



Oxfordshire
Community
Foundation



OUR IMPACT 2020

ABOUT OXFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION


Connecting communities for a better Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire Community Foundation (OCF) works to improve lives by addressing social and economic disadvantage.

We tackle the most pressing problems locally: homelessness, educational inequality, and loneliness and isolation.

Our work is all about collaboration and consensus-building. We make the best ideas happen – solutions to the problems, not sticking plasters. This leads to sustained and meaningful improvements to people's lives.

Home-Start is a delivery partner in OCF's Growing Minds project, which provides free books and family support in disadvantaged communities from birth to age 5.



“Disadvantaged communities get ‘project weary’, and feel ‘done to’ rather than ‘done for’. This is why the collaborative element and the long-term element of Growing Minds was very important to us as a funder.”

Stuart Macfarlane, Tambour Foundation, which has seed funded our Growing Minds project

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is creating a whole new world – we must make sure it is one that we want to live in.

Every autumn we share the impact we were able to have with the support of our donors during the previous financial year. But 2020 is a year like no other, and we cannot report back to you on the year to March 2020 without also looking at the effect of this pandemic, which has had such a huge influence on the most recent nine months.

March 2020 brought a feeling that all of our previous priorities had to be put on hold, including plans to celebrate our 25th birthday this year, and a new way of working embraced. We quickly set to work on an emergency crisis response, which we dubbed “respond better” – with a focus on fast, flexible support for the local community via the charity and voluntary sector.

“We’re probably operating at four times the speed and four times the pace compared to three weeks ago. OCF responded really quickly to cover that gap.”

Richard Kennel, South Oxfordshire Food and Education Alliance, the leading charity delivering food parcels to vulnerable people across the county



Nick



Adrian

Read
more on
our blog



However, as this year goes on, we are realising that we had our priorities right all along. Some of those most affected by this crisis are people experiencing homelessness, disadvantaged children, and our society’s most isolated – groups that have been our focus since 2016, corresponding with our strategic programmes.

We are confident that an evolution of our existing work in these areas has never been more needed. The partnership approach that we advocate for has never been more relevant. And we believe that we will only succeed in tackling disadvantage by playing to our strengths as well as adapting when needed.

Now we are turning our attention to the “recover stronger” phase of the pandemic, with further rounds of long-term funding in the pipeline. We believe that a stronger society of the future will need the capacity to thrive through challenging economic times, drawing strength from well organised, empowered communities. These connected communities are exactly what we aim to nurture through both our strategic programmes and grant-making.

This report gives snapshots of this journey. We hope you’ll continue to support us as we look forward to the next 25 years.

Nick Case, Chair, and Adrian Sell, Chief Executive, December 2020

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY TO RESPOND BETTER

As soon as the pandemic hit, we created a dedicated Community Resilience Fund so that we could respond quickly. This attracted our biggest single donation of [£500k from the Indigo Trust](#), combined with UK-wide funds from the National Emergencies Trust. A further £230k has been received from our other generous donors so far.

£735,973

awarded in grants to 139 different organisations between March and December 2020

Most grants were received by frontline delivery charities and community groups within seven days of an application, focusing on food distribution, moving services online, and meeting core costs, enabling rapid adaptations to meet immediate needs.

“What OCF has done is enabled us to go forward without financial restrictions; so when we sat down to decide how to respond, we had a green light.”

