparency about the grounds on which the decision was based. Some applicants felt they would like to have received more information regarding the decision-making process, in particular about what type of people were on the panel and who ultimately makes the decision. Despite assurances by local administrators that they were not making the decision, some unsuccessful applicants were convinced the administrator either made or influenced the decision.

Additionally, some groups felt it was inappropriate of the LNF to make a decision based on the application alone and thought the project should always be visited before it is turned down. Although one area was trying to implement this practice they found it difficult to achieve as a result of the number of applications received. Certainly, unsuccessful applicants who had not been visited suggested they would have felt happier about the decision if they had been visited by the local administrator.

### **6.3.7 Outcome**

Overall, applicants did not seem concerned about the length of time the application process took; usually around two to three months from beginning to end. However, some delays were noted and these were said to be either a consequence of local administrator backlogs or as a result of requests for additional information – characteristically, information on the budget or the Child Protection Policy. It seemed, however, that these delays had usually occurred during the initial implementation of the LNF and had dissipated as the delivery of the fund had bedded down.

Successful applicants did not tend to highlight any problems regarding hearing about the outcome of their application, nor did they raise any problems regarding receiving the funding - which they suggested they received quickly and without problems.

*They wrote back to me with one or two queries but there was no problem and once those queries had been answered there was no problem with the money coming.*

(Successful applicant)

Unsuccessful applicants' views on the feedback they received from the local administrator regarding their application varied; whilst some were satisfied with the reason they were given, others were not as they did not deem the reasons given to be fair. Some of the reasons given for refusal included:

- Not benefiting children and young people – applicants said this showed inflexibility, as they thought their projects had an extremely positive indirect benefit to children and young people; and
- Having unrestricted funds/being a large organisation – in these cases the applicants felt it was unfair as larger groups with unrestricted funds were not said to be ineligible in the application pack.

A similar point was noted by local administrators who felt they were unable to say they had turned applications down because the group had received LNF funding before, even if this was the case, as receiving a previous grant did not technically make them ineligible. However, they were concerned that some – perhaps more established - groups might make serial applications.

Furthermore, some unsuccessful applicants suggested they did not receive any feedback at all which they felt was totally inappropriate as the following unsuccessful applicant indicates:

*I was very disappointed in [the Local administrators] 'cos they never come back and told me we hadn't got it. I had to chase them to find out.*

## **6.4 Monitoring**

Although monitoring was explored during the qualitative case study interviews, in many cases it was too early in the project evolution to discuss this. We would expect to be able to explore the monitoring practices in more detail specifically in relation to the end of grant report in the next stages of the research.

It is, however, worth noting that a number of groups were carrying out their own broader project evaluations in order to improve their own service, either on an ongoing basis, or during specifically organised evaluation events. The types of evaluations carried out included making videos of the events, taking pictures, completing questionnaires and holding forums. Although when asked about their views on the LNF monitoring (for instance, the end of grant form), applicants were sometimes unclear about what they had to produce for the LNF, they hoped they would be able to utilise their own evaluation material.

Monitoring was not generally perceived to be a problem by those who had reached this stage, particularly in comparison to the monitoring they were required to do for other funds, which was often said to be more time-consuming and complicated.

*It's not a burden at all, I don't see it as a burden, I think it's a necessity. I have absolutely no problems in filling monitoring forms out because if we do that then next time we do apply, they've got evidence that we have spent the money as we should.*

(Successful Applicant)

However, some applicants had experienced problems, but this tended to be where the grant had funded multifaceted projects - such as a range of summer activities, as this required the applicant to do a lot more monitoring work and consequentially the task was said to be 'onerous'. In particular it was thought to be difficult accurately to record how many young people had benefited from the project.

*What I had a problem with this is a bigger form than the application form, it is actually a more onerous as a task and it had, the problem was with the monitoring because they wanted to know if I had done one activity it wouldn't have been very difficult but to send in a whole series of activities ... that was really difficult. In the end what I did, when I first got the grant and got this form I thought right ok I am going to need to do monitoring as I go along, I designed my own financial monitoring form and attendance form for every single activity and gave them to the project staff and said complete these every single time you know the ages of the children and all that sort of thing so that when I got to this point I would have that information because otherwise I just wouldn't know who had gone on what.*

(Successful applicant)

Furthermore, some applicants felt the goal-posts had changed during the course of their project which had made it difficult for them find the required information even though they had collected information they thought they needed throughout the project. For example, one applicant said that despite having collected information throughout, they were told at the end they were required to provide information on the age groups of the beneficiaries and another said they were only told by those administering the fund locally at the end they were required to collect receipts.

*There was no mention at the beginning to save all your receipts, now we did anyway, and then I got a phone call when it was due to end saying can you send through stuff and I was like, oh!*

(Successful applicant)

*I have problems filling the final report form because the age groups you know we do our monitoring sheets accordingly. We design our monitoring sheets according to the applications so that this shows that what they expect from us at the end. But then what they expect of us at the end was different from what was asked in the beginning.*

(Successful applicant)

## **6.5 Impacts**

This phase of the study is very much a formative one and it was not intended that assessing impacts would be the main focus of the first phase of the research. In some specific instances, there are also methodological problems in that it is difficult when LNF funding has provided only one part of a much broader activity (for instance, particular activities at a youth club) to assess benefits to children and young people specific to the LNF funded activity in isolation from the benefits gained from attending the broader activity *per se*.

Despite this, a wide range of impacts were nevertheless reported and these have been classified as impacts for projects, young people, parents and the local community. These are described in the following sections:

## **6.5.1 Impacts for projects**

### **6.5.1.1 Developing new facilities and activities**

A key way in which the LNF had made an impact was in enabling groups to provide a wide range of new facilities and activities for children and young people. Playgroups, playschemes and toy libraries had all benefited from new facilities. Projects had been able to organise a wide variety of social and educational activities and trips (including dance and drama, IT, music and movement, puppeteering, horse riding, camping, skiing, canoeing, theme parks, museums, seeing the countryside, etc.). In some cases it was suggested by the LNF project leaders that these activities and facilities would not have been established without LNF funding. However, others were either already in receipt of other funding or felt that they would have been able to secure this if they had been unsuccessful in their application.

The LNF grant was also valued for having enabled groups to develop and build their services, something over and above the ordinary:

*If we hadn't got the £7000 there would have been gaps. Your bids come together to create a programme – so we have an idea what we want to do that year and then we go looking for funding. So if we hadn't got the £7000 it would have come down to prioritising. It's the development stuff that might have been hurt because you have to maintain the mainstream in the youth club. So it would have been training somebody up, offering a variety, using extra community facilities which would have been affected.*

(Youth centre worker)

### **6.5.1.2 Increasing staff morale / general personal development**

The additional resources and the greater depth of activities they funded provided enhanced job satisfaction for members of project staff. There appeared to be no losers in this process, everyone gained to some degree:

*It's enabled the groups within the centre to develop ... the individuals within the group, it's enabled them to learn, it's all about people's personal development. ... So it's staff, it's parents, it's young people, children, babies, you know it's about learning, it's about moving, slowly trying to move people on, getting them more involved with what's happening, you know, within their own life and a little bit wider as well.*

(Project centre worker)

## **6.5.2 Impacts for young people**

### **6.5.2.1 Acquiring new skills and experiences**

As a consequence of projects providing these new activities and facilities young people had learned new skills and enjoyed hitherto unknown or inaccessible experiences.

*It may be really run of the mill to us but for that group to do that particular thing, it would be innovative to them and that might be as simple as going to the seaside – it might be a new residents group and organising a trip for kids might be the first thing they've done.*

(Local Administrator)

Young people were extremely enthusiastic about these experiences, which were often described as a mixture of fun and learning:

*I thought camp was fun and I liked all the activities and mixing with other people.*

(Young person)

Even within the limited range of case studies examined, it was clear that the children and young people had experienced a considerable variety of activities – of a trip to Ireland, for example:

*We done walking ... We played football on the beach ... The first day we got there we did an activity thing – do you remember, like, where we had to fit through that hoop ... And everybody putting their feet in that puddle of water. [laughs] It was all about team building.*

They had also found new and different pastimes:

*I didn't know that there were hobbies like puppet making - it's the first time I found that such hobbies existed. So I used to come to drama and there were day trips to places to do with drama – from puppeteers to singing – and I didn't know there were those other sides to drama. So I'm actually making puppets myself now. I've been doing little puppet workshops with the youngsters here and a school in \*\*\*\*\*. I show them how to make puppets out of cartons.*

and enthused about learning new skills:

*It teaches us to learn things a bit better – like football skills a bit better. Doing art a bit better ...*

Some projects had clearly assisted young people who either had been excluded from school or had been in danger of being so excluded. This they had done by providing educational facilities in IT and homework clubs, but also by providing a non-authoritarian, user-friendly outlet for energies and stress. One project was assisting schools in tracking child development:

*What can they count up to? Do they know their colours? Etcetera, etcetera. So it's the child's development, we keep records of that, and that goes with them to the school as well, so it gives the school then a good starting point with each child, so it is important, and we can't stress how much importance there is with grants like this.*

(Project worker)

When asked what they would be doing were they not at their particular project, children stated they would either be 'bored,' 'on 'the streets' or 'stuck at home watching television.'

