

Small Grants Programme April 2022 to April 2024

How the Small Grants programme works

NHS Lothian Charity Small Grants are open to all NHS Lothian staff to take forward projects in their departments, wards or service that directly benefit patients. Grants are available from £50 - £5,000 and staff apply via an online application form on the [NHS Lothian Charity website](#). Small Grants can only be used for enhancements or activity that is above core NHS Lothian support and that will commence within six months of award.

The Small Grants programme is funded from NHS Lothian Charity's General Fund and is designed to complement the approx. 400 specific funds held to support particular services and areas. Using the General Fund in this way enables the Charity to support enhancements to patient experience and improvements to clinical outcomes in areas which do not regularly benefit from donations, for example population health, services provided in the community, mental health or learning disability services.

Having NHS Lothian Charity providing an opportunity to apply for the Small Grant programme funds is essential and greatly appreciated."

Meaningful Activity Coordinator, Western General Hospital

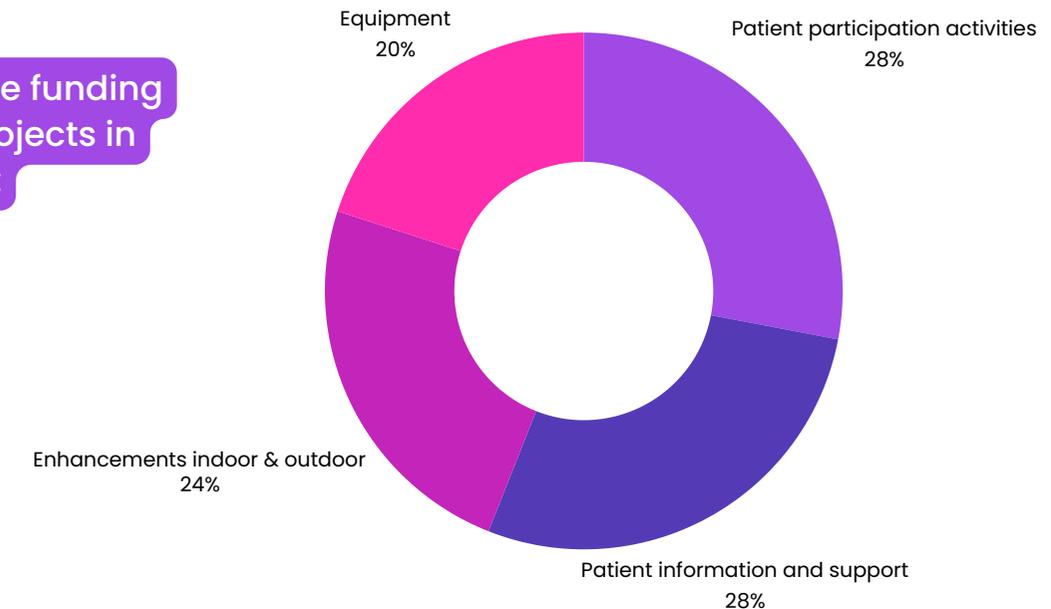


NHS Lothian
Charity awarded
64 grants totalling
£188,443.

65%

of Small Grants have been awarded to teams and departments in Edinburgh with the remaining grants spread out across sites in the rest of Lothian

Small Grants programme funding has been awarded to projects in the following categories:



Beneficiaries April 2022–April 2024

The highest proportion of projects, 19 (30%), have benefitted patients with a mental health disorder, 11 projects (17%) benefitted children, 10 projects (16%) benefitted patients using General Practices, and 9 projects (14%) benefitted patients in hospital waiting for planned or elective treatments. The remaining projects (23%) benefitted patients in urgent care, patients using sexual health services, and older people.

53% of projects were delivered within a community setting or service, (17 in General Practices, 9 within a community mental health service and 5 supporting those facing the most significant health inequalities such as prison and homelessness communities). 36% in acute and specialist hospitals (mainly the Western General Hospital and the Royal Edinburgh Hospital; 36 services don't have access to a specific fund at the hospitals), 9% in Community Hospitals (3 in East Lothian Community Hospital and 3 in Midlothian Community Hospital) and a project carried out by the NHS Lothian Patient Experience Team.



