

# OXFORDSHIRE UNCOVERED

SECOND  
EDITION

Why effective philanthropy is needed to build  
thriving communities in our county



*"This new edition of Oxfordshire Uncovered makes  
a powerful case for philanthropy in the county."*

**Marjorie Neasham Glasgow BEM,**  
HM Lord-Lieutenant of Oxfordshire

Sponsored by the High  
Sheriff of Oxfordshire



Oxfordshire  
**Community**  
Foundation

# About Oxfordshire Community Foundation

We improve lives and tackle inequality by investing in Oxfordshire's dynamic charitable sector.

Oxfordshire Community Foundation (OCF) is a charity that builds thriving communities through effective philanthropy, matching investment to the needs of small charities. We fund around 200 grassroots charitable organisations each year, giving around £2 million annually to tackle priority issues.

Why local donors choose to work with us:

1. We understand the needs of communities in Oxfordshire
2. We bring together funds from multiple sources
3. We have relationships with thousands of local charitable organisations
4. We run an expert, fair and rigorous grant-making process
5. We follow up and assess impact.

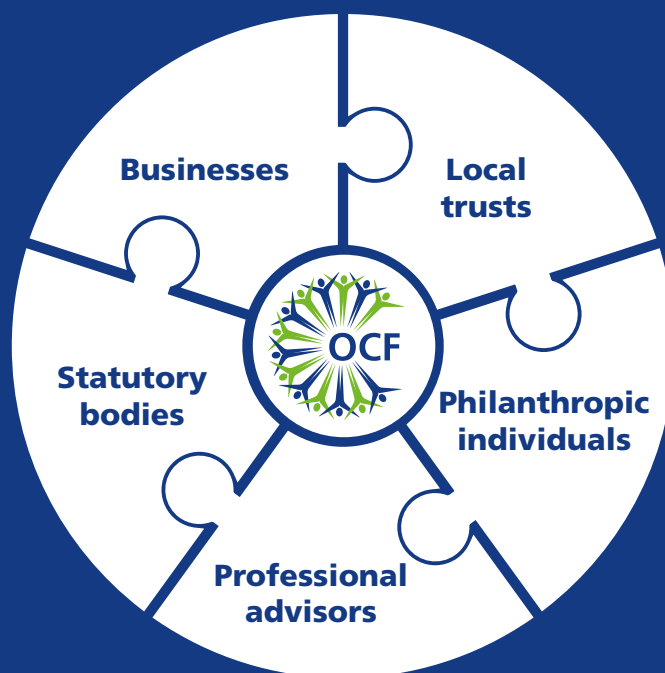
Our funders work with us because they feel confident of a safe and efficient home for their donations, without any of the hassle of setting up and managing their own charitable trust. They are able to make a bigger difference together than they ever could alone.

*"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 MBE,  
OCF donor



in an independent assessment of transparency, accountability and diversity by the Foundation Practice Rating



To find out more about joining our giving community, visit [www.oxfordshire.org/giving](http://www.oxfordshire.org/giving).

## References

A full list of references by page of this document is available at [www.oxfordshire.org/uncovered/references](http://www.oxfordshire.org/uncovered/references).

**All quoted facts and figures are specifically about Oxfordshire unless otherwise stated.**



# Introduction

Every single person in Oxfordshire deserves to be part of a thriving community, where everyone lives a decent life. Unfortunately, too many people face barriers to their safety, wellbeing and fulfilment.

**In 2016, OCF published the first edition of Oxfordshire Uncovered, where we revealed some of the surprising and concerning issues affecting our county. Since then, we have experienced a pandemic, a cost-of-living crisis and increasingly extreme weather, all of which have affected the most vulnerable in our county the greatest. These have highlighted to us the importance of investing in preventative measures and resilience, alongside immediate relief.**

Over the last few years charities have been stretched to breaking point by increased demand for their vital services, combined with increased running costs and decreased giving. Nonetheless, our county's effective and expert charitable sector has stepped up in these hardest of times.