### **6.5.2.2 Developing friendships / encouraging mixing across social groups**

It was clear that there were also important social impacts resulting from children and young people mixing with others and making friends at projects.

*I like meeting new people and it's really friendly and good to come to.*

(Young person)

*It's just a place where people can come to see their friends – you're not seeing them at school any more.*

(Young person)

For some young people this was the first time they were able to mix with other young people from their own culture or ethnic background, for others it was virtually the first time they had mixed with children and young people from other ethnic backgrounds. In one project it had been of particular benefit to the siblings of children and young people with disabilities, as a parent volunteer explained:

*It was all about him [her son] being involved with sporting and recreational activities, because outside of where we are, a lot of special needs kids are not accepted in society and it was a way for him to be himself without any pressures. A chance to mix with other kids ... we have a lot of parents who come as volunteers and they bring their children, but siblings come as well, and I think it is very important that we do invite siblings so that they come to realise that their brother or sister is not the only person that exists with a special need, and we are hoping that by seeing that they learn to accept people for what they are rather than a label that they've been given.'*

(Parent volunteer)

### **6.5.2.3 Raising confidence levels**

Respondents spoke of the importance of nurturing the interaction process whereby young people began both to communicate on new levels and build their confidence. Parents told of 'shy' and 'clingy' children, previously lacking in confidence, coming out of their shells for the first time:

*it's getting them in, mixing with other, with the adults, and the children, playing, learning new skills.*

(Parent)

Children and young people also acknowledged the part that mixing with other young people, making friends, and engaging in sporting and social activities had played in raising their own confidence levels and in altering their behaviour:

*It's helped to build my confidence up. It's also learned me how to control my temper because when I was 12 my temper was just ...*

They had prepared for and undertaken daunting tasks and had felt 'proud' of their achievements. They had enjoyed the opportunity to perform sports, dance and drama in front of parents and relatives. This helped to build confidence and self-esteem:

*My mum comes to the events. We went to a triathlon out of school and I came third and third – swimming, biking and running and my mum came to support me. My dad came as well and my gran.*

Some had performed for their local communities, others for a much wider audience such as at the opening ceremony of the Manchester Commonwealth Games. Others enthused about the opportunity LNF-funded work gave them to take a lead:

*They give us choices, what we want to do and they don't tell us what we have to do, they ask us what we want to do.*

#### **6.5.2.4 Encouraging new roles and responsibilities**

It was clear that some young people had gained much from helping others on the projects. They enjoyed being given the responsibility to help others and appeared to *'get a lot out of it'*.

Several of the young people who had benefited from projects had also gone on to become volunteers and in some cases this had already assisted them in obtaining subsequent employment. Project leaders cited numerous examples of young people, some of whom had been 'quite difficult' at first, having gone on to find more positive outlets for their energies by contributing to local community activities, some by having trained to be instructors in various activities (IT, sports, puppeteering) whilst at the projects.

There were also some reports of children and young people being consulted and having a major say in the organisation and direction of activities, and where this occurred they invariably said they had enjoyed the experience. The types of responsibilities they were given included: setting out and putting away equipment or taking registers; older children supervising the activities of younger children; deciding on it might be taking decisions over which trips they should organise or which songs a dance troupe should perform to. In one case it involved drawing up a code of behaviour for both themselves and adults attending their projects. An LNF worker responsible for monitoring commented:

*I think there are a lot which go out of their way to hear children's voices as to what they want. I've been talking to one this afternoon and he started a 'youth bank' as he calls it – they are forming a committee of youngsters between eleven and fifteen and saying to them 'right you've got this pot of money, we want you to decide how to spend it, on something that's going to improve your environment or your way of life.'*

Among the projects visited were those who were keen to evidence how they were fostering the empowerment and self expression of children and young people:

*With our children we have changed things on part of the LNF and that was possibly my fault – because I was quite specific in what the outputs would be, but when we started talking to the children there were changes they wanted to make – which we've responded to. ... The way we work is that we try to develop the confidence, the esteem and communication skills so then that people can make choices if they are given the opportunity. So this type of fund allows us to put opportunities in place where people can make choices.*

(LNF Administrator)

### **6.5.3 Positive impacts for parents**

#### **6.5.3.1 A social and information facility for parents**

Where parents were interviewed then they also identified the value of the LNF-funded projects, asserting that they provided new facilities, guardianship and new friends for their children. This in turn, had given them 'a

*break*, particularly in the school holidays. In addition, they provided a social, advice and information facility for parents:

*You come here and everybody's really nice.*

(Parent)

*I think parent and toddler's quite good because everyone else just looks out for each other, you don't just look after your own child ... someone could say 'right, I'm just going to go and have a brew will you just keep an eye on my little girl,' which they'd do exactly the same thing for me.*

(Parent)

As one project administrator explained:

*It's the social thing as well, which is just as important for the adult in some cases, because we have single parents coming down. And you know some of the single parents are in the house, almost twenty hours a day, looking at the same four walls. So it's a chance for them to get out, also it gives them information because of the notice boards, because the information we disseminate through each groups, of training, of, you know anything else.*

(Local Administrator)

### **6.5.3.2 Promoting parent volunteering**

Several of the LNF-funded projects were promoting volunteering amongst adults associated with CYP beneficiaries. Volunteers spoke of having benefited themselves directly through their involvement in the funded projects. One had provided an 'outlet' for single parents or parents with disabled children, who previously had felt trapped in the home:

*Once I got involved with the youth club I was sort of hooked. Even if Michael didn't want to come on some occasions I still did because I liked it – so it was a social thing for me as well because I never used to go out, Michael was my whole purpose in life. So that was how I got involved and I've got more and more involved over the years ... I didn't have a job – my job was looking after Michael and I gained a job out of it – and a job I love.*

(Parent)

At another project parent volunteers had also gone on to find employment in various areas of childcare and the social services; a typical example was:

*I was doing NVQ Level Two in Childcare and I was offered a placement here, I did my placement here for two years, went to college one morning a week and then I actually, got my NVQ level two, I got offered the job as a playgroup leader.*

(Parent)

As an indication of wider community impacts, several of the projects had also provided older and retired volunteers with a new lease of life. One 67 year-old volunteer had joined when his wife died 7 years previously but was now increasing his involvement:



*I originally came one day a week and now it's two days a week. Mainly I do table tennis but then any other activities they want me to do – so I help around here with the snooker or sometimes with football ... It's helped me tremendously ... what I'd have done I don't know. I'd have been just sat in or just gardening. But this is something I'd never done – I'd never done canoeing, never done abseiling or camping – and I've done all those now – I've done everything apart from skiing and I want to do skiing ... For me personally I couldn't have wished for anything better – it's been like a family.*

#### **6.5.4 Helping the most disadvantaged and reducing poverty**

Clearly one of the key objectives of the LNF is to ensure that funding helps to reduce poverty amongst children and young people. From the perspective of project workers and local administrators the fund was felt to have already assisted disadvantaged individuals and communities, even if there was some debate about whether it could combat poverty. Respondents told of a general lack of either statutory or voluntary provision for children and young people in the locality, of a violent street culture, of endemic crime and boredom, and of multi layered poverty. One respondent explained:

*The school is for special needs children, it is wholly a special needs school. They go from mild to severe learning difficulties. We have got children with physical, medical, social and financial ... 67% of the kids are on free school meals.*

At another project the clientele were described as being 'disadvantaged' and from 'low income or lone parent families'. Again, some had 'learning difficulties as well as physical disabilities' which 'affect their self-esteem and confidence' and leaves them feeling 'isolated and neglected.' Outside of the project they were 'not consulted on issues that affect their lives.'

Another project worker commented:

*A number of young people who attend the centre are not in mainstream education and therefore the centre is the only form of education available to them. All of the young people live within a socially deprived area. Many are from single parent families and often they are from large families.*

In addition to broadening life experiences and building skills, projects also helped to reduce poverty by providing basic amenities such as washing machines, toy libraries, and food in the form of breakfast clubs.

However, some Fund administrators and outreach workers felt that the Fund was not necessarily reaching down to the most marginalized and embryonic population groups within the local areas, such as BME groups or those facing severed disadvantage of other kinds. That was held to be in part due to insufficient promotion and outreach work from LNFs and in part due to the lack of capacity in marginalised and disadvantaged communities, which would be reflected in a lack of engagement from those communities with the LNF.

Concern was also expressed about raising expectations about what the LNF might be able to achieve in terms of combating poverty.

