



To: All Members of the Community and Wellbeing Committee

Dear Councillor,

**COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE - TUESDAY, 13TH JANUARY, 2026 ,
Council Chamber - Epsom Town Hall**

Please find attached the following document(s) for the meeting of the Community and Wellbeing Committee to be held on Tuesday, 13th January, 2026.

5. **VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING 2026-2027** (Pages 3 - 26)

This report considers the continued support of voluntary sector organisations and sets out the proposed funding arrangements for 2026/2027. The report also considers the impact of Local Government Reorganisation and presents a funding proposal for the financial year 2027/2028.

For further information, please contact democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk or tel: 01372 732000

Yours sincerely

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Chief Executive

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VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING

Head of Service:	Rod Brown, Head of Housing & Community
Report Author	Rachel Epton
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision? (yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1: Financial Support 2026-2027 Appendix 2: Voluntary Sector Annual Impact Reports.

Summary

This report considers the continued support of voluntary sector organisations and sets out the proposed funding arrangements for 2026/2027

The report also considers the impact of Local Government Reorganisation and presents a funding proposal for the financial year 2027/2028.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- 1. Agree to the financial support of the voluntary sector organisations as detailed in:**
 - a) Option 1 (section 3.2 of this report)**
or;
 - b) Option 2 (section 3.9 of this report)**
or;
 - c) Option 3 (section 3.19 of this report)**
or
 - d) Option 4 (section 3.24 of this report)**

1 Reason for Recommendations

- 1.1 The council has continued to provide financial support to those voluntary sector organisations as set out in section 2.2 of this report. This support is subject to committee approval each year.
- 1.2 The council continues to face significant financial pressures and, along with Local Government Reorganisation, the committee may wish to consider varying options for the on-going support of these organisations.
- 1.3 This report is asking the committee to agree to one of the proposals, as set out in section 3 of this report.

2 Background

- 2.1 The council provides support to a range of voluntary organisations in Epsom and Ewell. This support has been provided to help maintain and improve the quality of life for the borough's residents.
- 2.2 The council has historically supported the following organisations:
 - Age Concern Epsom & Ewell (ACEE)
 - Citizens Advice Epsom and Ewell (CAEE)
 - Central Surrey Voluntary Action (CSVA)
 - RELATE Mid & East Surrey
 - The Sunnybank Trust (SBT)
- 2.3 Following committee papers taken to Community and Wellbeing Committee in January 2025, and Strategy and Resource Committee in July 2025, from 1st April 2026, the council will no longer offer financial support to RELATE Mid & East Surrey. As such, they are not being considered in this report.
- 2.4 ACEE, CAEE, CSVA and SBT continue to provide support to some of the most vulnerable residents in the borough. They are also often the catalyst for mobilising community action and attracting, training, and deploying volunteers.
- 2.5 Over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic, the support the voluntary sector offered the borough's residents was invaluable, and they have continued to meet the needs of vulnerable residents who were disproportionately impacted by the effects of the pandemic.

- 2.6 The response of the voluntary sector to the on-going cost-of-living crisis has also proved invaluable. This continues to impact many of the borough's residents; especially those who were already experiencing significant hardship.
- 2.7 The impact report for each of the organisations supported by the council are shown in Appendix 2
- 2.8 At the time of the January 2025 Committee, both CAEE and ACEE reported an increase of 25% and 22% respectively in the numbers of residents they are supporting. The annual impact reports shown in Appendix 2 continue to demonstrate an increase in residents accessing these services.
- 2.9 Ceasing to provide financial support to the voluntary organisations, especially during the on-going cost-of-living crisis, could result in vulnerable residents being placed at a further disadvantage and unable to access the support and advice they need. Such a decision may also increase demand on council services.
- 2.10 While some of the voluntary sector organisations depend on the support of the council to ensure their ability to support residents, others do benefit from significant levels of alternative funding. For example, ACEE has been the beneficiary of significant funding from bequests in recent years.
- 2.11 The report taken to Committee in January 2025, referenced the council's intention to relocate from its current office location on The Parade in Epsom, to 70 East Street. As a result of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) (refer to section 6.6) this move is no longer being considered and as such, the options in this report are reflective of the Voluntary Sector remaining at the Town Hall.