In the 12 months following funding, 35,000 patients will have benefitted from the Small Grants Programme:

- Approx. 20,000 patients benefitting from Small Grants projects
- An estimated additional 15,000 patients will benefit from the projects over a 6 month period
- Some projects will continue to benefit large numbers for years to come especially those where equipment has been purchased over multiple years the total number of beneficiaries will likely exceed 100,000
- Grant holders reported 50% of patients benefiting are experiencing health inequalities

100%

of staff reported that patients will continue to benefit beyond the initial six months period of their Small Grants project



I predict this funding will be of benefit to hundreds of patients in our department over the next few years."

Katie MacLennan. OT, Stroke Rehab Ward, Western General Hospital

Small Grant programme projects on SIMD

- 60% of Small Grant funded projects in the community supported patients in areas of high social deprivation
- 20% of the projects supported patients living in the most deprived areas (Quintile 1)

Source: [SIMD \(Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation\)](#)

Case study - Creche facilities support parents to attend therapeutic group in Midlothian



8 children attended the creche over the 2 blocks of groups resulting in parents accessing 32 hours of support that would have otherwise been impossible.

NHS Lothian's Parent and Infant Relationship Service (PAIRS) is an Infant Mental Health Community Team who aim to support the social and emotional development of infants in the first three years of life to support better long-term outcomes later in life. The service offers a Circle of Security parenting group: an 8-week course which builds secure attachment relationships between parents/carers and infants, and offers parents who have had difficult parenting experiences themselves a "roadmap" of how to tune into their child's needs and respond appropriately.

The sessions are delivered without children present, and the service has struggled in the past to reach those parents who need it the most due to having a lack of childcare cover (for a variety of reasons, some examples include cost, lack of family support). To help overcome this barrier, NHS Lothian Charity Small Grants programme funded creche facilities for two blocks of Circle of Security parenting group in Midlothian.

Dr Baillie from the service shared how the creche increased the number of parents attending: "Last year we had five parents attend the first group we ran in Midlothian when we didn't have creche, and for the first block this time with the creche we had nine parents attend. For the second group we have been able to offer creche again which two of the six parents have used."

One parent who attended a block explained she wouldn't have been able to attend the sessions if the creche had not been available. She shared: "I have limited childcare as I am single parent so not much support for helping with watching the children." She reported that having the creche available for the sessions 'improved how she felt mentally' and was 'very satisfied' with the creche facility being made available. She shared: "All the staff been amazing. The creche is a brilliant place for the wee ones as lots of things for the kids to do while I am in the group."



Creche at Midlothian



The parent's wouldn't have been able to attend without the creche facility so I'm massively grateful as they are in much need of this support."

Dr Baillie, Principal Clinical Psychologist, PAIRS

Case study – Improving patient outcomes with postural management cushions



- 40% of projects funded by the Small Grants programme aimed to improve clinical outcomes for patients
- Grant holders reported 80% of those projects did go on to improve clinical outcomes for patients



Postural management cushions

 Our project is improving quality of life, because of the cushions some of our patients are now able to sit out in a chair rather than being bedbound.”

Iwona, Edinburgh Physiotherapy at Home Team

The Edinburgh Physiotherapy at Home Team covers a range of physiotherapy needs in community settings. One of the treatments the Physiotherapists provide is postural management, this refers to an approach that aims to preserve and restore body shape and muscle tone for patients with movement difficulties which result in muscles contracting leading to ‘deformities’ to affected parts of the body. This can be life-altering and very painful. The team were awarded funding to purchase postural management equipment such as the cushions shown in the photos. The cushions mold to shape and aim to lengthen contracted muscles.