*Ultimately it won't be wasted money, because children keep getting some incredible experiences, but we're not going to combat child poverty. I mean, who are they kidding?*

*It's a sticking plaster thing isn't it. In all honesty, the fund is tokenistic in relation to poverty. It's not going to make much difference in the long-term.*

There were also concerns around the issue of sustainability. Project workers told of the dangers inherent in raising expectations amongst children and young people by providing services one year, only to have those services curtailed due to lack of funding the next. Fund administrators had begun to pick up on this. One Fund Director explained:

*Especially when it's a very young organisation that are just establishing themselves, a year on, they get to know what they are doing, they are delivering the services which are very well-received and everybody wants it to continue and we have to say sorry, no more funding – it saddens me because I see it all the time. Unfortunately this is common to a lot of funding streams.*

Nonetheless, some groups were edging their way to sustainability via the Fund:

*So they may not come back to the LNF, but given that they've got a little bit further down the road, they maybe have some form of sustaining themselves other than applying for funding.*

## **6.6 Improving the LNF grant application process**

Based on this first set of visits to most of the case study areas, it would appear that the LNF is seen to be making a very positive contribution to the lives of some children and young people in local communities. It is clear also that it is, in general, highly regarded by the different respondent groups involved in the research. LNF project workers and beneficiaries had a variety of suggestions for improving the fund in relation to its operation, targeting and management.

- It was felt that more effort should be made to promote the Fund at grassroots level. There should be access to application forms and guidance, together with examples of successful applications on the internet, forms to be returnable by e-mail, and there should be more assistance for groups when completing applications. This was particularly the case with small and newer groups.
- Currently, neither applications forms nor Fund guidelines were in formats which were easily accessible to BME or other minority groups. Promotion and application processes should be multi-lingual and user-friendly to those with disabilities. They should be developed in conjunction with local administrators, CVSs, and both previously successful and unsuccessful applicants.
- Local administrators questioned the logic of a LNF being administered or co-ordinated in part through a national Call Centre. This was perceived as an unnecessary tier of bureaucracy and a barrier to embryonic groups. They called in particular for more flexibility in the distribution of application forms and packs so that a service geared to local needs could be provided. As we have seen, however, these views were not largely echoed by applicants.
- Outreach workers felt they would have benefited from having more control over the distribution of the application packs, as they believed that by distributing the packs themselves they would be able to promote the fund more effectively and consequently increase the number of application made.

They believed clients would be more likely to apply if they were given the pack directly, rather than having to go through the process of contacting the Call Centre.

- Local administrators also suggested it might be good to localise the application forms.
- Unsuccessful applicants felt strongly that all groups who made an application should be visited before their application was rejected. This would compensate for those who were not skilled in the art of form completion. One administrator felt that some groups required assistance in devising feasible projects.

Both Fund administrators and applicants felt that there remained some substantial cultural barriers to the funding of BME groups. One BME group advised the following:

*At every single stage I would make sure that there was compliance with equality legislation ... You have to state it from the outset, from the design of the funding that that is what they're doing, and it has to be advertised particularly.*

- Panellists and fund administrators felt there should be greater levels of informal sharing of information and best practice between administrators and panels both within and between regions.
- On the whole, outreach workers felt they would benefit from more feedback for the Local Administrator regarding applications.
- An outreach worker suggested that in order to encourage take-up of the LNF by children and young people-led groups, it would be advantageous to facilitate more concerted developmental work and capacity-building in schools, colleges, youth and community centres, possibly in conjunction with local learning partnerships and other organisations involved in training up local people via self-development/accredited courses.
- Applicants suggested that there should be additional resources available to develop child protection policies:

*I am concerned about the increased amount of administration that is being expected – especially when you consider that they frown upon you applying for admin. costs'*

(Adult applicant)

- Groups emphasised the need for greater stability within the funding world more generally. Virtually all funding streams available to them were of one year's duration, or less. Constantly having to apply for grants was time and resource-consuming. Several suggested that two or three year funding would offer more stability and the LNF could provide an example of best practice here - although we are aware that this is not the purpose of the fund. Rather the Fund seeks to get groups up and running.

Despite its funding limits, however, the value of the Fund should not be underestimated as there appeared to be little doubt that those groups who had accessed the LNF had utilised it to provide new and worthwhile experiences for CYP and their parents/other adult beneficiaries. It had provided a welcome addition to the

local funding scene, particularly for small groups. That said, there were concerns that the Fund was not yet reaching below 'the usual suspects' to the most embryonic groups and the most marginalised communities.

## **7 Continuing questions for the evaluation**

At this interim stage it is too soon to draw definitive conclusions about whether the LNF is ‘successful’ in achieving its objectives. Rather the focus of this report has been to provide early indications of how well it is currently working and highlight further areas for development. This final chapter, therefore, draws together the themes and conclusions arising from the first year of the evaluation and reflects upon the value and role of the LNF, as it currently operates. For some of the issues raised, we offer tentative answers which need to be firmed up in the course of the remainder of the evaluation, whilst others will be the main focus of elements of the evaluation as it continues. Here they are grouped for convenience but clearly there are inter-relationships between many of them and changes in one area of activity may knock on into others.

### **7.1 The application process**

#### **7.1.1 Is the LNF publicised adequately?**

The evidence to date suggests that the LNF is not being as widely publicised as it should be; by this we mean that whilst there may have been good publicity in some quarters, systematically, the LNF is not reaching one of the key targets, the most marginalised groups and communities. Those most aware of how to access funding streams as a whole are doing so in relation to the LNF, but concern was expressed by a number of LNF administrators and staff – as we report in the chapter 3 for example - that there remains untapped demand, almost certainly associated with smaller less well-established organisations. One argument is that this will simply change over time as the LNF becomes more widely known. However, even at this interim stage, it is possible to point to some examples of best practice in publicising the fund which could be more widely shared. This would include the use of the CVS in urban areas, and the RCC in rural areas, to promote the LNF, together with identifying other pre-existing local promotional networks, which are operated by volunteers as well as community-based workers.

#### **7.1.2 What is the role of outreach and support?**

Outreach has been shown to have two different roles in the delivery of the LNF. One is that outreach should be used to support applicants who are less familiar with form-filling and grant applications and, particularly, to help with difficult issues such as the setting up of financial systems and the development of child protection procedures. The other outreach role is about stimulating demand through, for example, running promotional fairs, sending out newsletters and providing information by word of mouth. As has been shown, depending on local circumstances, the emphasis placed on each of these functions differed across case studies, with some outreach workers focusing jointly on both promotion and support; and others focusing on either the promotional or the support aspects of the role.

Views on the quality of outreach differs. Clearly, it is very effective in some areas, through stimulating demand among hard-to-reach groups, helping organisations complete forms which might otherwise have had insuperable difficulties in doing so and helping applicants cope with unfamiliar requirements (especially the child protection policy). In a minority of areas, however, it is regarded as being far less effective (see for example, Chapters 3 and 5), being mainly reactive and with organisations doing outreach which have had little experience of grant-making processes. The national telephone survey of LNF administrators reported in chapter 3 has also raised similar questions about the role of outreach, and indicated some precise ways in which the choice of outreach method can be sharply focussed, especially with regard to stimulating demand

among more embryonic groups. Nonetheless, it is already clear that where a good working relationship exists between the outreach worker and the local administrator the quality of *both* kinds of outreach improves.

However, a question can be raised about the appropriateness of LNFs themselves managing outreach in-house: we have not had adequate experience of this yet as there appeared to be limited examples of it happening, but it does present some boundary issues in relation to situations where the organisation both stimulates demand and then makes judgments on applications coming in as a result; at the very least it requires some very firm boundaries between the two roles of outreach and grant-giving. It is important also to acknowledge that some informal and important outreach work is being done outwith the LNF system altogether, for example, by other organisations with which groups may have contact, through personal connections or by word of mouth.

### **7.1.3 Is the application process accessible as a whole to more disadvantaged groups?**

The evidence of successful applicants suggests that the LNF application process is user-friendly, accessible, relatively quick (see, for example, the responses to the telephone survey described in chapter 4 above); that support is available and usable; and that the form is reasonably easy to manage - although there were some suggestions that it might be more accessible on-line. Overall, then, the system appears to be experienced as responsive and more easy to obtain grants from than other funding schemes (although as we have found there are few close comparators to the LNF this is hard to judge).

Unsuccessful applicants, not surprisingly, gave a less whole-hearted endorsement of the process and about a quarter appear not to know why their application was rejected. This seems unsatisfactory, particularly in terms of ensuring that the profile of the LNF remains accessible and user-friendly and encouraging potential applicants to think about re-applying. The form also does not appear to address the needs of black and minority ethnic groups adequately, especially where familiarity with semi-formal English grammar and syntax is an issue. As yet, there appears to be no suggestion that the form will be translated into minority languages which is a key issue given that some minorities (those of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin and more recent refugee and asylum-seeker arrivals) are both amongst those with highest poverty levels in the UK and with a demographic profile skewed towards children and young people.

