

£260,000 Government funding to build social connections

Thursday 11 September, 2025

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has extended the Know Your Neighbourhood Fund to March 2026. Through this funding, Cumbria Community Foundation has received a further £260,000 towards the Furness For You partnership project, encouraging volunteering and building social connections in Barrow-in-Furness.

Barrow-in-Furness was recognised by Government as having significant levels of deprivation and higher levels of need in terms of civil society and community infrastructure.

Since the KYN Fund was launched in January 2023, UK Community Foundations (UKCF) – a national network of place-based community foundations – has delivered up to £14 million of £19 million government funding made available, of which Cumbria Community Foundation has distributed more than £1m to a number of projects. Additionally, Cumbria Community Foundation was able to contribute further funds through local match funding.

In April 2025, the Fund was extended until March 2026, with an additional £4.5 million of government funding. Of this £4.5 million, £2.6 million has been awarded to UKCF by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

With its extended allocation of £260,000, Cumbria Community Foundation, a member of UKCF, will continue supporting existing projects and work with local voluntary networks to implement long-lasting, scalable initiatives that last beyond March 2026.

The Furness For You project is a partnership of local charities and voluntary organisations, led by charity Groundwork North East and Cumbria. The partnership offers a variety of meaningful activities to address isolation and loneliness, help people build confidence, meet new people, acquire new skills and encourage volunteering.

Annalee Holliday, Head of Grants Practice and Programmes at Cumbria Community Foundation, said: “A recent evaluation confirmed that Furness For You has had a significant impact on participants, many of whom reported increased social connection, improved mental health, and personal growth. Beneficiaries described overcoming deep-rooted fears and anxieties to engage with activities, often after months or years of isolation.

“This valuable funding, together with match funding of nearly £11,000 from the Pappagallino Fund, will help extend and develop delivery, and support even more people.”

The Furness For You partnership has launched an online support hub designed to connect people across the Furness area with the help, services and activities they need.

The free website – furnessforyou.org.uk – brings together information from a wide range of organisations and builds on the partnership’s missions to tackle social isolation, promote volunteering, and strengthen community ties.

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