
Islington Council's Community Chest (ICCC) Annual Review, June 2026

Introduction

Islington Council's Community Chest provides grants of up to £5,000 to support small organisations that, with local knowledge and reach, make a huge difference to local residents. Priority is given to organisations based in the borough working with people that experience poverty and isolation. Islington Council's Community Chest actively seeks to fund projects that are inclusive, regardless of age, culture, disabilities, ethnic origin, gender, nationality, race, religion or sexual orientation and many of the funded projects support people who cut across these protected characteristics. Funded groups are often reliant on local volunteers, people dedicated to improving their local communities who reach out to support people in need.

Applications for Islington Council's Community Chest are considered by a Panel made up of Islington Councillors, Cripplegate Foundation Governors, members of Islington's Voluntary and Community Sector and two local residents, who as alumni of Islington Giving's participatory grant making programme, have some grant making experience.

In 2025/26, the ICCC programme continued to offer two application rounds reduced from three following a review of the programme undertaken in 2024. Despite the reduction in the number of application rounds, the programme continues to support a wide range of projects, reaching out to a diverse mix of Islington residents who typically do not access services or who have limited social networks. Following the 2024 review, Islington Council's Community Chest priorities were also amended to align with the Council's 2030 missions¹. Groups applied under the following five themes that together aim to improve the lives of Islington residents:

- Community Wealth Building
- Empowering Lives
- Child Friendly Islington
- A Greener, Healthier Islington
- A Safe Place to Call Home

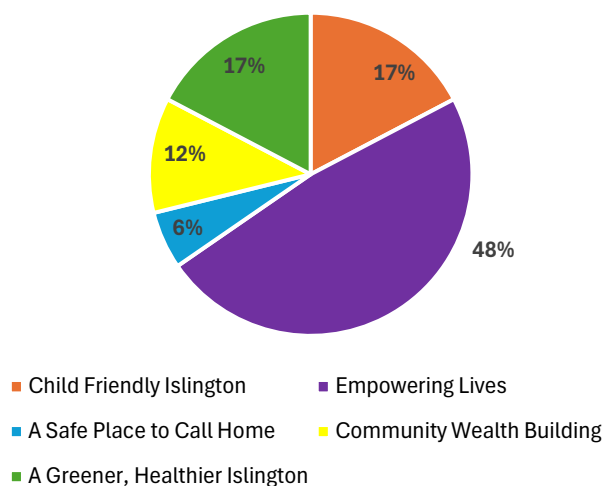
¹ [Islington Together 2030 summary | Islington Council](#)



Who Islington Council's Community Chest reached in 2025/2026

- 81 community groups applied to Islington Council's Community Chest in 2025-26
- 49 community groups (61% of applicants) were awarded funding, totaling grants of £217,140
- 15 (31%) of the 49 funded groups received Islington Council's Community Chest funding for the first time
- 13 (27%) of the 49 funded groups have received 5 or more grants

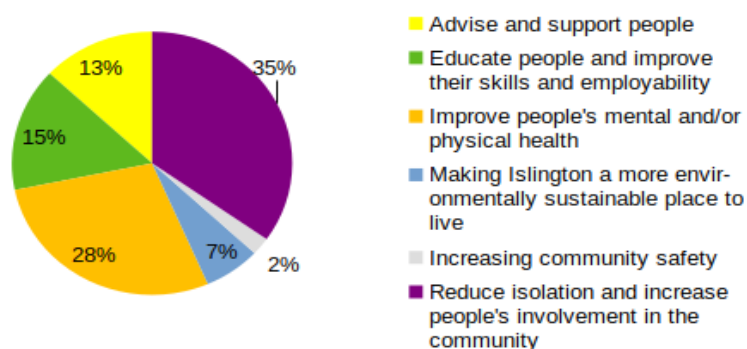
Funded Groups by Priority 2025/26



Who Islington Council's Community Chest reached in 2024/2025

- 78 community groups applied to Islington Council's Community Chest in 2024-25
- 46 community groups (59% of applicants) were awarded funding, totaling grants of £199,595
- 8 (17%) of the 46 funded groups received Islington Council's Community Chest funding for the first time
- 19 (41%) of the 46 funded groups have received 5 or more grants