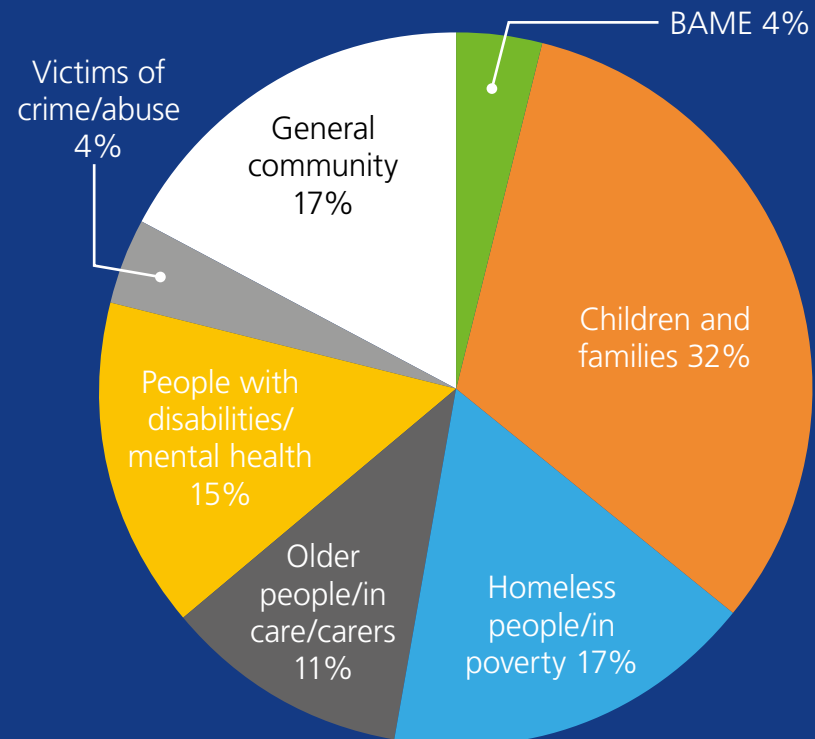
Jon Fitzpatrick, The Porch, which delivered 200 hot meals a day to homeless and vulnerably housed people during lockdown



OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE

The story so far...

Beneficiaries



Read the full report



FUTURE COVID CHALLENGES

The demographic data on local needs, which we use to inform our work and planning, show that socio-economic impacts are already being felt, and huge uncertainty exists for many people in Oxfordshire.

We are particularly concerned about the impact on children from low-income families, who were already struggling before the pandemic and whose wellbeing and education are at risk.

“When you’re financially struggling we know that it’s much more difficult, because the stress of parenthood and the feelings of guilt and failure and shame at not being able to give your child the decent upbringing you want to are very difficult for parents to cope with.”

Fran Bennett, Senior Research Fellow, Oxford University
Department of Social Policy at an OCF webinar

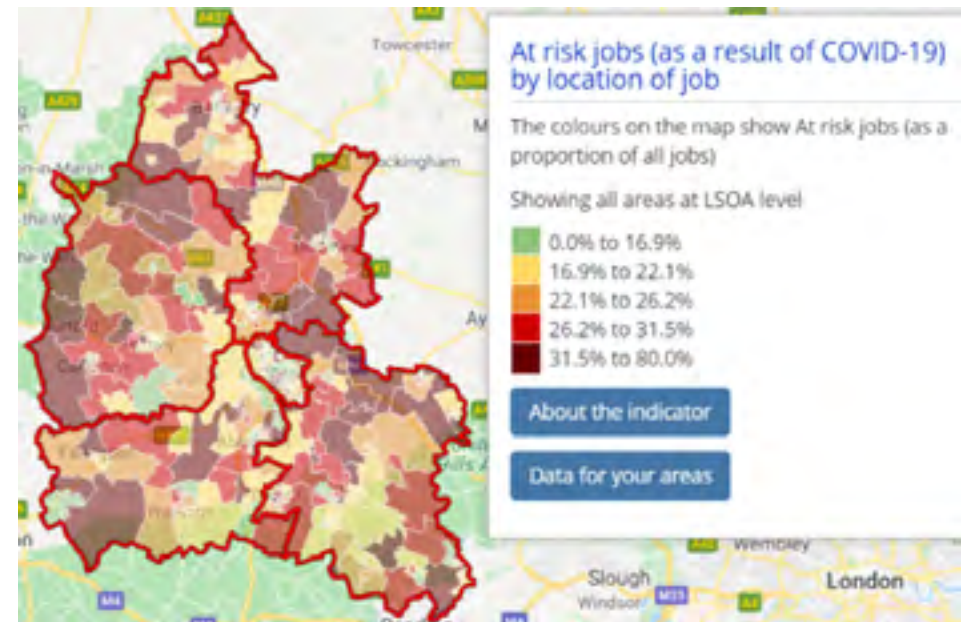
This is just one reason why fundraising continues for our response, and why funds are being safeguarded to ensure we are able to support the ongoing needs and a strong recovery.