In publishing this second edition of Oxfordshire Uncovered, we reveal the latest headlines about the barriers that stop people in Oxfordshire from thriving, and why charities and philanthropy are so vital in our county. These include: unaffordable essentials; poor health; loneliness and fear; and lack of opportunity.

Our purpose is thriving communities, and we believe that effective philanthropy is a crucial way to achieve this – combining and investing our county's resources to deliver targeted funding to grassroots charities that cannot dedicate many of their own resources to fundraising.

We believe that the people of Oxfordshire have the desire, commitment and prosperity to make this vision a reality.

**A donation to Oxfordshire Community Foundation will change lives. Find out more on the following pages about how your money could be used.**


***"A highly enlightening and honest report on life in Oxfordshire. Oxfordshire Uncovered shines a light on the difficulties faced by our neighbours and fellow Oxfordshire residents, and offers insights into how our communities can come together for a brighter future."***

**Chief Constable Jason Hogg,**  
Thames Valley Police



# Oxfordshire and its communities

 **725,300**  
people live in  
**Oxfordshire**  
(2021 census)

 **18%**  
are aged  
**over 65**

 **35%**  
live in  
**rented**  
accommodation

Primary schools in  
Oxford have over

**100**

different first  
languages

**23%**  
are from an  
**ethnic  
minority**  
background

**Population**  
increased by 11% since  
2011, above national  
average of 7%



**22%**  
are **disabled** or  
have a **long-term**  
**health condition**



 **40%**  
live in small towns  
and villages

## Oxfordshire's charity sector

The charity sector in Oxfordshire is wide and varied. Latest figures show it consists of 2,860 organisations and has an income of over £1 billion.

The vast majority of these are micro (income under £10,000) or small (income between £10,000 and £100,000) organisations. It is typically these organisations that are working at grassroots level in communities around the county providing a whole host of support and services directly to those in need.

The breadth of grassroots charities in the county is simply astounding. From dementia clubs and support for young carers, to offering a lifeline to refugees

and women experiencing domestic abuse, these charities make a huge difference to people's daily lives. They offer an essential safety net, filling the gap for what the state cannot provide. Without these innovative and dynamic charities, the picture would be unthinkable.

Everyone needs help at some point in their lives, and for some, this help is transformational and can mean the difference between simply existing and thriving. It is because of these charities

that more people are able to lead fulfilling lives.

**Since our inception in 1995 we have given thousands of grants totalling over £13.5 million to trusted community organisations in Oxfordshire and beyond, and it is thanks to our donors and funding partners that we are able to do this.**

*"Working with OCF is the simple way to give to the themes I care about the most. I would never have known about many of the causes I've helped without them."*

Jane McTaggart,  
OCF donor



Give to **Oxfordshire Community Foundation** and help build thriving communities. Find out more on page 5.

# A tale of two counties

Oxfordshire is not just dreaming spires and green wellies. Peel back the layers and you will discover another Oxfordshire right on your doorstep.

When you think of Oxfordshire, it conjures up visions of world-class education, a dynamic and innovative economy, an Instagram-worthy city, and picture-perfect villages that are rural boltholes for the rich and famous. All of this makes it a wonderful place to live – but whatever words you use to describe the county, they probably don't include poverty, inequality and lack of opportunity.

Around  
**1,800**

households are made homeless in Oxfordshire each year



**48,000**



people in Oxfordshire say they often or always

**feel lonely**

Yet, beneath the visible affluence of the county, there are parts of Oxfordshire where our fellow citizens do not enjoy the same advantages and privileges.

These upsetting figures show the reality of daily life for many, despite living in a county that is among the three most prosperous regions of the UK by individual wealth.

Poverty and deprivation affect childhood wellbeing, educational attainment, risk of disease, obesity levels, mental health, likelihood of drug abuse and imprisonment, exposure to violence and overall social mobility.

People living in the most deprived areas of the county tend to die **12 years earlier** than those in affluent areas



**In Oxford**



**one in six children live in poverty**





# Building a better future through philanthropy

Thriving communities benefit us all. For those who care about the place they live, building a stronger grassroots charity sector is an imperative in building a better society.