Funded Groups by Priority 2024/25

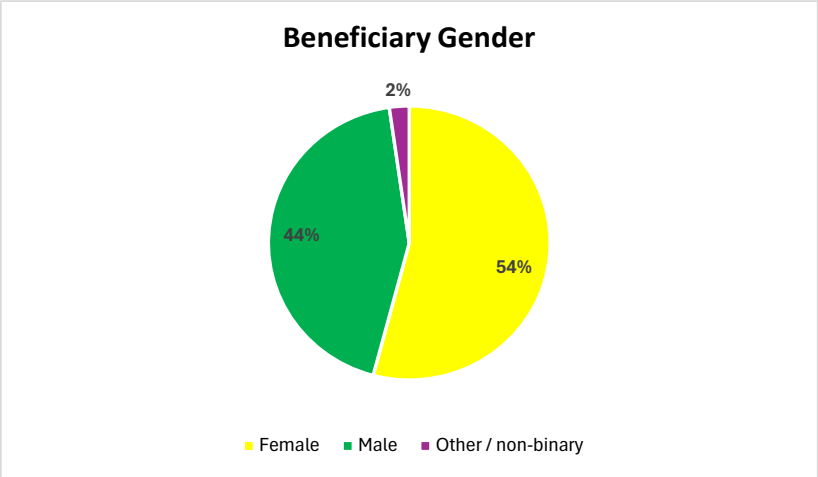
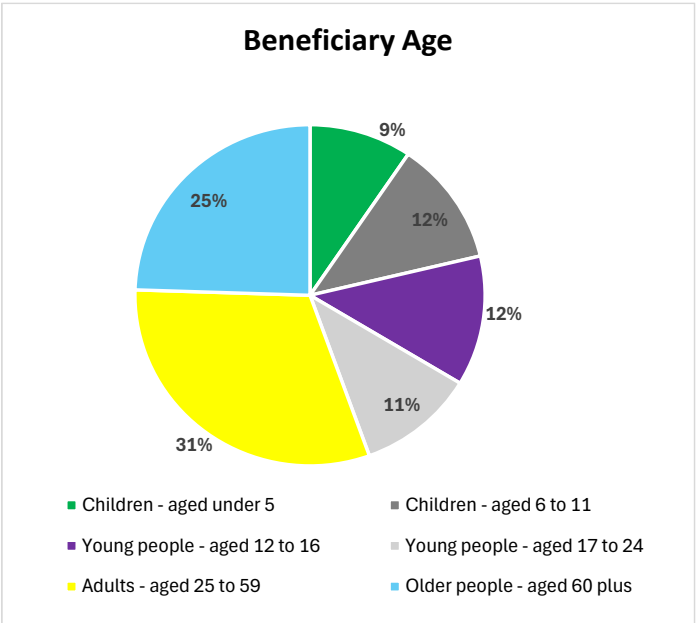
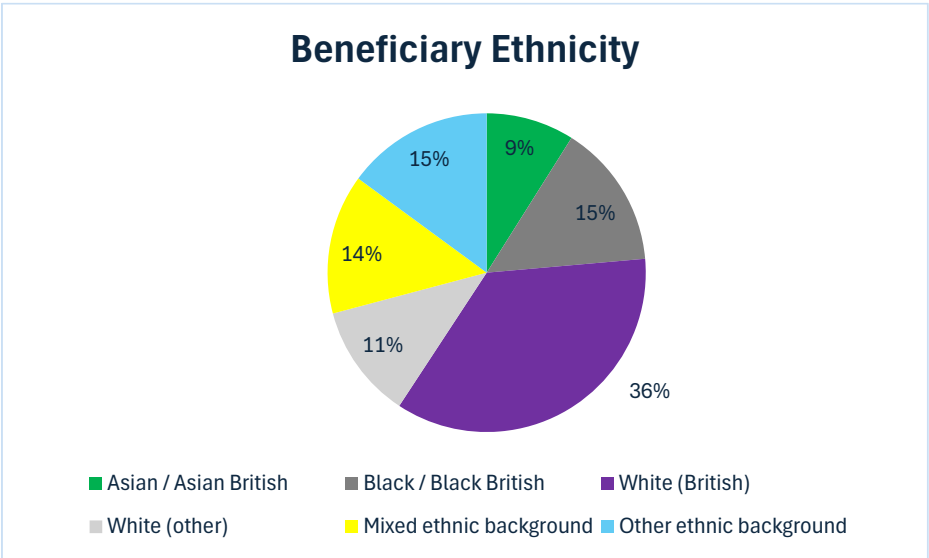