In terms of its design and content the form is also problematic for those with literacy problems or visual impairments and, somewhat ironically, appears not to be easy for some children and young people to use. This emphasises the need for the more focussed kinds of outreach identified earlier but this should also be underpinned by further attention to the presentation of the form itself.

It is clear, however, that organisations which do not have a track record of receiving grants are, nonetheless, successful in obtaining grants from the LNF, although at present these are in a minority overall. The majority of grants go instead to what are often described as ‘the usual suspects’, and are used typically for existing organisations to extend their work into new fields. However, this may be less problematic than it would appear, providing that the type of activity funded suggests innovation which can lead to capacity-building, for example, projects which aid the development of communication and management skills among children and young people. This is hinted at in chapter 5 above and will be explored further in the ongoing case study work.

## 7.2 The LNF as a grant-giving system

### 7.2.1 Does the organisational structure of the LNF help it to achieve its goals?

The economic evaluation will explore the more detailed aspects of this but in terms of the original goals of the LNF - to provide a scheme which was administered close to deprived communities – it is clear that there have had to be some compromises both in the original design and since. For example, the effective management of public monies has required the management of the LNF to be taken back into the CYPUP (albeit reluctantly on their part) but, given applicants' current low awareness of the CYPUP as the ultimate sponsor of the LNF scheme (35%), this may not make much difference to the application process. It appears that the shift of management back to the centre is broadly welcomed by LNFs themselves, and some administrators expressed to the research team ahead of the termination of the contract with CFN, a preference for a more direct relationship with the CYPUP, rather than a relationship which was brokered through CFN. These issues will be explored in greater detail during the remainder of the evaluation.

In terms of the LNF as an administrative system, in our view, there is always likely to be a tension between the need for consistency and equity on the one hand, and local flexibility and responsiveness on the other. This is not an unusual tension in schemes which disburse monies from a central fund through local agents. One arena in which this issue is raised is the ways in which grants panels work at the local level. Here there does appear to be considerable variety in practice – for example, in terms of recruitment of panel members and the size of the panel, the training of panel members, the handling of applications and the decision-making process. LNFs would defend such differences as reflecting differences in the local organisational and service context. However, it has been suggested that there should be stronger guidance about the parameters within which grants panels operate, for example that certain interests *must* (rather than *might*) be incorporated within them and that young people should be involved in particular ways. At present we observe merely that there is much variation. Some grant panels visit projects before making any assessment, while others do not; some provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants, others do not. Similarly, the approach grants panels adopt in terms of the flow of money varies: some appear to focus on larger numbers of smaller grants, others do not, preferring instead to fund fewer more expensive projects. Again, the introduction of the LNF Manual may help to level out these inconsistent practices.

The size of LNF areas is also an issue. Typically, an LNF area usually incorporates more than one local authority area (for example several metropolitan districts, or a shire county surrounding an urban unitary authority) and this introduces difficulties in terms of reaching some local communities. The LNFs have had therefore to find ways – and continue to explore them – of ensuring that they get as close as possible to disadvantaged neighbourhoods which may be some way from the LNF base. There is a considerable organisational 'distance' between a county of, say, 600,000 people and a neighbourhood of 3,000 but this is the gap LNFs have to bridge. Such differences seem to underline therefore the need for flexibility and responsiveness at the local level, rather than the achievement of an overall consistency of approach. One way in which this has been done, as our case study work and the telephone survey of administrators indicate, is to establish panels for sub-areas which can be more locally responsive.

However, whether such variations make for significant differences locally - in terms of meeting the overall objectives of the LNF - is impossible to tell at present. What emerges as important, therefore, is that the promotion of a wider discussion of these issues will help inform and encourage best practice in grant-making

for all LNFs, and there is little doubt that this debate would have wider resonance for other grant-making organisations.

### **7.2.2 Is the national Call Centre needed?**

At present views about the usefulness of the Call Centre (as opposed to its effectiveness) varied, depending on which respondents were asked. On the one hand, for example, and from the perspective of the centre (i.e. staff in the [former] CYPU), the Call Centre is allegedly offering a consistency of approach which will help to reduce any sense of 'postcode lottery' in terms of accessing the basic information necessary for applying to the LNF. Nearer the ground, however, there is some scepticism amongst many LNF administrators about its alleged benefits although this is not a reflection on the staff managing the Call Centre who were extremely positively regarded. Feedback from users – particularly those who were successful – suggests, on the other hand, a very high level of satisfaction with the Call Centre's performance and little indication that it created difficulties for them. The scepticism amongst local administrators arises instead from the argument that, because they are locally-based, LNFs are better placed to handle the application process themselves and can be more effective in reaching and responding to applicants. The jury is therefore out on this question; a more conclusive answer will come in the light of the further national telephone survey of all LNFs, the Call Centre tracking exercise we have just begun to carry out, a costing of the Call Centre exercise *vis-à-vis* alternative ways of providing the initial response to callers, and further feedback from applicants. It is also perhaps worth observing that staff at the Call Centre themselves felt they had been excluded from ongoing policy discussion about the LNF and would have appreciated more opportunities to contribute to strategic discussions about the operation of the LNF.

### **7.2.3 Is the child protection requirement a barrier or a benefit?**

After some initial concerns expressed within CFN and individual LNFs, it appears that there is less anxiety about the child protection requirement than had been expected or had been the case before the LNF became operational. This is not to say that it does not create anxiety for some smaller groups, but LNFs are learning how to manage these anxieties and the best ways to help local groups develop their own policies. Whether the child protection policy comes to be seen as 'the jewel in the crown' is a longer-term judgement with respect to its effectiveness in practice but at this stage the work being done locally to develop child protection policies can be seen in a very positive light as a form of capacity-building. One qualification here again is that work on child protection policies needs to focus more on emergent groups.

### **7.2.4 Monitoring systems**

There are two goals for monitoring grant giving: one is to ensure effective and appropriate accountability for monies spent and we cannot comment on the systems in place here. The other goal is to ensure that the grants are reaching the intended targets and, with respect to this aim, it is encouraging to note that some monitoring and evaluation work is already being carried out by groups themselves for their own purposes. The end of award report required by the LNF for each grant given is, however, seen as the main vehicle for monitoring and, when these are received, dimensions such as gender, ethnicity and disability will be regarded as critical, given what we know about the incidence of child poverty in relation to these variables. However, it should be noted that, as is already evident from the telephone survey and case studies, two key dimensions are proving rather difficult to monitor in any systematic way. First, the extent to which children and young people are involved in the running of projects – and what that actually means in practice – and, second, the



precise benefits children and young people derive from their participation. Given the usefulness of the monitoring feedback which local administrators reported during the telephone survey, there may be a case for reviewing and consolidating the monitoring processes currently underway.

### **7.3 Are resources targeted effectively?**

This question can be asked at a number of levels. Nationally, the LNF now covers the whole of England – as a result of the rollout of Wave Three - so technically the LNF funds are available to any group meeting its criteria, regardless of geography. This tacit recognition that child poverty exists in every area of the country (perhaps in widespread forms or in pockets of poverty), regardless of overall levels of income and wealth, therefore sets the LNF apart from many other government programmes. In the case of the latter programmes are usually targeted on large geographical units defined in terms of a range of poverty indicators such as the 88 local authorities with Local Strategic Partnerships and the associated Community Empowerment Funds.

Within the case study areas there seems to be a strong geographical correlation between the pattern of successful applicants (with the proviso that this may not necessarily represent the physical location of beneficiaries) and areas of greater levels of child poverty. At this level, therefore, this suggests successful targeting - that is, that the profile of spend is related to local needs in general terms.

Evidence also tentatively suggests that this is not displacing other grant sources from the frame, however, but supplementing them: for example, respondents suggest that the LNF offers funding which would otherwise not be available for the activities they propose. Two-thirds of applicants received funding from no other source although about two-thirds of all applicants had also applied elsewhere. This suggests it might be useful to explore the political economy of local grant-giving in order to understand what the impact of the arrival of the LNF might have been on other local funders, such as local authorities, as well as on particular types of applicants themselves, and we may take this issue up in further case study work.

However, as we have noted elsewhere the groups successful in receiving LNF grants appear, at present, more likely to be established groups with a track record of receiving grants, rather than new or embryonic groups inexperienced in the grant application process.

The question then remains, what is the extent of potential demand in each area which has yet to be accessed by the LNF and what is its profile? There was, for example, a widespread concern expressed by LNF administrators that cultural barriers remained for BME groups and, as we found in differing elements of the evaluation (see, for example, chapter 5 above), several LNFs thought that that they were not reaching out or down to potential applicants, which they presumed would be found within the less-established or organised sector. This was for a variety of reasons – ineffective outreach, publicity which is not targeted effectively enough, lack of knowledge etc, cultural barriers, - and some LNFs are themselves beginning to explore these problems systematically at the grass-roots level through small-scale research studies or reviews of their own data.