The information that follows only scratches the surface of the issues affecting people in our county. However, we believe that Oxfordshire Uncovered will continue to open minds – and hearts – towards the situation for many of our neighbours and fellow Oxfordshire residents.

We have hope for the future, and that we can all pull together to preserve our county for future generations.

Oxfordshire Community Foundation supports our county's heroic charity staff and volunteers, who work incredibly hard every day to address the challenges of unaffordable essentials, poor health, loneliness and fear, and lack of opportunity.

By donating to Oxfordshire Community Foundation, you will make a huge difference to these charitable organisations. Stable, multi-year funding through our grant-making will help them implement preventative solutions as well as crisis support. This requires a significantly bigger and more sustained commitment of philanthropic investment by Oxfordshire's residents and businesses.

For many donors, the personal fulfilment that can come as a result of giving is one of the most enjoyable and rewarding things in their lives. Anyone can join our philanthropic community, whether you have £100 or £1 million to give, and everything in between.

*"I opened a fund with OCF because of their knowledge, expertise and extensive contacts. I wanted to be part of it, to make my dream come true in helping the very young – my fund encompasses everything I've done in the past and expands the impact I've achieved."*

**Jane Wates OBE**,  
one of OCF's most  
significant donors before  
she passed away in 2020

# The difference your gift can make

When you give through OCF you fund the smallest charities in Oxfordshire, and every pound has a transformative impact.

Many of the charities we work with have incomes under £100,000 and are powered by volunteers. We know through years of working with them that these groups offer incredible value for money with very lean operations, but they lack the resources to become known beyond their immediate circle.

Take Dance Creative, a charity with an income of just £33,000. They enable people to improve their health and well-being through regular dance classes, specialising in working with isolated older adults and others with long-term health conditions like Parkinson's. A grant of £9,000 from Oxfordshire Community Foundation funded an entire year of creative dance classes in a deprived area, subsidised or free for low-income participants. Their application was one of just 30 selected for funding from more than 200 organisations that applied for support in the face of the cost-of-living crisis. With your help, we could fund so much more.



## Take action by giving through OCF

Here is what you can do to help:

### Your own fund

When you make a substantial donation or leave a gift in your will, we can tailor your local giving to your particular interests. A bespoke named fund is an effective alternative to creating a charitable trust, benefiting from OCF's knowledge of local needs and the organisations tackling them.



### Regular or one-off gifts

If you want us to direct your funds to the most pressing local causes of the moment, you can make an unrestricted donation online or by standing order. We will collect Gift Aid where relevant, and let you know what we have achieved with your help.



### Collective giving

Give with people who share your philanthropic interests and make a bigger difference together. By supporting one of our collective funds, you can direct your giving towards a particular geography or issue.



### Corporate giving

Support your organisation's CSR or charitable funding objectives. Whether you represent a local business, a trust or foundation, or a statutory body, we can offer robust, dynamic ways to get your funding into the community.



To join our giving community, visit [www.oxfordshire.org/giving](http://www.oxfordshire.org/giving).





# Unaffordable essentials

Too many of Oxfordshire's residents are facing a daily struggle to provide the basics for living a stable and safe life, which can lead to a spiral of instability, debt, ill-health, isolation and lack of opportunity.

Having a place to call home, which is warm and with readily available food, is something many of us may take for granted. However, for some, fulfilling this basic need for themselves and their family is a huge challenge. For too many people, life is a case of surviving rather than thriving.



## Homelessness

Oxfordshire faces one of the worst housing crises in the country. Unaffordable, precarious housing and homelessness are devastating for those affected, and are often the root cause of issues such as behavioural problems, poor school attainment, mental health conditions, substance abuse and criminality.

The systemic factors above mean more people are at risk of becoming

homeless. Relationship breakdown or losing a job can push people into homelessness, as well as leaving prison, care or the army.

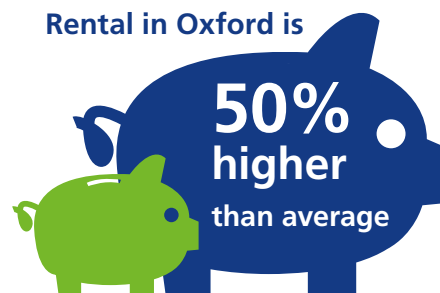
On any one night in Oxfordshire during 2022 it is estimated that there were over 400 homeless people across the county, including 160 children.