Visit our Knowledge Hub

165%

Percentage increase in unemployment across Oxfordshire since March



As of early November, there were 76,334 jobs at risk in the county due to COVID-19. Source: [OCF Local Insight Report](#)

HELPING OUR COMMUNITIES RECOVER STRONGER

We are now making strategic investments focused on different communities that have been affected by the pandemic.

The first three organisations chosen for funding embody partnership working, operating collaboratively with other local charities, and bringing the voices and views of the people they help into their decision-making.

All three are moving on from immediate crisis response, with carefully designed programmes that integrate lessons learnt so far in order to make a positive long-term impact.

“At the heart of this work is our core belief about connection – we thrive when we come together. How can we build on that togetherness and connectivity? With OCF’s support, we now have the capacity to invite others on this journey.”

Sara Fernandez, Oxford Hub, in her guest blog article for OCF



Oxford Hub

£44,700

to develop their Oxford Together neighbourhood volunteering programme



SOFEA

£50,000

to expand the community larder model to further areas of disadvantage



Asylum Welcome

£50,000

to strengthen grassroots community groups that support refugees

COVID REVEALS A DIGITAL DEFICIT

Our conversations with charity partners throughout lockdown revealed that access to technology was impeding the most vulnerable – homeless people accommodated in hotels had no access to support services; children in low-income families had no devices for remote learning; and older people were entrenched in isolation without the skills to get online.

“Thanks to OCF we’ve ordered a whizzy new computer in an isolated area where parents can come and log on here to their Zoom meetings with social workers or their court hearings.”

Jill Edge, The Sunshine Centre in Bretch Hill, Banbury – one of the most deprived areas of Oxfordshire

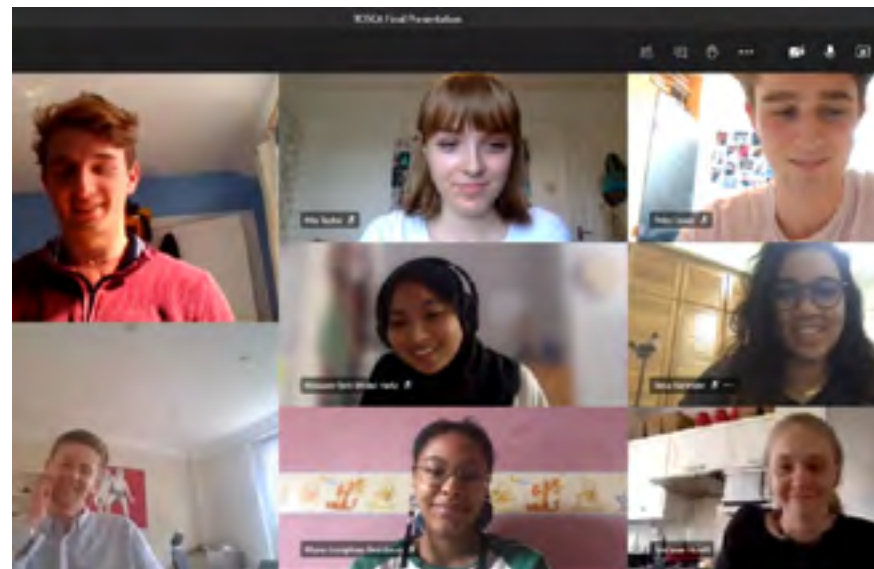
Number of students estimated to not have their own devices

**NURSERY AND
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

5,870

**SECONDARY
SCHOOL**

3,507



In September, we commissioned The Student Consultancy to research the problem for us.

We are now employing a project manager to kick off [Getting Oxfordshire Online](#) – a collaborative initiative that will refurbish unused devices, make data and connectivity available, and give people the skills and confidence to get online.