Another reflection of this concern is that the average level of grants across the LNF as a whole is towards the high end of the range, suggesting again that more established groups are dominating funding at present. There is an expectation, however, amongst local administrators and staff that the average level of grant could drop as smaller groups successfully accessing the LNF become more numerous. We would expect this issue to become rather more central as the LNF – and this evaluation – continues and it is possible that more

complex monitoring processes will need to be put in place to be able to understand the changing profile of successful grant applicants over time.

The data analysis suggests that so far only a small proportion – 3% - of applicants have received previous funding from the LNF (i.e. are serial applicants) and it is difficult to interpret this pattern, both in terms of the present situation and how it might play out in the future. Given that any particular group cannot apply a second time for the same purpose for which a first grant is given (and that most LNFs have no difficulty in spending most of their budgets) one question to explore is whether the profile of successful applicants will change over time, reflecting a shift from the more established groups to the less established ones. If, however, the percentage of groups making further applications - but for other purposes – *increases*, then this might – dependent on the profile of the groups - reveal some element of capacity-building and development over time at the local level. We would like to be certain that local monitoring systems can pick these issues up effectively since such signs of community capacity-building are a key objective of the LNF.

Cutting across this issue, and to some degree in conflict with the question of targeting, is the question of local group sustainability. Grants at present are available only for one year or, in a few limited instances, to two years and there was some criticism from the LNFs themselves of this constraint. Some LNFs argued strongly – including through the telephone survey - that this provided too little time for groups to become sustainable, especially for those with little track record of activities and, as noted, it was felt that there were dangers in raising expectations only to have those curtailed due to lack of future funding. In order to respond to these concerns, however, it seems clear that a much longer timeframe than is possible within the terms of this evaluation might be necessary to see whether the capacity which is fostered in these organisations continues and develops as a feature of the local organisational landscape, with the organisations remaining managed by local people and responding to local deprivation amongst children and young people.

One such measure of sustainability is the developing capacity of such groups to ‘lever in other endowments’ as one national policy actor put it to us, i.e. to access other grant streams, and there is some limited evidence that this is already occurring. However, as it stands, with the LNF time limit for grant aid fixed at two years, the fund has to be seen as essentially a catalyst, money which helps to start things up but is not responsible for them continuing. This is where a comparison with the track record of the ‘Awards for All’ fund (part of the National Lottery Charities Board) – one of the comparators which we hope to examine - may be illuminating

## **7.4 Capacity building**

The issue of building capacity can also be examined at several levels. One is at the level of organisational growth and development: are new organisations emerging at local level, managed by adults, and/or children and young people, focusing on issues of childhood poverty, which successfully access the LNF and develop activities, projects and schemes which benefit children and young people? As noted in the case study work and data analysis, there is plenty of evidence that this is happening and the fact that many of the organisations applying have not formally registered their existence with the Charity Commission is an indication of their relatively informal voluntary sector status.

However, there is also evidence that there has been a significant proportion of spend on groups which have been in existence for some time and are perhaps less likely to be locally-controlled (in the sense of being at the neighbourhood level). That such groups are using the LNF to extend their *range* of activity may, however,

work towards capacity-building at the local level i.e. this may, nonetheless, be an effective use of resources in terms of achieving some of the overall objectives of the LNF. This will need to be explored carefully. Nonetheless, as noted above, we would in any case expect the balance of grant applications/giving to change over time as the LNF is marketed more effectively at the local level, as the skills of outreach are honed and as the requirement precluding repeat applications necessarily means that LNFs will have to access this more hard-to-reach market.

Another way of examining the issue of capacity-building is to consider the extent to which the profile of the objectives of groups making applications changes, moving from what are seen as the softer goals of aspirations and experience towards the more challenging objectives of encouraging the voice of the child or having some economic impact on local communities. This would imply a process of development, that is, that groups are enabled to learn, to develop skills and confidence and to address more challenging tasks. Although there are some discrete examples of the latter – activities which have promoted self-esteem amongst disabled children, the establishment of breakfast clubs – the extent to which these represent a strong trend cannot as yet be known.

Another aspect of capacity-building lies in the development of skills and expertise within groups and organisations and, in particular, in individuals taking leadership roles within organisations. Again, there is some evidence from the case study work to date that the LNF does offer new opportunities for individuals to develop their own capacities, and some examples of individual adults using their experience within the LNF as a stepping stone to advantage in the labour market. However, it is far too early to make a considered judgement on this issue and further tracking of individuals and groups throughout the period of the study is required and, potentially, through further longitudinal work. It would, however, be useful if local monitoring could include data on the development of employment opportunities as a result of LNF engagement with local volunteer helpers.

Next, there is the question of hearing the voice of the child, which reflects one of the key goals of the LNF as a whole. As we have noted earlier, the present evaluation is not particularly focused on how this is best done, since there is already a considerable literature on this subject both in the academic and policy contexts (e.g. Willow 1997; NEF 1998; Craig 2000; Kane 2000; Craig 2003) which points to the need for sustainable and sensitive developmental work with children and young people rather than, as has often been the case, organising one-off consultations with little or no follow-up work. Instead, the evaluation is considering whether this approach is happening within the LNF. Interviews with national policy actors left us with the sense that somewhat differing emphases were being given to the goal of providing a vehicle for children and young people to have a voice in policy and service decisions. This may reflect the shifting relationship between the LNF and the Children's Fund; the shape of the latter appears to have emerged after the format of the LNF had more or less been developed and the Children's Fund itself continues to give considerable prominence in national guidance to encouraging the participation of children and young people in developing services. However, as we understand it, this does not preclude the encouragement of the development of the voice of the child being a continuing goal for the LNF.

By consulting children and young people, and by proposing to consult with them more strategically over the terms of the evaluation, this evaluation has reflected what we took to be an important goal of the LNF. Feedback from children and young people has generally been positive to date. The telephone survey reported in chapter 4 suggests, for example, that about two-thirds of projects involve children and young people in running groups or projects. However, other results from the telephone survey and the interviews with the

local administrators (chapters 4 and 3 respectively) indicate some confusion about what this, in practice, entails and our case study evidence suggests that the number of projects which could be said to be *led* by children and young people (as opposed to those where they are simply involved or consulted) is actually fairly small. This is an area for further exploration but we have assumed that building capacity amongst children and young people is an important part of the more generalised objective of capacity-building amongst local deprived communities.

Similarly, understanding the longer-term impacts of the LNF on particular individuals and whether participation can be said to have empowered children and young people through the development of new skills and abilities, new knowledge and the capacity to come from the margins into the mainstream (or, as one national policy respondent put it ‘get onto the radar’), has to be the subject of a more considered judgement. However, it is clear from the evidence that a higher proportion of those applying for funds under the ‘children’s voice’ heading have been rejected. This may be because it is more difficult to frame these projects without an element of risk, and therefore applications are rejected; but there may be some other explanation. For example, some panel members and administrators may not be clear about what it means to give children a voice or they may not be committed to it. Other research shows, for example, that allowing children a voice is often quite contentious even for practitioners committed to hearing children’s views in policy and service settings, even those where children are the key focus of these settings. These issues will continue to be explored during the remainder of the evaluation.

Contradictorily, perhaps, the analysis of the application data suggests, however, that there may be some implicit assumptions (even judgements) being made by panels about both children’s voices (discussed above) and also about the commitment levels of applicants. This is reflected in the fact that projects with more volunteers and less paid staff seem more likely to be successful (a finding according with our initial analysis of administrative data – see Appendix 2), as are those projects which are cheaper. Although this appears to indicate that the fund may well be meeting the objective of targeting projects which are more embryonic and smaller, these same characteristics, as far as capacity- building goes, may not, as noted above, promote durability. The balance that is being struck at the local level between ‘getting more for less’ as opposed to ‘investing to gain rewards’ needs, therefore, to be explored further with grant panels.

## **7.5 The LNF and child poverty**

Strategically, one of the key questions facing the LNF is what is its contribution to reducing childhood poverty? The answer to this question hinges in part on how poverty is understood; is it ‘merely’ material poverty (i.e. lack of income and the deprivation that may bring) or is it, for example, poverty of experience or aspiration? Interviews at national and local levels gave a variety of dissonant views in answer to this question and therefore, views on whether the activities of the LNF reduces poverty were similarly varied. In strictly monetary terms, for example, it seems self-evident (and was to many respondents) that the funds available to the LNF (£150m over five years or, say, around £17.50 per annum per 0-19 year old living in a family claiming income-related benefits, in England) are unlikely to make a significant impact in financial terms. The LNF has, to date, retained an explicit focus on childhood poverty although most feedback suggests – realistically - that the LNF can only be understood as a very modest contributor to this strategic goal in more obvious monetary ways. In addition, although, as a preliminary analysis of the administrative data suggest, the pattern of grants made fits well with patterns of high average levels of child poverty within the LNF areas studied, further analysis will be needed to be sure that the groups accessing funds *within* these areas are themselves largely focused on children and young people suffering disadvantage.