Over the last few years, the councils and voluntary organisations in the county have cooperated to improve services and help more people. The 'Everyone In' initiative during the pandemic reduced the number of people visibly sleeping rough. Despite this, the cost-of-living crisis, soaring rental costs and shortage of social housing mean that the number of people becoming homeless is growing again.

People who are  
homeless in England and  
Wales die on average  
**30 years younger**



Rental in Oxford is



and county house prices are **31% higher**

*"In our rural market towns and villages there are quite a few neighbourhoods where you might find multigenerational living with three, sometimes four generations living in the same house. They are effectively locked into the house because they can't afford to buy another house in the area, and they want to live close to their family. And that creates pressure within a household when the house isn't suitable for that many people to dwell in it."*

Superintendent  
Lewis Prescott-Mayling,  
Thames Valley Police

**Homelessness can be invisible. Sofa-surfing, emergency B&Bs or shelters are not homes, and severely impact on an individual's ability to address all of life's other challenges.**



Story of hope:

## Oxfordshire Homeless Movement (OHM)



**OHM's main project helps people with no access to benefits or government help escape rough sleeping and destitution.**

The project provides accommodation, immigration advice and mental health support, with the aim that guests will become self-sufficient, contributing members of our community. With 15 units of accommodation the project has helped more than 20 people over the last two years, with guests now beginning to resolve their immigration status, sustain their own tenancies and find work. In the words of one the guests:

"It's given me a fighting chance to try and sort myself out so that I can move on. I'm just one person that they've helped, but I can expand on it and give back... That's the reason I want to get better, and try and move on with my life, so OHM can help somebody else as well... I was hanging on a cliff, and I'm not anymore. They put me on firm ground."



## High food and energy costs

In Oxfordshire, the high general cost of food and energy is coupled with the exceptionally high cost of housing in the county, leading to economic instability for many. Eight per cent of Oxfordshire households live in fuel poverty, spending a high proportion of their income on keeping their home at a reasonable temperature. Homes in the county's mostly rural areas are disproportionately affected by this, typically with less energy-efficient housing, and can have greater reliance on more expensive heating fuels such as oil. Implementing clean, affordable energy across all communities, including the less wealthy, has to be a priority for the future.

Families on low incomes are going hungry, unable to afford regular, healthy meals. High food prices are having a disproportionate effect on lower income households, with

*"Thank you so much for the grant monies, which have ensured enrichment to many local deserving families during this time of crisis. The process has been very straightforward."*

**Sue Mackrell,**  
Bicester Food Bank

reliance on food banks increasing. Witney food bank was 50% busier in October 2022 than during the same period in 2021.

This squeeze on monthly outgoings has devastating effects on people and their families. This is where the charity sector steps in to keep people afloat with debt advice, food, clothing and mental health support in this seemingly constant battle to survive.

The effects of climate change also do not treat people equally. Those in poor quality housing are less likely to have built-in measures to deal with extremes of heat or cold, or to be able to afford the extra costs of heating or air conditioning.

Story of hope:

## Waste2Taste

**This social enterprise tackles food waste and food poverty.**



By using high-quality food surplus they are working towards a vibrant, healthy and sustainable food culture. They run 'Cooking for Health and Wellbeing' workshops for homeless and vulnerably housed families experiencing poverty, providing skills in cooking, budgeting, nutrition and seasonality. An eight-week cooking and nutrition programme is aimed at healthy cooking for mothers and babies. Participants share knowledge across cultures, and learn how to improvise healthy recipes from cheap and readily available ingredients. By providing this programme the hope is to provide a strong start for young children, along with lifelong healthy food habits for the whole family.





# Poor health

Poor health has a disproportionate impact on many of Oxfordshire's residents. It affects people's ability to work, be independent and live a long and fruitful life.

