



What is Big Local?

Big Local is an investment of funding and support into 150 small areas around England. Each area uses a fund of at least £1m to make their community an even better place to live.

Our funding approach is based on our experience of running Big Local.

Big Local programme outcomes

1 Communities will be better able to identify local needs and take action in response to them.

2 The community will make a difference to the needs it prioritises.

3 People will have increased skills and confidence, so that they continue to identify and respond to needs in the future.

4 People will feel that their area is an even better place to live.

About this leaflet

This leaflet is based on work carried out by the Institute for Voluntary Action Research on behalf of Local Trust during December 2014. For more information and to see the full report visit the Local Trust website www.localtrust.org.uk.

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Local Trust creating lasting change



Putting residents in control

An overview of our funding approach



How do you fund communities in a way that puts residents (beneficiaries) in the driving seat?

We asked the Institute for Voluntary Action Research (IVAR) to identify the distinctive features of our funding model.

Core principle: resident control

They identified our core principle as resident control, and described four key features that flow from this core principle.

This leaflet is based on IVAR's findings and their full report is available on our website.

Awarding funds from
The National Lottery



Making resident control happen

Big Local was set up in a way that supports resident control.

A trust runs the programme

The Big Lottery Fund gave an expendable endowment to fund the Big Local programme. This endowment is held by Big Local Trust and overseen by Local Trust. The trust model means that local spending is not subject to central or government determined targets and timetables.

No competition for funding

The 150 areas were selected by the Big Lottery Fund. In each area, we brought together residents to decide their local priorities and how the funding should be spent. Residents are encouraged to work collaboratively for the benefit of the wider community, rather than in competition for resources.



Key features of our funding model that flow from the core principle of resident control

1 Time and pace

Big Local is about consistently funding an area for at least ten years – they know that we won't take it away from them.

Big Local areas have at least ten years to spend their funds. The areas are not bound by annual spending targets – they can decide when, as well as where, to spend.



2 Willing to take risks

We have a positive attitude to risk and accept that not everything will succeed. We also emphasise the importance of building strong relationships with Big Local areas as the basis for trust. We balance the need for proper oversight of public money with the commitment to not interfere.

Big Local is built on relationships and trust, not rules and regulations.

3 'Light touch' and flexible

We provide 'light touch' support to Big Local areas. This type of support is enabling, not 'doing for', in line with principles of resident control. It is there when areas want it, with a flexible range of options on offer.

There is a small team at the centre, with outreach through 'people on the ground' and specialist providers.



A commitment to learning and reflection

We feel that an ongoing commitment to learning and reflection is essential for us because we are testing out new approaches to funding communities.

4 Sustainability through maximising assets and investing in communities

We maximise assets in Big Local areas by bringing together all the local talent, ambitions, skills and energy from residents, groups and organisations who want to make their area an even better place to live. As Big Local activities progress, residents build long-term networks and capacity.

We also promote sustainability in Big Local areas by supporting their involvement with

The money ceases to be the focus; the main thing for residents is the community working together to get things done.

social enterprise, community businesses, skills and job training, social investment and local credit unions.