At the time of reporting, the team have used the equipment with 10 patients referred for postural management. The clinical outcomes for patients were overwhelmingly positive. Iwona, Physiotherapist, from the team explained: “Using this equipment as early as possible enabled my patients to promote symmetrical posture and comfort and reduce pain. It also prevented secondary issues such as hip dislocation, reduced lung function and reduced pressure on the skin.” She shared one specific example: “We provided equipment to a patient with thoracic kyphosis, who had a problem with swallowing due to their neck position. They were supplied with equipment to support their head and neck position and it’s improved their safety with eating preventing aspiration of food. If we hadn’t had been able to use this, the patient could have ended up in hospital.

Due to waiting lists, patients often wait up to 6 weeks for their first appointment. Iwona explains: “The great thing about having this stock of cushions means after such a wait to see us, treatment starts on day 1. This increases staff morale and motivation as we know we are providing patients with the best possible equipment and quickly without the wait.” The team have also used the equipment to educate families and carers at home and staff in care homes.

Positive outcomes for patients – Enhanced patient and carer experience

70%

of staff reported that their Small Grants projects resulted in patients having a better experience of their service



The board helps patients to understand the process and their journey around the department so they are less frustrated and confused...additionally is visual with less wording to help those with health literacy problems."

Claire Sutherland, Clinical Service Manager, Emergency Department, RIE



Improved outdoor space at The Access Place

70%

of staff reported that their Small Grants projects resulted in patients being more engaged with staff and treatment



The project has helped reduce harm and create safer injecting opportunities, also has improved engagement with staff allowing longer consultations to help identify areas where additional support may be required."

Alison Coull, Specialist Nurse, Harm Reduction Team



Patient information display units at the SDEC unit.

60%

of staff reported that their Small Grants projects resulted in patients being happier



We can see how happy children are when they come here and how they now have a positive experience and that in turn makes our jobs easier."

Rachael Mckernan, Paediatric Clinical Support Worker, RHCYP



Patient using Motomed at East Lothian Community Hosp.

Benefits for families and carers

The principle aim of the Small Grant programme is to improve patient outcomes but many projects also contribute towards an improvement in outcomes for patients' families and carers.

63% of staff surveyed reported their project made a positive difference to patients' families and carers. They shared what difference it made.

Families and carers felt less stressed:

"Parents of children on neurodevelopmental pathway were offered a child friendly, non-clinical environment, relieving stressors."

Families and carers have an increased ability to help/support the patients:

"Some families have had some input in using the motomed with patients...they have felt that they have helped their relative in their recovery."

Case study – Storage unit increases bike use at Alcohol Related Brain Damage Unit

Physical exercise is part of the recovery journey for patients at the Alcohol Related Brain Damage (ARBD) Unit in Edinburgh. The unit has two bicycles which are used as part of weekly occupational therapy and physiotherapy sessions with the residents. But there was a challenge to overcome. Fiona, Assistant Programme Manager from the team explained: “The bikes were being stored in the basement which was the only place on site for dry and safe storage but this is down a flight of narrow, steep stairs and if anyone was scheduled to use them it required two members of staff. This was a bit of an ordeal for staff and very much restricted use to the bikes. It also didn’t allow for any spontaneous requests for access out with the scheduled session.” Therefore, the team applied to NHS Lothian Charity Small Grants for a bike storage unit that could securely store the bikes in an accessible area of the unit’s garden.

Because the bikes are much more accessible to use in the new storage unit, the team have seen an increase in their use. Amy, the OT from the team, explains: “I don’t know how we managed without the bike storage before. Regular users can access the bikes themselves and more importantly patients can have access to them outside of the Occupational Therapist and Physiotherapy weekly sessions. This is supporting patients to be healthier and fitter both physically and mentally and aiding their recovery.”

The bikes have a wider reach and appeal now. Fiona explains: “We also accommodate a small regular group of ex-residents who visit the unit and are able to use the bikes as an activity with current patients, and visiting family members or carers can accompany patients on a cycle if they fancy. There have been some long-lasting benefits and the team have seen some discharged residents continuing their cycling activity after discharge from the unit.”

Fiona shares her gratitude to NHS Lothian Charity: “Over the last 10 years, NHS Lothian Charity has been very supportive of the ARBD Unit, enabling many improvements through the provision of new resources, materials and equipment through the Small Grants fund. All the purchases have improved the environment for the patients and supported staff in delivering a gold star service. All the funding has bought items that would not have been available from the core budget and as such, have greatly benefitted patients and staff over the years.”