Persistent health problems can have a destructive effect on individuals and their families, and the impact can run across generations. People with long-term health conditions often have a small or precarious income. Improving health should be a priority to increase financial stability, as well as reducing the demand on already stretched state provision.

## 105,482



adults in  
Oxfordshire have a  
long-term illness  
or a disability

## Poor physical health

The number of people living with excess weight is rising and it is particularly affecting our most deprived and disadvantaged communities. Being overweight has a cost to wider physical and mental health, reducing quality of life and life expectancy. Obese children and adolescents are around five times more likely to be obese in adulthood.

Estimated  
**320 deaths**



caused by fine  
particulate  
air pollution in  
Oxfordshire

## Oxfordshire figures show:



Lack of life choices contribute to excess weight. For example, if you cannot afford a car, you may rely on convenience stores for your shopping, which offer less healthy food options; or working long or irregular hours might create reliance on ready meals.

Poor air quality is a silent enemy that disproportionately affects the

most vulnerable. Air pollution causes the development of coronary heart disease, stroke, respiratory disease and lung cancer; exacerbates asthma and contributes to mortality. Deprived areas, especially on the outskirts of cities, are more likely to experience poor air quality and the associated impact on health, which in some cases has been fatal.

## Story of hope:

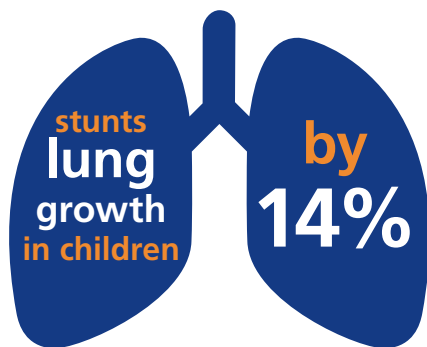
## Sunrise Multicultural Project

**Sunrise works with the most disadvantaged BAME groups in Banbury.**

They delivered a series of sessions to raise awareness of cardiovascular disease and healthy lifestyles, including exercise, healthy cooking and group walks. One participant is diabetic, and acknowledges she is overweight and has problems with her legs and back, often making walking difficult. She is very keen to become healthier and provide a healthy diet for her family. Her yoga sessions have increased her mobility, and her state of mind appears calm and relaxed.

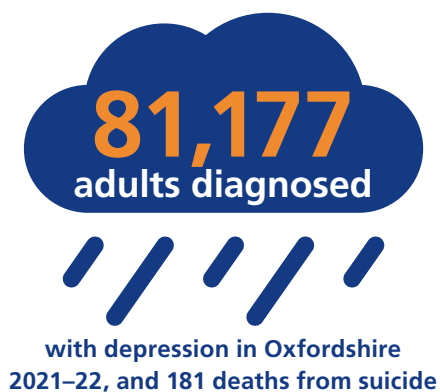


## Air pollution in Oxford



## Poor mental health

The prevalence of depression and demand for mental health services is continuing to increase in Oxfordshire. Factors that impact on mental wellbeing include someone's financial situation, physical activity levels, access to and use of green spaces, and connection to others. Self-harm, an expression of personal distress, is most prevalent in Greater Leys, Barton, Littlemore, Rose Hill, Blackbird Leys and Didcot South East, some of the the most deprived areas of the county.



Mental health issues have an impact on the work of Thames Valley Police. 2022 saw a total of 290 emergency detentions under the Mental Health Act across Oxfordshire.



### Story of hope:

## Root and Branch

This charity supports adults with severe mental health difficulties from an organic farm in the Vale of the White Horse.



They work therapeutically through a wide range of interesting activities such as gardening, blacksmithing, woodworking, artwork, pottery and cookery. One participant said "The friendliness, warmth, love I have had here has helped me heal again. This place is like a warm blanket wrapped around me. The peace and serenity I find here has cleared my head of my thoughts and demons."

*"Tackling obesity and physical inactivity is arguably one of the biggest public health threats as we emerge from the pandemic"*

Ansaf Azhar,  
Oxfordshire Director  
of Public Health

## Substance abuse

24% of 15-year-olds say that they have taken drugs in the last year. Hospital admissions for the use of drugs peak between the ages of 25 and 34 in the county, and these admission rates are higher in areas of greater deprivation. Thames Valley



Police have identified substance use as one of the risk factors that increase the likelihood of individuals being involved in serious violence.