In this context, and based on perceptions drawn from a range of respondents, we have been encouraged to judge the impact of the LNF in more strategic terms and in two ways i.e. that first it demonstrates the government's commitment to meeting child poverty and second that it does so in a way which engages with children and young people, their families and communities effectively. To do this, in addition to work already planned, a first approach will be therefore to seek (further) external views on the LNF from key policy actors. This will consist in most part of re-interviews with respondents interviewed earlier in the study (see chapter 2). The second approach will be to evaluate the LNF as part of a stable of inter-linked initiatives addressing aspects of child poverty as a whole. Evidence to date suggests that the links with the Children's Fund, with which the LNF was most closely associated and which many respondents felt ought to be significant, are weak and with other strategic initiatives even weaker. Thus, if the LNF were to provide added value beyond the impact of the grants, this would require some strategic linkage between it and other initiatives and it is not clear, as yet, if this will become an explicit goal of the common small grants scheme which is being discussed at a more strategic cross-departmental level within government.

## **7.6 The impacts of the LNF on beneficiaries**

Questions relating to the impact of the LNF on beneficiaries can be summarised within eight themes as follows:

First, the impacts of the LNF on actual beneficiaries. The benefits of the LNF for the children and young people, their parents and friends, and on the communities in which they live - has been discussed at some length above (chapter 5) in the review of data from the case study areas and will not be repeated here in detail. In brief, what this data reveal is first and foremost a range of positive impacts for all key actors.

Secondly, it is also clear – for example from the case study work, together with the more tentative comments made by LNF Local Administrators to the telephone survey - that impacts can ripple outwards from one group of beneficiaries to others. However, the extent to which this process can be taken as an index of durability over time, either for the individuals involved or as a sign of broader community development, might only be capable of being judged over a longer time period and beyond the scope of the present study. One strategy worth considering may be to build on the fact that 'the usual suspects' (i.e. more organised groups) have accessed the fund and use them within the context of some kind of partnership arrangement with smaller groups to ensure the latter's continuity.

Thirdly, in relation to the question of beneficiary impact, sustainability remains an important issue and it is worth underlining here the potential negative effect of the time limits placed on the fund noted above. Many groups funded or potentially to be funded are embryonic, with few resources and little experience and these are seemingly the key target group. Whilst the LNF grant may help them get going, the level of grant and its time limit may not be sufficient for a sustainable future. In thinking about individuals involved in projects, another impact of the short time-frame is that the children and young people benefiting now will, as they mature, inevitably move quickly out of projects, leading also to a possible drop-off of associated volunteer parents and interested others. The longer-term impact on poverty may therefore be undermined by such processes unless those moving out of the LNF arena are replaced by others moving in.

Fourthly, there seems little doubt that in all of the areas in which fieldwork is occurring, there is a widening (and, more slowly, deepening) of the range of new activities taking place in identified areas of deprivation. It is, however, important to be clear that 'new' activities are activities new to the particular context in which they

are occurring, even though they might not be recognised as new by those outside the areas more generally familiar with these kinds of activities involving children and young people. The telephone survey suggests, for example, that more than a quarter of all activities funded were new to the area. However, although there are important examples – such as groups involving children and young people with learning disabilities - we have to date rather more limited evidence of the extent to which this increased range of local activities includes, for example, the development of new specialist services for groups with particular needs or traditionally more marginalised groups.

Fifthly, in terms of volunteer engagement, there is evidence of more adults becoming engaged with leading groups and activities, with most comment focused on these volunteers being adults known to the children, particularly as parents and friends. However, we would need to explore the extent to which these are locally-based adults or ‘outsiders’ in order to assess issues of local capacity-building, especially given that the level of children and young people-led activities and groups seems relatively small to date.

Sixthly, there is encouraging evidence that the child protection policy, whilst difficult initially for some groups to grapple with, is beginning to become part of the LNF landscape, and outreach workers and local applicants are, in general, beginning to work with it effectively. We have heard of only a very few groups for which it has become a completely insuperable barrier to application; at worst it appears to slow down the application process, to require more intensive support from outreach and, for a very few, to make the application process more complicated. However, as noted above, what this policy means *in practice* for child protection cannot be guaranteed.

Seventhly, in terms of local communities and community-based decision-making, there is less clear-cut evidence about impact. Clearly a network of LNFs has been established which, from the perspective of the (former) CYPUs, is a local network with its own autonomous systems for decision-making in place (with the tensions with the centre that this brings). However, from the perspective of a small group on a deprived peripheral estate seeking funding, the LNF, which is characteristically and, at present, unavoidably, embedded in the more formal end of the voluntary sector and might be based forty miles away within a different conurbation, would not fit any definition of ‘local’ which they would recognise, despite the attempts of some LNFs to decentralise their operations. There is a linked question here which relates to the issue of inclusion and the position, in particular, of black and minority ethnic groups which were one of the more marginalised groups most frequently highlighted to us through the case study work. Although evidence from the mainstream case studies and the pilot shows black and minority ethnic (BME) groups accessing the LNF - and this appears to be borne out by the preliminary analysis of applications data - there is nevertheless some disquiet arising from feedback from the case study areas. This is that access is occurring in areas where it is fairly straightforward to do so - i.e. those areas with relatively large BME populations and a strong history of the BME voluntary sector - but that elsewhere it is failing to do so anywhere near as effectively as it might. As noted, there are systematic problems in the LNF which act as barriers to BME groups, such as the lack of administrative instruments in languages other than English and the lack of use of interpreters and translators. It may also be that some LNFs, like many more established agencies with the voluntary sector, are not as well-equipped in terms of their past practice to undertake this role as they need to be. This may require some rethinking of the outreach function since general all-purpose outreach workers may not be the best way to approach this issue; there is considerable evidence from other voluntary sector research (e.g. Craig *et al.* 2001) suggesting that work which aims to involve BME groups within a universal framework has to incorporate a strong element of very specific targeting and capacity-building.

Finally, connected to this is the question of inclusion. Early LNF documentation refers to the combating of social exclusion but, in the light of comments from some national policy respondents, it is important to be clear what this means in terms of impact. For example, some of the BME projects funded by the LNF are clearly building capacity within particular BME communities (what Putnam [2001] might call bonding capital) but are not necessarily building capacity across to other communities ('bridging capital') defined by their ethnicity. This was noted with some concern by one national policy respondent. However, there is no evidence available to us that the reverse happens i.e. that so-called 'majority' communities are required to make their services equally accessible to minority communities. Given the demography of the areas where many LNF projects are funded, which are mono-cultural, this may be an unrealistic goal for many; however, we would be concerned that this issue, if it continues to be pertinent, is one which is seen as requiring guidance for all groups and not simply those from minority communities. It is an issue which bears more widely on the question of community cohesion at a local level.

## **7.7 Conclusion**

This interim report gives grounds for considerable – if qualified – optimism about the performance of the LNF to date. Although both the telephone survey and the case study evidence suggest areas where the performance of the LNF might be improved, many of these problem areas are neither substantial nor structural. They consist of pushing current trends a bit further - making forms clearer, making eligibility clearer (including what the LNF won't support etc). Many of these problems may also be assuaged when the new LNF grants manual becomes more firmly bedded in.

There are, however, other more structural issues, which we have raised in the course of this report, often from a number of perspectives, which will need to be monitored. These include: the need to find reliable ways to reach the most marginalised communities and groups; the issues of capacity-building and sustainability; the role of the national Call Centre; and the position of BME groups. These will be explored, as far as possible, in the remainder of the life of the present evaluation. There are also some other important issues which have been raised frequently by respondents – not least the issues of sustainability and long-term impacts – which are beyond the scope of the present evaluation

In addition, there is also a strategic issue concerning the profile of the LNF and its relation to the (former) CYPUP. On the one hand, the LNF does not feature much in national publicity about the work of the (former) CYPUP, certainly in comparison with its nearest policy neighbour, the Children's Fund. This means that many of the clear achievements of the LNF, which are detailed in this report, risk going unrecognised and unreported at the national level, an important issue given the question of the overall sustainability of the programme in the longer term. From the perspective of applicants and those benefiting from the fund, however, the fact that grants are administered locally, quickly and with little bureaucracy, with support and outreach, is of considerable benefit. For them, the LNF may in fact be seen – as has been reported to us - as the more significant player, with, as noted, awareness of the (former) CYPUP remaining relatively very low and thus less likely to affect people's perceptions of the fund. This disparity between views from 'above' and 'below' underscores therefore the key questions raised in this report about ways of ensuring the accessibility of the fund whilst protecting its immediate impact and about the tension between the competing needs for overall consistency and local flexibility.

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# Appendix 1: The Economic Evaluation

The economic evaluation is contingent on other aspects of the evaluation being carried out and on the data that is collected through qualitative fieldwork and quantitative surveys. Its significance will therefore grow as the evaluation itself develops. This Appendix outlines the purpose and approach of the economic evaluation.

## The aims of the economic evaluation

The aims of the economic evaluation part of the LNF evaluation project are two-fold

- to explore the cost-effectiveness of the distribution of LNF funds to meet objectives relative to other similar programmes; and
- to model the potential costs and benefits of the impact of LNF funds.