3 Proposals:

- 3.1 This report sets out 4 options regarding funding for specified voluntary organisations.
- 3.2 Option 1:**
- 3.3 The Committee is asked to approve the proposed (on-going) support for voluntary organisations in 2026-2027 as detailed in Appendix 1.
- 3.4 The proposed budgeted net amount for 2026-2027 is £194,859.00. This does not include rents paid to EEBC, after which, the council's total net costs are £188,503.00
- 3.5 There has been a slight increase in service charges of £2,329.00 since the previous year. This is inclusive of water, electricity, gas and central management charges for those organisations based at the Town Hall. All costs are subsumed into the notional grant.

3.6 Parking charges: The council subsidises parking for those organisations based at the Town Hall – the *estimated* subsidy for 2026-2027 is £18,620.00. These charges are based on those forecasts for the next financial year and are due to be considered at Environment Committee on 20th January 2026.

3.7 The council receives £3,420 from The Sunnybank Trust in rental income. They do not benefit from any other notional grants/awards

3.8 The council receives £2,936.00 from Age Concern Epsom and Ewell in rental income. They benefit from £27,410.00 in other notional grants, plus £,3180.00 in parking subsidies.

3.9 Option 2:

3.10 The committee is asked to approve the proposed support for the voluntary organisations for the financial years 2026-27 and 2027-28. However, is asked to note that any two-year option would be subject to future sign-off by the new East Surrey unitary's financial leadership. An extension beyond March 2027 would need to be agreed collectively by the new and / or shadow authority's S151 officers once the governance and budgetary framework is in place. Consequently, if agreed, at this stage this option would not be binding but would be the basis of a recommendation to the new unitary.

3.11 This option would seek to offer the voluntary organisations being considered in this report some stability and allow them to plan for the period post LGR for up-to one year.

3.12 The cost to the council for the year 2026-2027 is as set out in Option 1, section 3.2 of this report.

3.13 The cost to the East Surrey unitary authority for the year 2027-2028 cannot be forecast however, in order to provide Committee with an indication of predicted costs, over the course of the last 3 years, net cost (omitting RELATE Mid and East Surrey and accounting for rents received) are as follows:

3.14 2023-2024: £190,924

3.15 2024-2025: £188,123

3.16 2025-2026: £186,104

3.17 The slight reduction in 2025-2026 was the result of energy costs decreasing, and these savings being passed on to the voluntary organisations.

- 3.18 The above provides an indication of future direct expenditure and notional charges and is intended to aid the Committee's decision in choosing to support this option.

3.19 Option 3

- 3.20 To withdraw the direct grants awarded to the voluntary sector, but continue with all notional grants and parking subsidies
- 3.21 This option would mean the withdrawal of direct financial support to Citizens Advice Epsom and Ewell (CAEE) and Central Surrey Voluntary Action (CVSA)
- 3.22 This would represent a saving of £82,104 to the Council for 2026/2027.
- 3.23 If option 3 is preferred, this may have a direct impact on residents and result in a lack of support, advice and guidance being available to those who are most vulnerable. It may also increase demand on council services, in particular housing services and the revenue and benefit department.

3.24 Option 4

- 3.25 This option proposes the council cease all support of the voluntary sector as shown in Appendix 1.
- 3.26 This would represent a saving to the Council of £82,104 in direct grants, and £113,425 in notional grants and subsidies for the year 2026/27. This is as shown in Appendix 1.
- 3.27 If this option is preferred, it would hold the same implications as option 3, whilst also leading to the potential displacement of the voluntary sector organisations.