### Story of hope:

## Didcot Train Youth Project

This charity improves the life opportunities of young people in Didcot.



Didcot is a town where socio-economic deprivation is at a significant level, and it is a prime location for county lines and drug or sexual exploitation of young people. A grant enabled the implementation of a Young Leaders Programme, designed to improve positive engagement and outcomes. This will reduce the young people's vulnerability to becoming victims of crime or involved in anti-social behaviour.







# Loneliness and fear

In many areas of Oxfordshire, people do not know or trust their neighbours, and live in isolation. Still others are victims of crime both inside and outside the home.

## Loneliness

Oxfordshire's rural make-up and higher-than-average number of elderly households mean that isolation and loneliness are distressing factors in many people's lives. Loneliness can affect anyone, but the elderly are particularly vulnerable. One in five older people live in rural districts, compared to one in ten in Oxford city, often without access to transport and the internet to keep in touch with friends, find out about local groups and activities or reach out for support.

Loneliness has a serious impact on an individual's wellbeing. It increases ill health, creates greater reliance on



statutory services and makes people less resilient to other life challenges. The physical consequences of loneliness are so great that research suggests that loneliness is as damaging to our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

## Crime and violence

Crime is an important feature of deprivation that has major effects on both individuals and communities. In 2021, total recorded crime was over 2.5 times more prevalent in the most income-deprived 20% of areas compared with the least income-deprived 10% in Oxfordshire.



***"Many thanks for all you do for Daybreak and all the charities in Oxfordshire. OCF does incredible work, and it seems to get better and better each year. We all appreciate you."***

**Lee Gray,**  
CEO, Daybreak

## Story of hope:

## Archway Foundation

**This charity works to relieve the distress associated with loneliness, its causes and impact.**

Oxfordshire County Council funding, administered by OCF, has helped Archway to continue to provide their telephone and face-to-face support. One of the volunteers commented: "I have had a call with P who has been feeling incredibly low and not eating very much. But he said that knowing my call was due today helped motivate him to get out of bed. He said he has decided to make himself eat a little more and feels determined to do it as he so appreciates the support from Archway that helps him keep going. He was quite emotional when talking about this and I could hear how much it means to him that people have him in mind and think about him."



*"Violence against women and girls is such a societal issue around culture. It's not something that the police or any of our partners can solve on their own. It's something that we as a system and as a society need to concentrate on."*

**Assistant Chief Constable  
Katy Barrow-Grint,**  
Thames Valley Police

Gender-based violence is at an all-time high, with figures for domestic abuse, sexual assault and rape continuing to rise in Oxfordshire. These crimes can lead to significant and long-lasting impacts such as mental health issues, suicide attempts and homelessness.



**Violence and sexual offences are 3.6 times more prevalent in the most deprived areas of Oxfordshire**

Story of hope:

## Children Heard and Seen

**This charity supports children impacted by parental imprisonment.**



One participant, Kyle, initially felt like he had nobody he could talk to about his dad being in prison. Through attending online support groups, Kyle came to understand that he was not alone, and was so excited to be in an environment where others shared a similar experience. In his one-to-one sessions, Kyle was given the tools to manage complex feelings and understand that it is okay to still love his dad, despite not liking what he had done.



## Vulnerable new arrivals

Oxfordshire has a long and proud history of welcoming people from around the world, who contribute a huge amount to our county. The emergency evacuation of Afghans in 2021 resulted in about 250 people

put up in local hotels; 100 have now been resettled here under official programmes. Approximately 2,400 Ukrainians fleeing the war arrived between 2022 and 2023. Oxfordshire has also become an official dispersal area for asylum seekers, with around 700 people accommodated across the county awaiting a decision on their claim. Newcomers who do not speak English face particular barriers to becoming integrated into their community. 10.4% of Oxford City households have no-one speaking English as their main language, which is over double the England average. A lack of English can prevent individuals from meeting a whole host of different needs, from feeling they belong in their local community, to accessing essential services that most of us take for granted. This lack of a support network can even make them vulnerable to crime.