As the tables above illustrate, the number of applications to the ICCC Programme in 2025/26 increased compared to the previous year. There has also been a corresponding increase in the number of successful applicants, with 49 in 2025/26 compared to 46 the previous year. This indicates that the programme continues to receive good quality applications, while the 61% success rate also demonstrates that, despite the reduction in the number of funding rounds, applicants still have a good chance of receiving funding. This is important for a grass roots funding programme like the Community Chest. With more projects funded, overall grant spend increased by £17,545 compared to 2024/25. A £9,504 underspend was carried over into the 2025/26 ICCC budget from the previous year and £3,736 was returned to the programme budget from a previously unspent grant. This meant that although the grant spend was higher than the annual budget allocation of £204,000 the programme remained within budget for the year, with £100 carried forward into the 2026/27 budget.

The trend observed in 2024/25 towards a growing gap between the number of funded groups receiving five or more grants compared to those receiving funding for the first time appears to have reversed in 2025/26. As the programme has now stabilised with two rounds per year and regular deadlines, it appears that new groups are applying in higher numbers again. This is reflected in the fact that, for the first time, the programme has seen more first-time applicants (15) receive funding than long standing applicants (13 with five or more previous grants). Compared to 2024/25, the number of first-time applicants awarded funding has almost doubled (from 8 to 15). In contrast, the proportion of successful applications from groups that have been awarded five or more previous grants has also dropped from 41% in 2024/25 to 26% in 2025/26.

The two pie charts above compare the proportion of funded projects against each priority area. As the priorities have now changed following the 2024 programme review a like for like comparison cannot be made. However, it is interesting to note that as with the previous priorities, there appears to be one priority area under which more applications are funded (also mirrored in the number of applications received), with at least one other priority that struggles to attract applications and secure funding. For 2024/25 the priority area with the highest number of applications was Reducing Isolation while in 2025/26 it is Empowering Lives. As both are broad priority areas it is understandable how more applicants will fit what they aim to deliver under these headings but it is noticeable that an even bigger proportion (48%, representing close to half) of all applications were received under Empowering Lives in 2025/26, compared to just over a third (35%) for Reducing Isolation the previous year. A focus on community safety has remained a priority for both years (as A Safe Place to Call Home in 2025/26 and Increasing Community Safety in 2024/25). Historically this area has received the lowest number of applications, with less projects funded overall and this continues to be the case for 2025/26. However, it is noteworthy that in the current year there appears to be a slight increase in the proportion of funded groups under this priority area (from 2% to 6%). Two of the previous priority areas – Making Islington a More Environmentally Sustainable Place to Live and Improving People's Mental and Physical Health – have now been combined under one priority area – A Greener, Healthier Islington. Looking at the two separate priority areas in 2024/25 a combined 35% of total applications was received, dropping to just under half (17%), following the merger of the two in 2025/26. This may suggest that if the programme wishes to increase applications to previous levels under these priority areas, there may be some justification going forward in splitting these priority areas again. However, while this reduction is more than made up for by the increase under the Empowering Lives priority, when this priority area is set aside, it does appear that there is a more even distribution of funding across the remaining priority areas compared to the previous 2024/25 priority areas. It is also interesting to note that the final two priority areas that are quite closely aligned (Advice and Support in 2024/25 and Community Wealth Building in 2025/26) have continued to receive a comparable proportion of applications (13% and 12% respectively) across both years.

Facts and figures – who we reached in 2024/25



The charts above provide a breakdown of the ethnicity, age, and gender of all the people that have benefited from projects funded through Islington Council's Community Chest over the 2024/25 period. The data is derived from returned monitoring reports so provides an accurate reflection of the work undertaken.

Slightly higher compared to 2023/24, the breakdowns demonstrate that the ICCC programme continues to provide good reach for Black, Asian, minority ethnic or refugee communities, representing 53% (52% in 2023/24) of all beneficiaries, compared to 47% for White British/White Other). This compares favourably to the 32% non-white Islington population overall.