Economic evaluation is a set of techniques for comparing the costs (or inputs) and consequences (outcomes) of a number of alternative programmes or activities. In order to make the comparisons, many of the inputs and outcomes are valued in a common term, money, so that programmes or activities can be directly compared. If everything is valued in monetary terms the economic evaluation is called cost-benefit analysis. If programmes are expressed in terms of net costs per unit of some common outcome, for example, net cost per reduced family in poverty, this termed a cost-effectiveness analysis. Such economic evaluation techniques, applied especially to health care and environmental policies, have been conducted with the primary aim of yielding a definite answer to the question of whether the programme in question is good value compared to an alternative. This makes it a potential powerful technique although most economists would suggest that the results of such studies should only be one of the criteria used by policy-makers in taking decisions.

Along with all other public spending, social welfare programmes have to demonstrate good value for money. However, there are a number of issues that arise in applying traditional economic evaluation techniques to such expenditure and these are beginning to be explored in what is still a very limited literature on the subject (for example Shiell and Hawe 1996; Byford and Sefton 2002; Sefton 2003).

These issues can be divided into those impacting on the implementation of current evaluation techniques and those challenging the basis of the methodology as applied to social welfare policy. The technical problems occur in the following areas: the choice of potential alternative programmes to evaluate (the choice may be very limited); the choice and valuation of outcomes; and the attribution of outcomes to programmes (which becomes more complicated when the programme being evaluated is one amongst many which are operating at the same time). The more fundamental debates of the appropriateness of traditional economic methodologies includes the focus on total outcome rather than distributional or equity goals; the emphasis on the overall relationship between inputs and outcomes (the what), rather than how these outcomes are generated (the how/why questions) – a black box approach; the focus on individual rather than community outcomes; and the positive nature of economics versus constructivism approach taken by many other social scientists (Burrows *et al.* 1996; Craig 2002; Sefton 2003). There are still few economic evaluations of social

welfare interventions and therefore there remains the question as to whether such techniques are useful or indeed could give misleading information.

Potentially all these issues apply to the evaluation of LNF both in terms of its efficiency in distributing funds to the appropriate target group in comparison with other methods (the first aim above) and the longer-term question of the overall costs and consequences of the impact of LNF funds (the second aim).

## **Development of the methodology**

In developing the methodology to be adopted for this study, it has therefore been important to ensure that the economic design builds upon and does not conflict with the main design of the evaluation in which qualitative and quantitative methodologies are being combined. It was also important to ensure that the economic component did not become intrusive. In the main components of the work, information is therefore being collected on the inputs and outcomes of the LNF process which can be re-analysed for the economic component of the study. However, as noted above, this implies that the economic component will, of necessity, be timed to follow the other analyses.

One of the major issues with applying economic evaluation is the choice, definition and valuation of outcomes. In economic terms outcomes have often been labelled “benefits” but this can be somewhat misleading as some social welfare programmes can have a range of negative as well as positive outcomes. It is therefore more accurate to label outcomes as consequences. In social welfare evaluations, the situation becomes complex simply because of the range of potential outcomes and additionally, especially as the LNF involves children and young people, potential impacts could have consequences over a long time period. There is an additional problem of having evaluative designs that can show how different outcomes can be attributed to the programme concerned and not to other factors. The evaluators of community preventive health and educational programmes have faced similar problems and suggested the need for a conceptual model. Anderson *et al.* (2003) used this approach in their systematic review of early childhood development programmes. Similar suggestions have been made for evaluating community and economic development and Trochim and Tobias (2003) have proposed the development of a concept map.

The construction of a conceptual map of processes, outputs and outcomes of how the LNF funds may impact on young people and their communities is an important part of this project. This map is currently under construction, based upon the literature, the pilot case study and the national policy interviews, summarised in chapter 2. As part of the development it was thought useful to involve the policy and research teams of the (former) CYPUP in defining those attributes and the evaluation team met with the policy team to take this forward. Where appropriate, the aim is to use the economic techniques of conjoint analysis to attempt to see if it would be possible to obtain some idea of the values given to the different characteristics of the LNF programme (Ryan and Farrar 2000).

There are three other major components to the economic evaluation element which have been developed over the first year. The first part is the costing model for the distribution of LNF funds. From the pilot study, national interviews and some of the quantitative data available, the components of the cost model have been identified. The main components are, leaving aside the cost of the present evaluation: the national administration of the scheme (which has changed in the first year of the evaluation both in terms of the national arms-length organisation managing the LNF and the organisational structure within the DfES responsible for managing it on behalf of government); the national Call Centre; local administration; and the

individuals and groups seeking the grants. From the pilot work it was clear that for the individuals and groups, the costs of form-filling and application were generally modest although other important issues arose.

At the national level, the changes over time in organisation and the financial impact of the move from contracting with a national but external contractor (the Community Foundation Network) to handling contractual relationships within the CYPUP itself will need to be assessed as may the move to other structural arrangements – including the absorption of the CYPUP into a new structure within the DfES - if and when they occur within the lifetime of the evaluation. While there is a generally a need to separate out the development stage from the normal running costs for a scheme, this may prove difficult for the LNF given the changes that have occurred and are continuing to occur. It is more straightforward to value the resources consumed by the national Call Centre. At the local level, the pilot and the national interviews highlight the likelihood of considerable variation in types of activities and this picture is confirmed by early data returns from the main case studies. From an economic perspective some differences in activities could be associated with different outcomes. In an extreme case, low spending on outreach may generate fewer applications and also result in less local administrative costs as there would be less competition for the funds available and fewer applications to process from another area which put considerable effort into outreach and generating demand for funds. These issues will be explored further across the case study areas in order to be able to model different costing structures and how these may interact with applicants. It is proposed that these analyses will be used to provide examples of good and problematic practices.

These issues are particularly important for the next component of the economic part of the programme: the choice of comparator programmes. Initial discussions have taken place with the CYPUP research team and contact been made with evaluators of the Community Chests and Community Learning Chests. Further contacts involved in other evaluations are currently being followed up. In undertaking any comparative work there will be a need to examine whether there are any useful comparative indicators and whether calculations such as the net cost per £ awarded or the net cost per £ awarded adjusted for deprivation, can be interpreted in any meaningful way. This will in part depend on whether the full resource costs of administering different schemes can be identified as is being attempted for the LNF funds.

Investigations are continuing with regard to finding other comparators. Enquiries to other government departments through the CYPUP identified only the following as potential comparators and none closely follows the structure and goals of the LNF: the National Lottery Charities Board, Children in Need (BBC) and the Community Empowerment Funds managed through the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. We have also reviewed a range of charitable grant-making trusts to see if there are any viable comparators in terms of a focus on grants to children and young people in deprived areas.

The final element of the economic analysis involves attempting to model the combination of inputs and outcomes or costs and consequences. The main question being addressed is to examine the costs and consequences of the LNF compared to the situation where no LNF existed. This involves bringing together work from the qualitative and quantitative evaluations and therefore draws on the rest of the research reported elsewhere in this interim report. One additional element is deriving unit costs for the different potential impacts of the LNF fund in order to model different scenarios. This methodology will follow that developed in Godfrey *et al.* (2002)

## **Interim Progress and programme of future work**

The methodology being adopted for the project means that economic analyses will follow the main analysis of the project. The aim in the first year has been to develop the methodology to be adopted and collate data that will be used in the analysis. The proposed methodology does fit with Sefton's (2003) suggestions that economic evaluations of social welfare include using theory, qualitative analysis and discussions with stakeholders. The work has been progressed in all four specific areas of the economic component of the study although there are no results to be presented at this interim stage.

### *1) Conceptual Map*

This is currently the subject of consultation within the evaluation team and will be finalised early in 2004.

### *2) Costing Model*

Some additional data are required before the national element can be provisionally costed. These estimates will also be circulated for comment early in 2004. Some local estimates from the pilot work will be constructed and further work undertaken as the case study material becomes available. These will be fed back to various stakeholders for comment as they become available throughout 2004.

### *3) Comparator programmes*

As noted above, suggestions and contacts have been provided by the project team and CYPUP, and other possibilities are being explored: and these are currently being followed up.. A plan will be produced based on the data available from other programmes to suggest how available data could be used in conjunction from the results of the LNF costing model.

### *4) Economic modelling*

This will be the final part of the research work building on the results from the case study work. The models will be developed further as the results from the main analysis become available.

## Appendix 2: Secondary data analysis: specimen Tables

A preliminary analysis was undertaken of the administrative data collected at the ‘centre’ and based on returns regarding applications from individual LNFs. This showed not only that there were substantial technical problems with the assembling of the data – which have since been addressed – but that there were areas where it was not clear what the data meant: for example, definitions of year 1 and year 1 awards, which made comparability between LNFs or more strategic commentary difficult. In addition, the collection of some information was incomplete, for example in relation to categories such as ‘working with other groups or not’, whether applicants have used the outreach or publicity services offered, and information on the child protection policy issue. It was therefore decided not to reproduce the initial analysis of this data in this report but to return to an analysis of the administrative data in the final report from the team. We have, however, reproduced a few specimen tables below to give some idea of the kinds of analysis which may be possible once the database has been fully cleaned up. These specimen tables show the ways in which the qualitative data can be illuminated by more wide-ranging quantitative analysis.

