

Executive Summary: Mapping place-based work across the UK

Observations on the patterns & trends in place-based funding 2024



A report written by Place Matters

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Background and Purpose

In 2023, a coalition of 17 UK-based funders of place-based initiatives convened to discuss strategies for more collaborative funding. This collaboration led to the development of [the Place-based Interactive Map](#), an annually updated resource designed to showcase successful regional initiatives, highlight areas needing more support, and understand partnerships across sectors. We thank Esmée Fairbairn for funding the initial development and other funders and project teams for their input.

Scope & Methodology

The map currently includes data from 15 funders, encompassing 114 projects across the UK with a total funding pool of £62 million. Projects with a place-based approach were chosen that address significant social and economic challenges and use multi-sector collaborations to drive systemic change. The report is based on data collected as of Quarter One 2024 and includes metrics on funding per geography, capita, area of impact and specific beneficiary groups.

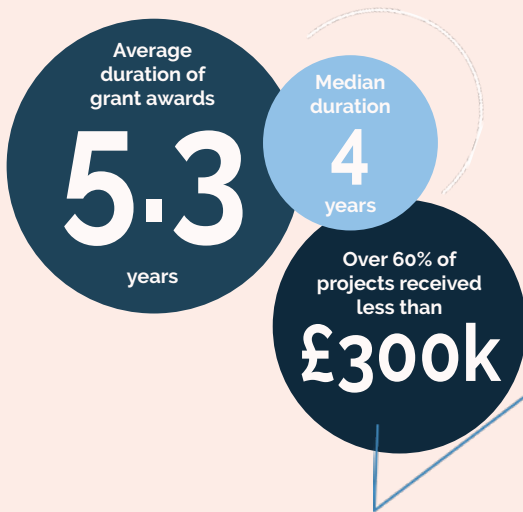
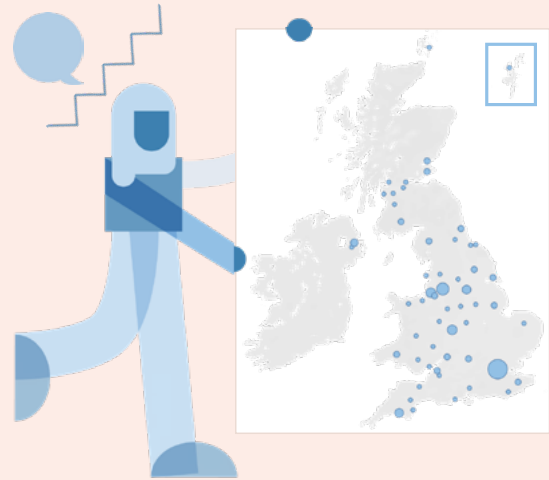


Key Findings

1. Geographic Distribution of Funding

Project Density: The map reveals a regional concentration of projects, notably in London and the Northwest, with fewer projects in regions like the East Midlands and East of England.

Deprivation Analysis: Analysis of disadvantaged areas reveals variation in funding allocation. The Southwest, with a major cluster in Plymouth, receives the highest funding per disadvantaged area, while regions such as the East remain underserved despite evident need. Many towns with high deprivation indices near metropolitan areas lack dedicated projects, suggesting the need for more focused regional support.



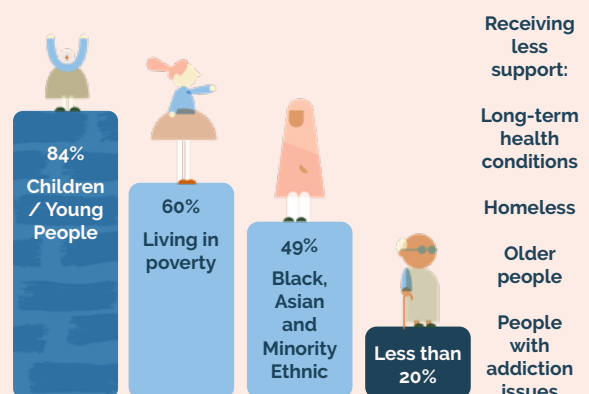
2. Project Funding & Duration

Funding Levels: The average project funding is approximately £600,000, though the median is £200,000, reflecting a few high-value outliers. A significant number of projects are under £1 million, which may not align with the systemic ambitions of place-based initiatives.

Duration of Projects: Average project length is 5.3 years, but the median is four years, with some projects lacking defined end dates. Given that systems change requires sustained efforts, funders may consider extending commitments.

3. Beneficiary Groups

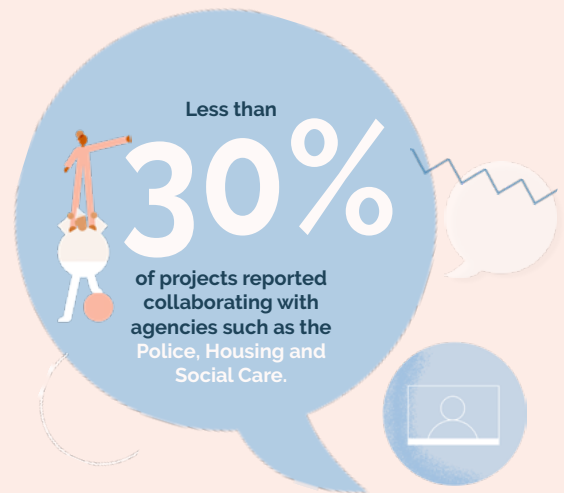
Beneficiaries: While 59% of projects target 'All Residents,' main beneficiaries include children and young people (84%) and those experiencing poverty (60%). Other beneficiaries like people with complex health conditions, older people and the homeless were amongst beneficiaries that received little support through place-based funding programmes.



4. Collaboration Across Sectors

Sector Engagement: The projects we focused on required organisations across different sectors to be involved. The highest levels of collaboration are between the community and voluntary sectors, while engagement with local government and education sectors also featured, but to a lesser extent. Beyond that, other local leaders like the Police feature much less.

Resident Engagement: 70% of projects reported extensive community involvement which is encouraging and essential for genuine systemic change.



5. Evolving Role of Funders

Funders increasingly take active roles beyond financial support, with over half investing in capacity building within local ecosystems. Many funders are adopting a systems-level approach, aligning with the field-building strategies seen in North America, where funders drive collaborative networks to enhance impact beyond the grant period.

Conclusions

[This interactive map](#) provides a foundational resource to improve the visibility and collaboration of place-based work across the UK.

Insights from the map highlight disparities in funding distribution and the need for targeted support in high-deprivation areas.

Next steps include enhancing data on beneficiary impact, addressing funding disparities, and exploring deeper collaborations across funders and sectors.

The next phase will refine methodologies and expand the scope to include additional funders, such as the National Lottery Community Fund, to better represent the landscape of place-based work further.

The organisations who contributed to the project:

Civic Power Fund
Corra
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Rank Foundation
Right to Succeed
Save the Children
Steve Morgan Foundation
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