Grants for Places of Worship programme evaluation

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An evaluation of sixty projects from the Grants for Places of Worship programme demonstrates the role these buildings continue to play in the daily lives of their communities.

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Since 1994, the UK's places of worship have been some of the key beneficiaries of National Lottery support.

We have awarded more than £1billion to projects supporting places of worship, making them the single most supported type of built heritage.

Support has been accessed through a range of programmes. Today, places of worship across the UK continue to receive funding through National Lottery Grants for Heritage.

Grants for Places of Worship

Launched in 2012, Grants for Places of Worship (GPOW) was a targeted programme to support those caring for places of worship. It aimed to engage people with the heritage of the buildings, undertake repairs and, in some cases, add new facilities.

The desired GPOW programme outcomes were:

- heritage will be in better condition
- a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage

Evaluation report

This report was commissioned in 2015 and the study ran until 2019. The evaluation was a four year longitudinal study and explores the experiences of applicants and grantees of the GPOW programme.

Objectives

To track the 60 places of worship that were involved, and evaluate:

- how well they achieved their application aims
- how well they achieved the GPOW programme outcomes
- how effectively the programme outcomes were maintained after the project ended

Some key findings

In the great majority of cases, the place of worship was left in a better condition as a result of the project. About three-quarters of places of worship delivered at least 75% of their community engagement activities.

In terms of maintenance of programme outcomes, most of the respondents were ‘very optimistic’ or ‘quite optimistic’ about the future of their place of worship.

The full report also includes findings on:

- sources of funding
- project managers – what support they received, their response to the specific GPOW processes, and how the project affected them
- how GPOW applicants reacted to rejection of their application for a grant
- what factors tended to increase or decrease the likelihood of success for a project

Explore more

Read the full Grants for Places of Worship programme evaluation in the PDF attached to this page.

Our research and evaluation

We regularly conduct research to discover what is happening in the heritage sector, and we evaluate our work to better understand the change we are making. Read more of our insight.