4 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

4.1 Equality Impact Assessment

- 4.1.1 Whilst acknowledged that withdrawing the financial support offered to the voluntary organisations could have an impact on the borough's residents in respect of the support they can access, this report is concerned with the provision of financial support to these organisations and not the direct provision of services. As such there are no EIA considerations directly as a result of this report.

4.2 Crime & Disorder

4.2.1 The voluntary organisations play an important role within the borough, assisting the statutory services in supporting residents requiring professional interventions, and supporting Community Harm and Risk Management Meetings (CHaRMM).

4.3 Safeguarding

4.3.1 Voluntary organisations offer frontline services, and direct support to residents. Voluntary organisations are well placed to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns.

4.3.2 Voluntary organisations work with statutory services in reporting safeguarding concerns through the appropriate channels, and subject to the requirements of the Multi-agency Adult and Child Safeguarding hubs.

4.4 Dependencies

4.4.1 None.

4.5 Other

4.5.1 None

5 Financial Implications

5.1 Impact of the voluntary organisations:

5.2 Much of the work of the voluntary sector organisations involves substantially the same residents as those who interact with the council on a regular basis. These residents may primarily be those who access the council's services relating to Housing, and the Revenue and Benefits team.

5.3 The support the voluntary sector organisations provide to residents has both direct and indirect financial benefits to include, but not exhaustive of:

- Prevention of evictions and statutory homelessness by providing advice and support in reducing housing and energy related debts, and support in the repayment of Council Tax arrears
- Maximising benefits and additional income entitlements
- Providing direct resources to include Foodbank vouchers, energy payments, and other discretionary payments i.e., for transport or additional services.

- Providing opportunities for accessing education, volunteering, and employment
- Securing external sources of funding opportunities.
- Increasing social impact in respect of reducing isolation, offering emotional support, gaining a sense of purpose, and belonging, and intervening to address issues as they emerge.
- Providing mental health/psychological interventions that can prevent a crisis that often, inadvertently, can result in financial difficulties.

5.4 To remove funding may therefore have as significant impact on the residents of the borough and have implications for the council in regard to being required to respond directly to an increased demand for support.

5.5 Council revenue:

5.6 Direct grant payments are made to CAEE and CSVA. The council budgets for this expenditure within its revenue budget each year at a cost of £82,104 (not inclusive of notional awards or parking subsidies)

5.7 The remaining costs are notional, inclusive of parking costs.

5.8 Any funding beyond 31st March 2027 as set out in option 2 of this report is subject to future sign-off by the new East Surrey unitary's financial leadership as set out in 3.10.

5.9 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** The Council must set a balanced budget for 2026/27 and is facing financial pressures that need to be taken into consideration when choosing the preferred option.

5.10 I can confirm that the proposed expenditure for 2026–2027 (£194,859 gross / £188,503 net) is within the approved revenue budget and does not require use of reserves.

5.11 While we would like the new unitary authority to honour funding post 2026/27 it cannot be guaranteed, and it will be a decision for the new authority.

6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 The Council has power to provide grants to voluntary and community sector organisations under the general power of competence set out in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. All grants will be made in accordance with the requirements of subsidy control legislation (if applicable).
- 6.2 Council officers reviewed the government guidance pertaining to the subsidy control legislation and consider that the grants outlined in this paper are unlikely to constitute a subsidy.
- 6.3 Relying on the specific response to the four questions set out in the government guidance, given the nature of services provided, these charities are not considered enterprises, with the grants not being deemed capable of having an effect on competition or investment within the UK, or trade or investment between the UK and another country or territory.
- 6.4 The Council must enter licences, funding agreements and other agreements in respect of notional and direct awards. The contract manager will review these agreements as required, and in ensuring the financial integrity of each organisation.
- 6.5 The grants set out within the body of this report are not subject to the Council's Contract Standing Orders. (Section 4 and 10 EEBC CSO).
- 6.6 **Legal Officer's comments:** As set out above

7 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 7.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:
 - Safe & Well: A place where people feel safe, secure, and lead healthy, fulfilling lives and
 - Smart and Connected: building stronger communities.
- 7.2 **Service Plans:** Providing support to the vulnerable residents as well as supporting the local voluntary sector are both included in this years' Service Plan.