APPROXIMATELY

9,377

DEVICES ARE NEEDED

To supply to
disadvantaged
children in
Oxfordshire

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO TACKLE HOMELESSNESS

During the first lockdown, people across the country were immediately brought in from the streets to protect them and the public from the threat of the pandemic. Could homelessness be solved overnight?

“There are people coming in who haven’t been inside for years, and who are recognising that they can accept support and help.”

Jane Cranston, Chair, Oxfordshire Homeless Movement at our webinar on homelessness

Sadly, rough sleeping is just the tip of a large homelessness iceberg; and of course, temporary accommodation is not a place to call home. Now, due to the economic fallout of lockdown, pressure is building again, with more people at risk of homelessness. But we can end homelessness if we are determined enough.



This work supports people like Sam, who is now housed in OHM partner Aspire’s Beckett Street project since being made homeless during coronavirus.

Find out more on the OHM website



We are continuing to host and support Oxfordshire Homeless Movement (OHM) to facilitate genuine and lasting collaboration between the many agencies working hard to tackle homelessness locally. OHM is working to fill the gaps that others can’t, such as:

- Supporting people who cannot access government-funded services due to their country of origin
- Providing the finishing touches to accommodation that turns it into a real home
- Ensuring that those with lived experience of homelessness are at the heart of local decision-making.



THE URGENT NEED TO CLOSE THE EDUCATION GAP

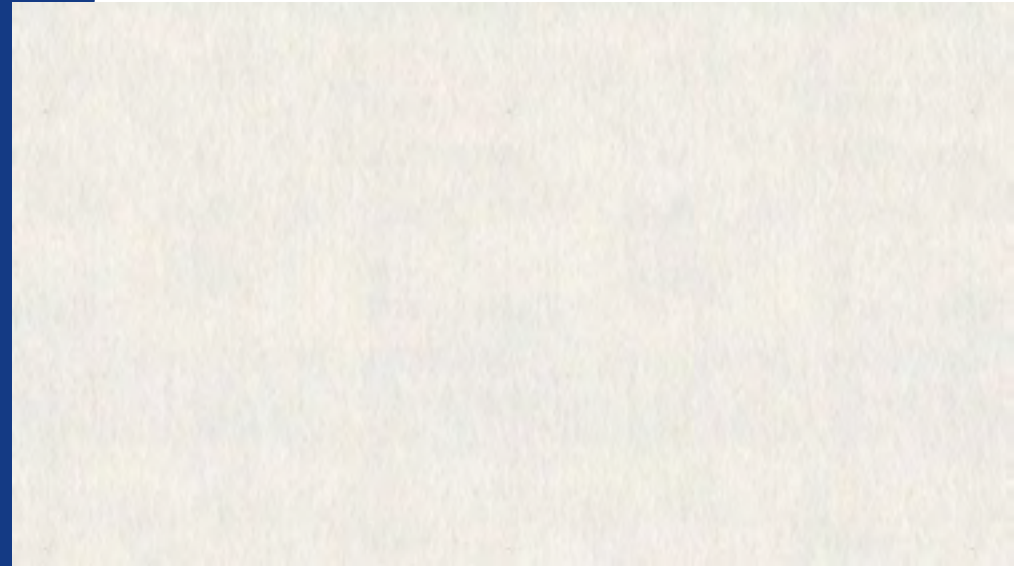
Oxfordshire already faces a larger attainment gap at age 16 than the rest of England, and recent research from Ofsted shows that disadvantaged children have regressed as a result of lockdown. We are concerned that this will affect school readiness and their opportunity to thrive over the long term, so believe that our Growing Minds project has never been more needed.

“We have a responsibility to prioritise those children who have no voice, no language, no connections outside the home.”

Karen Porter, Senior Coordinator, Home-Start Oxford

This project focuses on the early years – a time when, with reduced health visitor and other statutory support, children are effectively hidden and families are without the help they need.

Since launching in January 2020, despite the challenges of the pandemic, Growing Minds has already reached 102 families in Berinsfield and Littlemore. The project’s one-to-one and peer learning sessions have moved online, and free books are still being delivered.