**Table 1:** Registered charity and successful or rejected applications

	Award received	Rejected
	%	%
<i>Registered charity</i>	49.6	54.4
<i>Not registered charity</i>	49.1	44.4
<i>Missing</i>	1.3	1.2
<i>Total</i>	3878	1517

**Table 2:** Who the application says will benefit

	Award received	Rejected
	%	%
<i>Women/girls</i>	42.7	43.0
<i>Men/boys</i>	41.3	41.4
<i>Disabled children and young people</i>	33.4	33.5
<i>Parents</i>	31.4	31.9
<i>Total</i>	3878	1517

**Table 3:** Geographical distribution of grants awarded in Year 1: distribution over LNF areas

<i>LNFAREA</i>	Award Year 1			Poverty rank (ward)	
	Mean	No. of cases N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N
<i>AVO</i>	£4,198	52	£2,100	2804	72
<i>BED</i>	£4,747	25	£2,118	4369	39
<i>BIR</i>	£5,577	200	£2,049	1492	226
<i>BLA</i>	£5,101	147	£1,985	1993	171
<i>CHE</i>	£5,128	51	£2,037	4343	33
<i>COR</i>	£5,422	52	£1,848	2282	52
<i>CUM</i>	£4,388	30	£2,051	3519	49
<i>DER</i>	£5,262	31	£1,788	2567	37
<i>DEV</i>	£4,414	45	£2,160	2561	54
<i>DOR</i>	£5,056	20	£1,851	2712	24
<i>DUR</i>	£4,348	54	£2,507	2149	63
<i>ESU</i>	£4,479	63	£2,178	3470	83
<i>HAM</i>	£5,401	26	£1,866	3659	35
<i>HUM</i>	£4,431	134	£2,254	2136	185
<i>KEN</i>	£3,662	231	£2,027	3408	264
<i>LAN</i>	£4,507	185	£2,305	2674	223
<i>LCE</i>	£5,193	64	£1,791	2088	109
<i>LCR</i>	£5,269	31	£1,935	2091	41
<i>LEH</i>	£4,904	22	£2,025	1577	37
<i>LEI</i>	£5,192	65	£2,028	2391	75
<i>LEN</i>	£5,532	35	£1,725	673	50
<i>LIN</i>	£3,788	51	£2,371	2984	56
<i>LNE</i>	£5,282	40	£1,489	2926	56
<i>LNO</i>	£5,098	75	£1,719	1157	130
<i>LNW</i>	£4,825	91	£2,261	2586	172
<i>LSE</i>	£4,185	156	£1,829	1713	315

<i>LWE</i>	£4,758	35	£2,128	3387	45
<i>LWF</i>	£4,950	71	£1,931	1932	127
<i>MAN</i>	£4,598	307	£2,294	1578	380
<i>MER</i>	£4,481	266	£2,173	1270	245
<i>NHU</i>	£4,356	32	£2,370	2777	23
<i>NOF</i>	£3,940	89	£2,211	2956	79
<i>NOT</i>	£4,087	136	£2,334	1966	163
<i>NYO</i>	£4,378	63	£2,177	3661	71
<i>SHR</i>	£4,476	22	£2,258	3332	28
<i>STA</i>	£4,022	94	£2,127	2958	126
<i>SUF</i>	£5,132	27	£1,882	4363	46
<i>SYO</i>	£4,849	147	£2,131	1742	176
<i>TEE</i>	£4,932	86	£1,993	1595	84
<i>TYN</i>	£4,098	220	£2,235	1565	223
<i>WAR</i>	£5,521	24	£1,900	3492	25
<i>WYO</i>	£4,707	274	£2,169	1513	415
<i>Total</i>	£4,599	3869*	£2,172	2167	4907

\*Seven pilot cases have been removed from this table

# Appendix 3: Specimen topic guide

## LOCAL NETWORK EVALUATION

### SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS – FIRST VISIT

#### Key Objectives: To explore successful applicants’:

- Awareness of the LNF and reasons for applying for it
- Experience of the application process from start to finish
- Use of funding and impact on service provided
- Reflections on the LNF and whether meeting its aims
- Views about possible changes to the way fund is designed and delivered

#### 1. Introduction

- About University of Hull/BMRB
- Commissioned by CYPUP
- Aims of the study: to assess the effectiveness of the way LNFs are allocated to applicants, and whether the funds available are helping to reduce poverty and exclusion amongst the target populations
- Introduce tape recorder/reassure about confidentiality
- Remind them about length of interview (about 1-1½ hrs)

#### 2. Background Information

- Nature of organisation and service provided; target client group
- Role within this
- Length of time in operation; client base etc
- How funded
- Whether young people involved in the development or delivery of services

#### 3. Awareness of the LNF

- How they first heard about LNF
- What information did they hear; views about this
- Initial impressions of the LNF (at this stage)
  - its purpose, target group etc
- Awareness about the requirements for qualifying for LNF; views about this



#### 4. Applying for the LNF

(Explore the process in detail and any anxieties people had about applying e.g. some applicants may have contacted the Call Centre for an application form and then hesitated about applying)

- Investigate time period between becoming aware and deciding to get an application form
- How did they get an application form; sources of this information
- Talk through contact with the Call Centre; who they spoke to; views about this contact
- When did they decide to apply for the LNF; reasons why decided to apply for LNF; Whether considered applying for any other funding; reasons why
- Talk through the process of deciding to apply; and whether they talked to anyone during this time; who; with what result
- Explore whether any concerns or reservations at any stage about applying for the LNF; nature of these; at what point in the process
  - e.g. need to have effective child protection policies in place
- Ease or difficulty in completing application form; nature of difficulties; whether and how resolved
- How did they develop their child protection policy
- How did they demonstrate in their application that they would ensure the participation of children and young people
- Whether sought guidance/ further information about their application; from whom; impact of this on their decisions to apply/or completion of the application process
- Whether any contact with the outreach and support teams, local administrators; nature of this contact; views about the help/advice received
- Date when submitted their application

## 5. Receiving the LNF

Talk through experiences of LNF after completing application form

- What happened after they had submitted their application form
- Whether they had any contact with the grant panel or administrator about their application form (i.e. was there a decision deferred to let them get organised); nature of this; views about this contact
- When did they hear the outcome; how long did it take; views about this
- How much did they get; how long is funding for; views about the level of funding they received; did it meet their needs
- What other funding sources do they have
- When did they receive the money
- How was paid to them
- Whether they encountered any difficulties during this time; nature of these and how resolved
- What did they see the LNF money being for; reasons why
- Talk through how they have used their LNF
- Ease or difficulty in managing the money
- Whether encountered any difficulties as a result of receiving LNF; nature of these; whether and how resolved

## 6. Impact of LNF on their organisation

- What difference has the LNF made to the service they provide
  - help with development
  - ongoing work
  - separate project
- How do they monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their service
- How does LNF funding compare with other small grants they may have received

- What difference has it made to their clients
- How far have they been able to support BME groups, people with disabilities, vulnerable groups such as refugee and asylum seekers
- What difference has it made to them personally or other staff members
- Any other impact(s) of the LNF so far
- Future plans for the service they are providing
- How secure is their future

## **7. Views about and reflections on the LNF**

- Views about the LNF; perceived advantages/ disadvantages
- How do they judge its success; by what criteria/performance indicators
- Views about how the fund is being administered; the application form, process; and level of support available from the Call Centre, local administrators etc
- Views about whether LNF is achieving its aims; what about in the longer term; What evidence are respondents basing this on
  - to reduce underachievement and the overall effects of child poverty
  - to ensure funding reaches those best able to provide local solutions to child poverty
  - to reach children and young people most in need
  - to help children and young people to express their own views
- How far is the LNF helping
  - to develop new groups rather than support existing groups / organisations
  - to support existing SMALL groups to do new things (e.g. this may be to change /develop and existing project)
  - to encourage local volunteering; by whom
- Views about the way the LNF is promoted and advertised
- Views about the overall level of LNF funding available
- Views about the level of grants available

- Views about the criteria used to determine who receives funding

## **8. Suggested changes and improvements**

- Suggested changes and improvements to the future of the LNF:
  - the idea and purpose of the LNF
  - its design
  - the way the LNF is administered
  - the way funds are allocated and distributed
  - the support arrangements
  - any other changes
  
- Any other suggestions for/changes to the future of the scheme

**Recap on the aims and check whether they have anything else to raise that has not been covered during the discussion**

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Produced by the Department for Education and Skills

ISBN 1 84478 200 X  
Ref No: RR520

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