



Smart giving to grow local charities

Step Change is a charitable fund focused on helping leading Oxfordshire charities grow and thrive. It uses a unique approach to ensure donor funds are well invested, resulting in an exceptionally high success rate during the life of the fund.



The aim of the Step Change Fund is to strengthen foundations of proven voluntary sector organisations, so that they can grow to meet the challenges faced by some of our most disadvantaged neighbours.

For many people in our county, these challenges are multiple and often embedded across generations and within areas. The Step Change Fund supports medium-sized social organisations that are already making a positive difference, making substantial grants to strengthen them over the long term.

The Step Change Fund is hosted and administered by Oxfordshire Community Foundation (OCF). OCF provides the first point of contact for charities and ensures that applicants meet the fund's broad eligibility criteria. This guidance, combined with the proven Step Change methodology, has seen the fund achieve an 80% success rate and an average increase of 61% in the turnover of the organisations supported.

The fund maintains regular communication with its donor community: an annual dinner, quarterly updates and access to members of the Grants Panel ensure donors understand where and why funds are being allocated and can see the impact of their giving.

The fund has achieved an 80% success rate and an average turnover increase of 61% in the charities supported

The need in Oxfordshire

While Oxfordshire is for most a very attractive home, it also features great inequality and examples of social deprivation:

- 15 neighbourhoods in Oxfordshire are amongst the 20% most deprived in England¹
- 1 in 5 children in Oxford are living in poverty¹
- Less than half of the population can afford so-called 'affordable' housing²

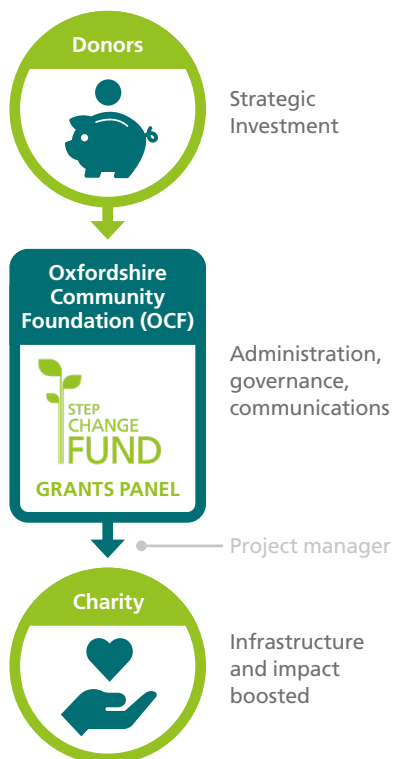
¹ English Index of Multiple Deprivation

² Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Oxfordshire County Council

The Step Change Fund makes substantial grants to charities with a turnover of £75k–£750k whose beneficiaries are amongst the county’s most disadvantaged people. They must demonstrate that they have outstanding leadership.

The Step Change methodology

1. Charity submits an ‘**Expression of Interest**’ setting out the proposed project
2. If invited, charity pitches a **full bid** detailing key performance indicators, with support from a Step Change project manager
3. On approval, project manager agrees **project milestones** against which tranches of the grant are released
4. Following the final payment, performance continues to be **monitored** for one year



Who we are

The Step Change Fund was established in 2014 when a group of Oxfordshire-based philanthropists recognised that many charitable organisations struggle to obtain funding to build core capacity and thus fail to achieve sustainable growth. Donors to Step Change understand and value the vital contribution to the community made by voluntary sector organisations. The fund gives donors a unique vehicle for combining their resources and making investments at a scale that reinforces the best organisations for the long term.

80%

of KPIs met across
Step Change projects



61%

average increase in charity
turnover after funding



£1.7m

in charity
investments
since 2014

Charities
funded

32

£35k

Average
grant

Supporting **PROVEN** charities...



Strong
leadership



Commitment to
increase capacity

...via a **PROVEN** methodology



Substantial
infrastructure
funding



Mentor
support

Smart
giving



Strategic
philanthropy



Informed
donors



**Strengthening foundations
for future growth**

"The Step Change investment enabled us to significantly increase our income from sales of training. The income generated has enabled us to reach more families in need of our therapeutic support."

Helen Callaghan
CEO, Oxfordshire Parent
Infant Project (OxPIP)



"Step Change enabled us to better understand the impact our work has on the youth sector and on the young people we serve. The Project Manager offered us genuine support and guidance throughout, making the whole experience really positive."

Jodie Lloyd-Jones
CEO, Oxfordshire Youth

"Whilst the numbers are encouraging, the most important thing is that these figures represent regular meaningful human contact for people who would otherwise be suffering the acute pain of loneliness."

Sheila Furlong
Chief Executive, Archway Foundation



"Step Change's support has enabled us to expand our services, develop our partnership work and raise our community profile. With a focus on the health benefits of social-welfare advice, the project aims to prevent crisis by reaching people earlier."

Mandy Richards
Centre Manager, Agnes Smith Advice Centre



"Donors to Step Change can be confident that their contributions are used to support the most effective charities and that grants are only disbursed after agreed project milestones have been met. We are proud that our grants support excellent projects at the best charities."

Sandy Arbuthnot, Step Change Chair and donor

Next steps

To further build the fund, we seek donors to join our group and make a pledge for the next phase.

If you'd be interested in joining us,
please contact Step Change Chair
Sandy Arbuthnot at:

sandy.arbuthnot@oxfordshire.org

If you'd like further
information, please visit
the OCF website:

www.oxfordshire.org/step-change-fund



The Step Change Fund is a charitable fund hosted and administered by Oxfordshire Community Foundation, Charitable Incorporated Organisation number 1151621.