The matter is not included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

- 7.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** No implications for the purpose of this report.
- 7.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** No implications for the purpose of this report.

- 7.5 **Partnerships:** Voluntary organisations comprise members of the "third sector" that support the local community through the delivery of services. The Council works in partnership with all the voluntary organisations identified in this report. The Council also leads on a Community and Voluntary sector forum that is held annually and brings our voluntary sector organisations together.
- 7.6 **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR):**
- 7.7 The council acknowledges that the impact of LGR will also be felt by the Community and Voluntary sector. This is primarily the result of changes to the geographical boundaries within which these services operate, with possible implications for funding arrangements.
- 7.8 If option 1 is supported, this would provide assurance to the voluntary sector organisations for one-year up-until 31st March 2027, The council is unable to commit funds post this date, as this will be a decision for the new unitary authority (refer to section 3.9 and 5.5)
- 7.9 The council acknowledges that this is an unsettling and uncertain time for the voluntary sector as we move through LGR and commits to exploring opportunities for future funding opportunities in light of this.
- 7.10 As such, the council is committed to working with the shadow authority to establish funding for our much-valued voluntary sector.

8 Background papers

- 8.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

[Report entitled Voluntary Sector Funding 2025-2026 reported to Community and Wellbeing Committee 16th January 2025](#)

[Report to S&R – July 2025 \(RELATE\)](#)

Other papers:

- None.

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Proposed Support for Voluntary Organisations 2026/27

	Age Concern Epsom & Ewell		Citizens Advice Bureau Epsom & Ewell		Central Surrey Voluntary Action (CSVA)		RELATE Mid Surrey		The Sunnybank Trust		Total	
	2025/26	2026/27	2025/26	2026/27	2025/26	2026/27	2025/26	2026/27	2025/26	2026/27	2025/26	2026/27
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Direct Grant Funding	0	0	74,115	74,115	7,989	7,989	0	0	0	0	82,104	82,104
Licence/Rent - Notional Grant	14,615	14,615	28,686	28,686	7,344	7,344	14,910	0	0	0	65,555	50,645
Service Charge - Notional Grant	11,879	12,551	23,313	24,632	5,969	6,307	4,900	0	0	0	46,061	43,490
Rent paid to EEBC	-2,936	-2,936	0	0	0	0	-1,294	0	-3,420	-3,420	-7,650	-6,356
Grant for Volunteer Parking	100	100	1,920	1,920	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,020	2,020
Subsidy for Staff Parking Permits	2,920	3,080	4,380	4,620	0	0	0	0	0	0	7,300	7,700
Subsidy for volunteer parking	0	0	8,500	8,900	0	0	0	0	0	0	8,500	8,900
Totals do not include rent paid to EEBC	29,514	30,346	140,914	142,873	21,302	21,640	19,810	0	0	0	211,540	194,859
Net costs (after rents)		27,410		142,873		21,640				-3,420	204,890	188,503

Age Concern: £3080 = 4 permits @ (£890 - £120)
CAB: £4620 = 6 permits @ (£890 - £120)
CAB: £8900 = 10 permits @£890

*£890 price for 26/27 not agreed and is indicative only at this stage

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The Sunnybank Trust Grant Report: Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Over the past year, The Sunnybank Trust has continued to provide the key services to the increasing need amongst people with learning disabilities (LD). We witness an increase in need due to weakened national infrastructures of health and social care as well as the ongoing economic challenges.

Since October 24, we have supported 315 adults with learning disabilities through a range of services that continue to support the rights of the person with LD to have a voice, have access to leisure and social activities, be supported to be safe in their community and become more employable. We listened to the people we support and found that through Sunnybank services, people feel that they are heard, belong and greatly enjoy working together with each other and the wider community.