Get the latest on Growing Minds



COUNTERING THE EPIDEMIC OF LONELINESS

The COVID-19 pandemic is bringing out the language of loneliness. 'Self-isolation' and 'social distancing' have become common terms, but they are all the more resonant for people who were already struggling with their mental health before this crisis, or who had already lost the social and emotional connections that gave them a sense of belonging.

An extensive consultation with the community in Cherwell district led to the establishment of the Age Friendly Banbury partnership. During COVID-19, partners have [rallied round to help isolated older people](#), [held a communal 'big lunch' event online](#), [promoted mask wearing in the town centre](#) and [celebrated the International Day of Older Persons](#) at a pop-up stall in the market square.



Businesses with premises in Banbury have signed up to an age friendly pledge to make older people feel more welcome in the town centre

Get the latest on Age Friendly Banbury



OUR AGE FRIENDLY PLEDGE

We are an age friendly business, and are working to:



BE WELCOMING AND FRIENDLY

- A smile of greeting, good hospitality, the exchange of kind words
- Aware of communication challenges and conditions like dementia
- Offer practical help, such as carrying shopping
- Allow time for transactions, challenges with technology, small coins



OPENLY SHARE OUR FACILITIES

- Use of toilets and seating to older people on a drop-in basis
- 'Chatty table' where individuals can join others for a chat



CONSIDER EASY, SAFE ACCESS FOR ALL

- Physical space navigable for walking aids/wheelchairs,
- Items within reach and clearly marked
- Toilets and changing rooms checked for access
- Clear signage and displays, good lighting across all facilities
- Help to enter our premises if needed

SIGNPOST PEOPLE TO MORE INFORMATION

- Staff aware of local resources to support older people
- Printed information available on our premises

To find out more about Age Friendly Banbury, please visit oxfordshire.org/afb or call Bee Myson on 07500 285909



OCF's Age Friendly Banbury Co-ordinator Bee Myson spoke on Banbury FM about how to encourage older people out during the pandemic

GRANT-MAKING 2019–20

Working with philanthropists, fundholders and other donors, in the previous financial year we distributed...

£1,225,576

via 148 grants to charities and community groups in Oxfordshire and beyond*

Last year we offered a range of grants, from one-off support for 'small and vital' volunteer-led projects, to funds for longer-term infrastructural change.

£200

to East Oxford United Club to take refugee children to a football match at Wembley Stadium

£5,266

to Elmore Community Services to support people with complex needs such as homelessness, substance misuse or offending behaviour