In terms of age groups, the highest overall proportion of beneficiaries in 2024/25 were adults aged between 25-59. While this is understandable given that it is also the widest age category, at 31%, this is lower compared to 2023/24 (36%). A quarter of overall beneficiaries are older people (60+) which has remained fairly consistent with the previous year (22%). The proportion of beneficiaries under the age of 5 (9%) has decreased compared to 2023/24 (12%), while the proportion of beneficiaries aged 6-11 has also decreased slightly from 14% to 12%, following an increase from the previous year. The proportion of beneficiaries for the 12-16 and 17-24 age groups have both increased compared to 2023/24. When looked at individually, the breakdowns of children and young people under the age of 24 may appear low. However, when taken together 44% of the overall beneficiaries of ICCC funded projects in 2024/25 are children and young people. Finally, it is positive to see that the gradual increase in the proportion of males benefiting from the funding programme continues, increasing from 41% to 44%, as well as an increase in beneficiaries reporting their gender as non-binary/other, reaching 2% in 2024/25.

Case-studies and examples of projects funding through the ICCC programme

[3 Powerful Reminders About Children & Young People's Mental Health from Room Counselling – Cripplegate Foundation](#)

More case-studies can be found here:

[Stories – Cripplegate Foundation](#)

List of grants

List of grants awarded April 2025 - March 2026

Child Friendly Islington			
Round 1 April 2025	Eritrean Youth Club	Extra-curricular activities	£4,550
Round 1 April 2025	Memory Gardens	Hand and Sky Program	£5,000
Round 1 April 2025	St Peter's Children and Young People's Activities Group (SPAG)	Summer Enrichment Programme	£5,000
Round 1 April 2025	Arco - Music for All	Arco: continuation and providing equity	£4,390
Round 1 April 2025	Make-Do Play	Make-Do Play	£5,000
Round 2 Nov 2025	Somali Education Centre	Somali Education Centre after school Club	£5,000
Round 2 Nov 2025	WeSwim CIO	Get Islington Swimming!	£5,000
Round 2 Nov 2025	WeJam Foundation	Project Continuation	£4,000
Round 2 Nov 2025	Room Counselling CIC	Counselling for children and young people at Elizabeth House.	£4,800

Community Wealth Building			
Round 1 April 2025	The Angel Canal Festival CIC	The Angel Canal Festival 2025	£5,000
Round 2 Nov 2025	Islington Turkish Kurdish Cypriot Women's Welfare Group	Advice Connect Service for BAME women	£5,000
Round 2 Nov 2025	PETRA	Popham Street Estate Our History, Our Community, Our Memories	£5,000

Empowering Lives			
Round 1 April 2025	Islington Panthers Basketball Club	Islington Panthers training sessions	£5,000
Round 1 April 2025	Amberliegh	Project Continuation	£3,000
Round 1 April 2025	Singalong Songs CIC	Bread and Song Festivals 2025	£4,500
Round 1 April 2025	Cut Moose	Tales of Hilldrop Crescent	£4,970
Round 1 April 2025	Kurdish Association for New Generations Abroad (KANGA)	Project Continuation	£5,000
Round 1 April 2025	Daylight Studio	New Music Session Lead	£5,000
Round 1 April 2025	Go Africa Community Hub CIC	A Place To belong	£5,000
Round 1 April 2025	GALBUR FOUNDATION	Hijabi Footy Fun (Empowering Muslim Girls Through Football)	£4,970
Round 1 April 2025	Aflah	Aflah women's health and wellbeing project	£3,000
Round 1 April 2025	AL-ABRAR FOUNDATION	Elevate: Skills for Life, Leadership, and Community	£5,000
Round 1 April 2025	Pakeman Primary School PTA	Project Continuation	£4,000
Round 1 April 2025	Mei Mei Social CIC	The Art Laboratory 2025	£4,500
Round 1 April 2025	It's More Than Music CIC	Her Voice	£4,000
Round 1 April 2025	Mafia Weekend	Community Film Collective	£4,000
Round 2 Nov 2025	Sunday Club	Sunday Club	£3,000

Round 2 Nov 2025	STEPPING STONE4 (SS4)	Project continuation	£4,900
Round 2 Nov 2025	Cally Connects Us	Bring & Share Social Club and You Are Worthy Drama	£5,000
Round 2 Nov 2025	Change, Act!	Act Two: Playing the Lead Role	£5,000
Round 2 Nov 2025	Allie's Art Club	Creative Hangouts	£5,000
Round 2 Nov 2025	Venus Blazing Music Trust	PROJECT CONTINUATION	£5,000
Round 2 Nov 2025	Read Easy Islington	First New Readers for 2025/2026 Project Continuation	£2,000
Round 2 Nov 2025	Rehabit	Addiction support focusing on dual diagnosis	£5,000
Round 2 Nov 2025	weeds school	Weeds School	£3,000
Round 2 Nov 2025	East London Metropolitan Opera (ELMO)	Music in the Ville	£5,000
Round 2 Nov 2025	Odd Eyes Theatre	Islington Inside Out: intergenerational mental health through drama project	£2,850