Being Heard: Through our advocacy service, we provided advocacy for 164 advocacy issues each month ranging from benefit support, abuse and scams, accommodation challenges as well as health and social care. Over 50% of the issues have remained to be supporting access to health and social care. We also continued to promote the use of the Health Passport amongst professionals and GPs.

Advocacy Issues	Total no. Oct 24 – Sept 25
Accommodation	255
Finance/Legal/Benefits	265
Health & Medical Needs, GP & Hospital Appointments	628
Social Care & Support	525
Employment & Training	11
Transport & Marketing	48
Activities & Clubs	73
Safeguarding	14
Working with external agencies	101
Homes Monitoring	54
Total	1974

Belonging: Through our clubs and activities, we have enabled 130 people with LD to access over 300 clubs and activities throughout the year. All activities have used community spaces to enable better inclusion and opportunity for the people we support. Activities have included 12 monthly discos, over 40 weekly Allotment gardening groups, weekly Coffee and Chat drop ins, a variety of sports clubs as well as our weekly Sunny Afternoon Club for those with complex support needs. Attendance for each club has increased by over 10% with our monthly disco catering for an average of 38 people each month and our Sunny Afternoon Club supporting an average of 37 people per week. In partnership with the Epsom Bowling Club, we launched a new bowling club for those with reduced mobility. Whilst small (weekly KPI of 16) it has proved popular and one we will be seeking to grow as it proved a great opportunity to be outdoors and taking exercise.

Following a review on the clubs we learnt that 98% of those attending the Sunny Afternoon Club for those with more complex support needs, do not attend anything else during the week – making this club vital for well being and isolation.

Our drama group performed their annual summer performance, 'Circus'. As part of the preparation, the group visited a professional circus and had the opportunity to talk with the performers. Of their own show, 98% said that they felt proud and more confident of themselves.

'This has been the best thing I have ever done'. (Drama member).

Link to short video:

https://www.instagram.com/reel/DL96QSuKVH6/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFlZA==

Link to a Case Study: [Frankie's Gardening Blog](#)

Through our transition programme, we have provided 18 young adults with LD with the next steps towards employment, independence and greater confidence. 4 of whom have progressed to further work and employment as well as 6 who have now joined the Understand Us business enterprise.

Working together: Throughout the year we delivered over 100 radio shows to an average of 170 listeners per show – building connections which Understand Us (our inhouse consultancy led by people with LD) have now further developed. Understand Us has also delivered some key projects including providing the lived experience voice in SCC housing tenders, providing input into how cervical cancer screenings can become more accessible for people with LD as well as accessibility audits for local community settings such as the local Museum.

This year we were delighted for Understand Us to be featured on BBC Surrey Radio and online in the Spring, highlighting the challenges that face so many:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cd651p8pnj0o>



We are proud of what we have achieved and would not have been able to achieve any of the above without the support of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council. Thank you!

2025 saw a significant increase in enquiries through our I&A desk resulting in an increase in our client database by promoting our services at outreach settings, and increasing our marketing presence through social media channels, newsletters, and increased marketing activity. We also have seen an increase of referrals from the statutory sector including the ICP, PCN and EEBC

Our service delivery included:

Information & Advice - support providing a free and confidential information & advice service on a wide range of issues affecting older people, through a dedicated help desk by phone, e mail or one to one. Providing the right information at the right time we save clients and their carers time, money, as well as unnecessary worry and ensuring effective interventions. Delivered by our Information & Advice Officer supported by 7 volunteers on the I&A desk. 2945 clients made use of our I&A service. 8 office volunteers support office administration.