In the 6 months after installation 18 patients and 6 ex-residents have used the bikes over 100 times which is a 50% increase on the 6 months previous.



The bike storage unit



Staff getting bikes easily out of the storage unit



Amy, the OT, on the bike



The team at ARBD unit

Case study – Art classes improve patient wellbeing in South East Edinburgh

Thanks to funding from the Small Grants programme, patients in South East Edinburgh had the opportunity to attend 'Art and Chat' sessions at Gilmerton Community Centre. Patients who expressed an enjoyment in art and present with mental and/or physical health issues and patients reported to be socially isolated were referred into the project by Community Link Workers from Liberation Medical Practice.

Delivered by an artist, the 16 sessions explored different art materials and activities including printmaking, painting, marbling, pastel, collage, and clay. A welcoming and nurturing environment was created for the 10 participants with space to connect, chat about art, and also share experiences about challenges in their lives.

At the end of the block of sessions patients were asked how they found the experience.

- 100% of participants felt more connected to their community and less isolated
- 100% of participants felt it helped their wellbeing
- 100% thought they had developed new skills
- 87% of participants felt that being part of the workshops had given them strength to cope with challenges in their lives



Art produced by the group



Art produced by the group



Art produced by the group



"My mood has always felt enhanced and my levels of pain thresholds always seem to have improved by attending the sessions."

Participant



"Being part of a small group has been very helpful to me as I find it almost impossible to find the motivation to do things alone."

Participant



"I've enjoyed being able to learn new skills and take on new techniques to use at home when feeling stressed."

Participant



"I was very isolated and stressed... having these sessions once a week have given me something to look forward to...I felt better able to cope with subsequent days after the arty outlet."

Participant

Legacy of the project

The Community Link worker shared: "After the block of sessions at Gilmerton Community Centre, four of the participants took part in Art Therapy sessions in Dalry. This meant they were getting out of the South East area of Edinburgh which didn't feel achievable for some of the participants prior to being involved in the project, further reducing feelings of isolation. Three members took part in an exhibition as part of Thrivefest, (a day of celebration taking place on World Mental Health Day) and all have joined the art mailing list that promotes art opportunities around Edinburgh."

Positive outcomes for NHS Lothian staff – Improved staff wellbeing and professional dev.

The principal aim of the Small Grants programme is direct patient benefit and enhanced experience, but many projects also contribute towards an improving staff wellbeing and professional development.

Half of all projects funded have reported they have provided positive benefits for staff.



Staff relaxing in patient outdoor seating when patients not using



Staff at RHCYP in their child friendly tunics funded by Small Grants Programme

56%

of Small Grants projects resulted in staff feeling less stressed



The upper limb group has been beneficial to staff, ensuring a more manageable clinical caseload and working more closely with stroke guidelines therefore reducing stress on staff."

Katie MacLennan, OT, Stroke Rehab Ward, WGH



Staff have been less stressed because pupils have been less anxious due to the options we now have as a team."

Jane Shepherd, Healthcare Support Worker, Musselburgh Primary Care Centre

53%

of Small Grants projects resulted in staff having increased opportunity to gain knowledge and develop skills



This has allowed staff to work with a different piece of equipment and learn a new skill in using this. It has allowed them to teach new staff coming through our service and feel like they are assisting patients with their rehab

Wendy Cameron, Team Lead Physiotherapist, East Lothian Community Hospital



The staff had to develop online IT skills in order to access the digital version of Talking Mats."

Kerry Costello, Speech and Language Therapist, CAMHS

50%

of Small Grants projects resulted in staff feeling an increase in motivation levels



Staff are more motivated as they feel like they can better engage with patients who are in distress, as they now have a variety of tools to use."

Jane Shepherd, Healthcare Support Worker, Musselburgh Primary Care Centre



To date approx. 600 NHS Lothian staff have benefitted from the projects Small Grants Programme projects