Greener, Healthier Islington			
Round 1 April 2025	Islington Climate Centre	Islington Climate Centre	£5,000
Round 1 April 2025	Archway Upcycling Group	Archway Cycling Group	£5,000
Round 2 Nov 2025	Fit Women Group	Project Continuation	£5,000
Round 2 Nov 2025	Olden Community Garden	Olden Community Garden core activities Project Continuation	£4,000
Round 2 Nov 2025	Yogashare CIC	Flex and Strength Yoga	£4,800
Round 2 Nov 2025	Urban Forest Tribe CIC	Project Continuation - SENDay Family Nature Sessions	£5,000
Round 2 Nov 2025	Earlstone Tenants and Residents Association	Earlstone Green Spaces Initiative	£2,500
Round 2 Nov 2025	Sapphic Bison	It's About Bloody Time for Trans Healthcare to get Better	£4,900
Round 2 Nov 2025	Caledonian Park Users Group	Caledonian Orchard Weaving	£870

A Safe Place to Call Home			
Round 1 April 2025	Survivors Can Shine	'Project Continuation'	£5,000
Round 2 Nov 2025	Federation of Iraqi Refugees	Empowering Communities: Iraqi and Kurdish Voices	£5,000
Round 2 Nov 2025	Go Full STEAM	Reality Check: A VR Experience	£4,640

List of grants awarded April 2024 - March 2025

Advice and Support			
Round 1 June 2024	Islington Turkish Kurdish Cypriot Women's Welfare Group	Advice Connect Service for BAME women	£5,000
Round 1 June 2024	Federation of Iraqi Refugees	Community building, support, integration Islington's Iraqi and Kurdish residents	£5,000
Round 1 June 2024	STEPPING STONE4 (SS4)	Stepping Stone4 Integration Project	£4,900
Round 2 Nov 2024	One True Voice	Mother's Uplift Project	£5,000
Round 2 Nov 2024	Intrasonus UK	FRAthletics	£5,000
Round 2 Nov 2024	Love and Loss	Love and Loss	£3,500

Educate and improve skills and employability			
Round 1 June 2024	St Peter's Children and Young People's Activities Group	St Peter's Summer Enrichment Project	£5,000
Round 1 June 2024	Venus Blazing Music Trust	Venus Blazing Summer School	£2,990
Round 1 June 2024	We Jam Foundation	Islington Rocks!	£4,590
Round 2 Nov 2022	Head Held High	The Best You	£4,500
Round 2 Nov 2024	The Wipers Foundation	Rise and Reach	£3,800
Round 2 Nov 2024	Change, Act!	Playing the Lead Role!	£3,000
Round 2 Nov 2024	Read Easy Islington	First New Readers for Read Easy Islington 2024/25	£2,000

Make Islington a more environmentally sustainable place to live			
Round 1 June 2024	Blackstock Triangle Gardeners	Blackstock Triangle Gardeners	£2970
Round 1 June 2024	Islington Climate Centre	Core funding	£4970
Round 2 Nov 2024	Things in Common Limited	A Library of Things for Islington	£5,000

Increasing community safety			
Round 1 June 2024	Survivors Can Shine C.I.C.	I Shine, Speak Out - Ambassadors for Change	£5,000

Improve mental and physical health			
Round 1 June 2024	Amberliegh	Self Empowering Performing and Creative Arts for Young People	£5,000
Round 1 June 2024	Sports And Life Skills CIC	Islington 2024	£5,000
Round 1 June 2024	Sarah Agnes Foundation	SAF Support	£5,000
Round 1 June 2024	MamaSuze CIC	MamaSuze women's group	£4,950
Round 1 June 2024	SHE CAN EMPOWER	SHE CAN EMPOWER	£3,850
Round 1 June 2024	Bee connection	Refugee empowerment	£3,440
Round 1 June 2024	The Turkish and Kurdish Children's Group	Art to promote well-being and foster connections	£4,000
Round 2 Nov 2024	Fit Women Group	Women-Only Exercise Classes.	£5,000
Round 2 Nov 2024	Healthy Minds, Healthy Bods	HMHB Events	£3,900
Round 2 Nov 2024	Yogashare CIC	Flex and Strength Yoga	£4,865