Home Visiting - assessing clients' needs in their own surroundings including welfare benefits checks. Increase in income by benefits successfully claimed. Improved financial circumstances a key indicator for improved health and wellbeing. Successful Blue Badge applications helping mobility. Referral to Social Services, Occupational Therapist or other specialist organisations i.e. for Dementia and Parkinson's support. Delivered by our Home Visitor. Attendance Allowance claims = 277 worth over £500,000. Blue Badge applications = 104.

Medical Transport Scheme - service used by clients to medical appointments, or to visit family or friends in hospital or residential homes. Less medical appointments missed. Monies saved as service less expensive than taxis. Cost effective service as run by volunteers. Clients raise issues with the drivers who pass the matter onto our I&A and Home Visiting team. Overseen by our Office Manager. Supported by 21 volunteer drivers (2 volunteers have completed 2500 drives each) and 6 transport desk volunteers. 184 members, 1017 drives made.

Men's Club - dedicated to like-minded men within the borough sharing knowledge and skills and meeting to enjoy activities of their choice. Alleviating and reducing isolation and loneliness within the Borough. Delivered by our Men's Club Co-ordinator with 26 members.

Befriending Service - supporting lonely and isolated older people, who live alone, with volunteer befrienders. Delivered by our Social Support co-ordinator, supported by 58 volunteer befrienders.

Monthly Sunday Teas - providing a full tea and entertainment once a month with transport. Overseen by Social Support Co-ordinator, supported by 10 volunteers at the tea and 22 drivers. 35 members.

IT Support 'Helping Hands' – one to one support in clients' own home with computer, tablet or phone. Overseen by I&A volunteers. Supported by 7 volunteers with a broad knowledge of modern technology. 49 visits made.

DIY Support - doing small DIY jobs in clients' homes. Overseen by I&A volunteers. Supported by 5 DIY volunteers. 20 visits made.

Volunteers - supporting the services that Age Concern Epsom & Ewell deliver. Delivered by our Volunteer co-ordinator supporting 188 volunteers. Volunteer hours' worth £175,000 per annum

Fundraising & Marketing – delivered by our Fundraising & Marketing Co-ordinator

Our fundraising events include: An Easter Egg Trail in Rosebery Park, Fundraising dinners, Quiz Night, Candlelit Christmas concert, Christmas fundraising stalls, including 10 days in the Ashley centre selling knitted and crafted goods.

Local businesses have been very generous with donations. Charities, local not for profit groups and councillors have also supported us: Epsom Rotary, EEBC & Surrey Councillors John Beckett, Jan Mason, and Eber Kingston.

We have had very generous private donations and legacies which have been a major part of our income this year.

ACEE 'In Memory Woodland' - Launched in June 2025 for residents of the borough to reflect, remember and connect with nature in Long Grove Park, Epsom.

Accelerator Reform Funding – Funding secured to deliver an Outreach Information & Advice service 'ACEE Here to Help' project concentrating on Court Ward, Epsom. Also delivering in Ruxley & Town wards. 171 people of pensionable age accessed the service with positive outcomes: signposting to all ACEE services for support and referring to statutory, health and other charities for appropriate support due to client's needs.

Please note that this report encompasses the period of 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025

Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell 2025 Impact Report

This report to EEBC's Community & Wellbeing Committee, demonstrates how CAEE partners with EEBC and other community organisations to enhance our offering and enable more local people to access the help they need. We are extremely grateful to EEBC for the support it provides.

- We continued to distribute the Household Support Fund in 2025 initially extending our partnership with EEBC and now managing the latest tranche of funds from Surrey County Council. We remain the only partner to receive direct applications via EEBC's website as well as identifying clients who need support via our other advice channels.

In 2025 we were one of only 16 local Citizens Advice offices awarded national SGN funding to provide energy advice in outreach settings. We are now giving energy advice in seven different locations throughout the borough.

- We also extended our generalist outreach service, working within community hubs and advice cafes to help reach those who are not aware of the services we offer or who find it difficult to visit our Epsom town centre premises. We are particularly pleased to be supporting Court Ward residents, as part of a targeted Surrey wide outreach project for Key Neighbourhoods. We are now looking at offering advice within prisons to help those about to be released back into our community.