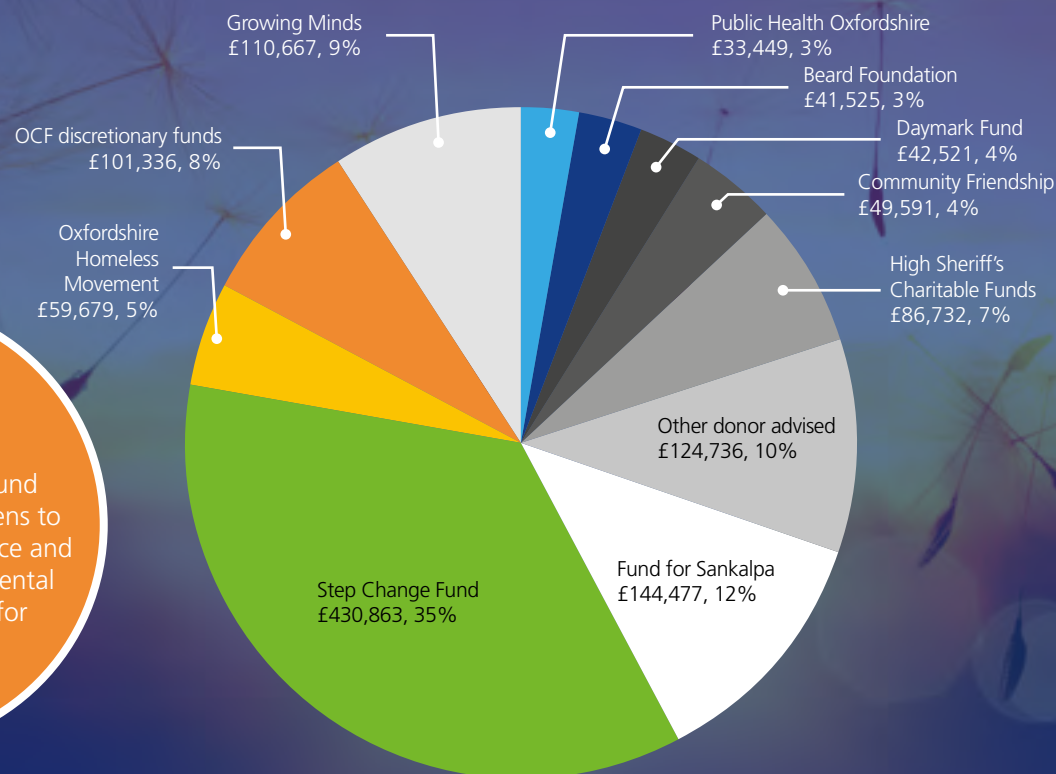
£9,998

to Cherwell Theatre Company to boost confidence and literacy for some of the most disadvantaged children in Banbury

£71,000

from the Step Change Fund to Bridewell Organic Gardens to transform their physical space and operations, securing its mental health recovery service for the next 25 years

Amount distributed by fund



Find all of our grants on 360 Giving



*NB This does not include our COVID response grants, which were made in the current financial year that runs from April 2020 to March 2021.

STORIES BEHIND THE NUMBERS – 2019–20



Oxfordshire Breastfeeding Support

The charity received £10,980 to connect parent communities in Oxford city centre with disadvantaged families in Barton and Donnington, reaching 250 new families. One beneficiary says: "I always felt boosted after attending a session, the moral support and encouragement was great and helped me to keep trying until things improved."



Down's Syndrome Oxford

£1,191 was used to run a singing and signing choir for young people with Down's and their families. This promotes wellbeing, confidence, and communication skills amongst the young people, but is also a vital support network for parents, many of whom suffer from anxiety or depression. "It's more than just a choir – to be with people who get it and understand", says one parent.



Joss Searchlight

The charity received £3,600 to help organise their Witney Wonderland event for Christmas 2019. Funding was used to run intergenerational singing workshops and carry out outreach to the most deprived parts of the town, bringing everyone together and breaking down many social barriers between the 'haves' and 'have nots', and between different ethnic communities.



Oxford Against Cutting

The Step Change Fund provided £40,000 to develop a new income stream providing sex and relationships education in private schools. This will enable the charity to subsidise sessions in state schools with more limited budgets, and protect more vulnerable women from female genital mutilation and honour-based abuse.

Find more case studies on our website



HOW YOU CAN HELP

If, like us, you believe that everyone deserves a place to call home, every child should have an opportunity to thrive and everyone should feel a sense of belonging to the community where they live, please continue to give what you can to help make this a reality.

At OCF we help you maximise the impact of your giving by harnessing the power of collective funds, expertise and passion, working with our partners for a better Oxfordshire. We now have three distinct ways to make a difference:



Join our Friends

Share in OCF's successes by contributing discretionary funds of £250 a year, which will be used where they are most needed.



Support a strategic programme

Enable innovative solutions to homelessness, educational inequality and loneliness by supporting our partnership work.



Become a Patron

Invest in OCF's long-term stability by committing to a substantial discretionary gift for three years or more.

"OCF's knowledge and resources drive real change. They unlock the power of community, allowing people to feel more connected to those around them, and for all who live in Oxfordshire to have better lives."

Amanda Ponsonby, High Sheriff of Oxfordshire 2020–21

GET IN TOUCH

Arrange a meeting

Our Chief Executive and team of dedicated trustees would love to meet philanthropic individuals or businesses who want to make a difference, and connect with local charities and community groups.

Ask us anything

We can provide research data, evidence our impact, answer questions about our programmes, or connect you with others in our extensive networks.

Find us online

Browse written and video case studies, information about our collaborative projects, plus all our latest insight, news, views and events on our website.

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