- The success of the Surrey-wide Advice First Aid project continues with almost 100 people from community organisations trained to understand the help we can provide, how to use Citizens Advice resources and to enable a direct referral when more in-depth support is needed.

Key Statistics 2025:



We helped **3,675** people
with **10,459** issues



Over **£1.5m** income gained
for our clients



We helped **407** clients and their
families access charitable
support and food banks.



86% of clients said that it was easy
to access our service and **88%** said
they would recommend our service

*'Thank you very much, people
like you inspire me every day of
my life, words are not enough to
say how grateful I am.'*

A thank you from one of our clients:

Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell 2025 Impact Report

Impact	Activities
Enhanced service and access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded access to our services by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing outreach advice to ten different locations across the Borough - Focus on increased AdviceLine capacity (our telephone service) which significantly increased the numbers of clients we helped Almost 100 Advice First Aiders trained across Surrey to increase awareness of the support available from online resources and local Citizens Advice offices Widened our community partnerships enabling direct grants to those clients most in need, these now include Household Support Fund, Wenceslas Fund, Hardship grants and grants for carers. Recruited 14 new volunteers during 2025 to develop our service capacity covering key areas such as digital support officers, volunteer advisers, back office support and research and campaigns. Awarded Double Green rating for our performance audit.

- Community engagement
- Awarded Family Building Society Charity of the Year for the second year
- Bi-monthly engagement with local MP's team to raise awareness of local issues and escalate matters to support resolutions where required.

2026 Risks & Issues:

- The funding environment is increasingly competitive with the focus of many grant funders on specific demographic groups rather than wider community support. In 2025 we lost a long running source of funding for the provision of money advice, and two three year grant funds for mental health and financial wellbeing support will end in 2026.
- Our ambitions to increase and enhance our much needed service are limited by our inability to plan long term with decreasing and short term income streams. Financial uncertainty may result in the loss of vital knowledge and experience from within our small team.
- The decision to split Surrey into two unitary authorities will impact local Citizens Advice offices who receive funding from Borough Councils. We are collaborating with the East Surrey offices however decisions around funding and accommodation post April 2026 will be critical in assessing the long term viability of CAEE.

Update on work undertaken from November 2024 – November 2025

Central Surrey Voluntary Action have supported 361 organisations in the last 12 months. The interests of the sector range from older people to sports, environment and children and young people. We do this through back-office support, advice and information, networking and advocating for the sector through our relationships with local authorities and health. This year we have particularly worked on making sure that information about LGR and changes within the local ICB have been communicated in a timely manner and that our sector has had the opportunity to have its voice heard.

We have allocated 36 hours a week staff time to Epsom and Ewell at a total of £624 per week. Epsom and Ewell Borough Council fund us £7998 per annum. We currently have 2 volunteers supporting our Epsom and Ewell work which equates to an indicative cost for volunteer support of £8,610 per annum.

Indicative salary for volunteers is based on £13.80 per hour for standard support and £25.00 for "professional" support. These rates are used by Surrey County Council. Those volunteers who receive a significant amount of training and are therefore an expert in their field would come under the higher rate.

We have undertaken 107 DBS checks and have over 50 organisations signed up to do their own checks.. We have gone back to providing face to face checks at the behest of DBS. We have signed up organisations to do the checks themselves if they are able to through our account. Charges for the checks done through CSVA have increased to: Volunteers check (for all levels) £20, Staff Enhanced DBS - £70. These charges are due to increase due to higher costs passed on by DBS.

Volunteer Centre

Our Volunteer Centre in Epsom is open to the public but only on Mondays and Thursdays unless an interview has been booked.

We invite potential volunteers in for a chat with an adviser, when people express an interest in volunteering, we are giving them a call first to ascertain whether they need to come in. Volunteer roles have picked up a lot over the last year with organisations looking to recruit volunteers



Central Surrey Voluntary Action

Supporting the voluntary sector in Elmbridge, Epsom & Ewell and Mole Valley

and more people during the summer months looking to volunteer. Figures have not returned to pre-pandemic numbers even though we have put a lot of effort into recruitment and many of our organisations are still struggling with the lack of new volunteers coming forward.

Over the last year we have registered 220 new volunteers, referred 263, recorded 145 new opportunities, and placed 262 volunteers. This equates to approximately £376,022 worth of volunteering.

Funding

During this period a lot of our Charities have been affected by the cost-of-living crisis. Increased costs on utility bills, rent and staffing costs and the loss of regular funding streams they rely upon, has put an inordinate strain on the sector. This situation was compounded by the increase in NI for employers and the increase to the minimum wage. We have been supporting Charities with new funding applications, making them aware of new funding streams and sending out information of new funding when it becomes available. We are sending out regular monthly funding newsletters and have delivered 4 online webinars focussing on the funding cycle and meeting the funders. Over the last year our funding advisor has enabled over £500,00 to be raised for the support of VCSE organisations work within Epsom and Ewell.

STEP Ukraine

Specialist Training Employment Program (STEP)

Central Surrey Voluntary Action, in partnership with [World Jewish Relief](#), launched a project to assist Ukrainian refugees in finding employment. The Specialist Training and Employment Programme (STEP) for Ukrainian refugees living in Epsom & Ewell, Mole Valley and Elmbridge. Weekly drop-in sessions at the Epsom & Ewell Employment Hub have allowed consistent access to guidance and resources, directly impacting the community by offering a reliable support structure.

In addition to the STEP programme we also support the Ukrainian community in many ways here are some examples of what we have been doing.



Central Surrey Voluntary Action

Supporting the voluntary sector in Elmbridge, Epsom & Ewell and Mole Valley

- "Back to School" Bags for Ukrainian Children
Thanks to this project, 105 Ukrainian children in Surrey will be starting school with essential stationery, helping them feel more confident, prepared, and included as they settle into their new learning environment.
- National Trust Annual Passes.
40 National Trust annual membership cards were distributed for Ukrainian refugees, including 17 Family passes to give them access to heritage sites and help them feel more connected to local culture.
- Laptop Support for Ukrainian Guests
We distributed 8 laptops to Ukrainian guests to help them develop essential digital skills and enable them to use the devices for studying, job searching, and other employment-related activities.
- Online English Classes
<https://www.centralsurreyvoluntaryaction.co.uk/home/about-us/projects/refugee-support-and-integration/english-courses>
In June, we launched online English classes in collaboration with a local provider specifically for Ukrainian guests. And in September we opened an additional registration for those who want to join, and we have over 40 new registrations making it over 160 participants for now, helping them improve their language skills and build confidence.
- Weekly Wellbeing Sessions
<https://www.centralsurreyvoluntaryaction.co.uk/home/about-us/projects/refugee-support-and-integration/wellbeing-meetings>
We continue to hold weekly wellbeing sessions in Epsom where people can share experiences, find emotional support, and connect with others facing similar challenges.
- Wellbeing Golf Sessions for Men
<https://www.centralsurreyvoluntaryaction.co.uk/home/about-us/projects/refugee-support-and-integration/golf-lessons>



Recognising the particular vulnerability and isolation of Ukrainian men, in May we launched weekly wellbeing golf sessions tailored to this group. These provided a welcoming and relaxed environment for socialising and improving mental health through gentle physical activity. 12 Ukrainian men benefited from this project. It is closed for now and we have great feedback from the participants!

- Youth Club for Ukrainian Children

We also launched youth club meetings for Ukrainian children in collaboration with the Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network. These sessions offer a safe space for young people to socialise, express themselves, and build lasting friendships.

In Refugee week we were proud to host a Ukrainian Art Exhibition at Bourne Hall. It was really well attended and allowed local artists to showcase their talent