Story of hope:

## Damascus Rose Kitchen

**This social enterprise helps refugee women to overcome barriers to employment and inclusion in the community.**



Many have experienced trauma both in their homeland and on their journey to safety. Their aim is to empower other refugee women to make social connections, improve their language skills and develop their independence in the UK. The women are skilled cooks, and operating from the Old Fire Station café in Oxford, they prepare high-quality, authentic Middle Eastern food. This vibrant social enterprise enables the women to retain their culture whilst becoming active participants in their new community.



**24%**  
of adults in  
Oxfordshire



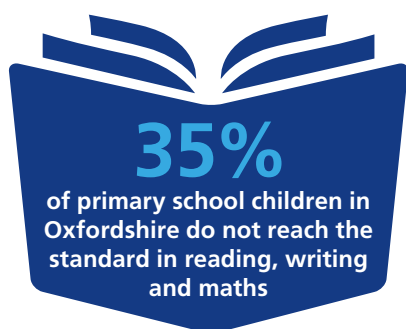
**say they always or often feel lonely**



# Lack of opportunity

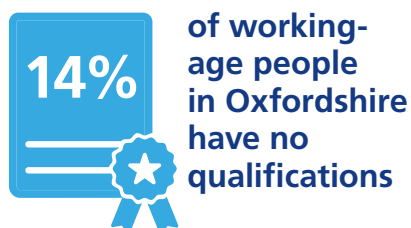
Life chances are the opportunities each individual has to improve their quality of life and fulfil their potential. For those born into deprivation, low educational attainment, digital exclusion and unemployment can have a stifling effect throughout life.

One in six children in Oxford is living in poverty – one in nine across the county, which sadly can start a lifetime of deprivation and inequality. Lower educational attainment and earnings, and higher entrapment in the criminal justice system, are just some of the issues more likely to affect this group.



## Educational inequality and unemployment

Despite Oxfordshire being home to some of the world's leading educational institutions and research centres, too many of our children are faced with challenges that limit their academic and career opportunities. This starts before school, with measures of development from age two already showing poorer outcomes for the most income deprived.



of 2-year-olds in Oxfordshire do not reach a good level of development

The trend for underachieving compared to wealthier children becomes more marked as time moves on, and is compounded when poverty is combined with coming from a racially minoritised background.

GCSE attainment in Cherwell is below the national average, while young people classified as Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in the city is the highest in the county.



## Story of hope: Growing Minds

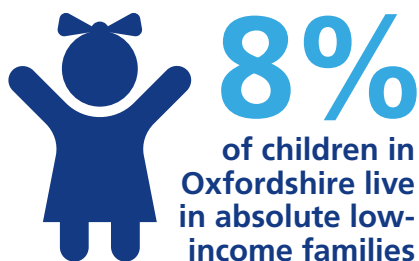
Growing Minds is an evidence-based, collaborative school readiness project based in two areas of high deprivation in Oxfordshire.



It addresses the inequalities in educational attainment right from the start; by providing support to families to improve and enhance the home learning environment. Growing Minds engages families who are the most marginalised and gives them access to one-to-one mentoring support; a group learning programme; and free books for their children. Since it began in 2020, 91% of families said Growing Minds has improved their parent-child relationships, and 97% of families now read at least three times a week with their children. One participant commented "We have sung songs together, I have focused more on counting and I have explained more things to him."







Not having a good educational underpinning means you are less likely to have a fulfilling and economically advantageous career and working life.

The Covid pandemic has also disrupted future outcomes for a generation of children, with research from The Prince's Trust highlighting that 59% of young people in the UK describe their generation's outlook as "frightening".

## Digital exclusion

Digital access is now an essential, not a luxury. It is estimated that up to 40,000 people in Oxfordshire are not online. This issue was highlighted during the pandemic, when people were suddenly unable to access education or healthcare, creating an even greater digital divide. Poverty is the most reliable predictor of digital exclusion, with families, the elderly and asylum seekers particularly impacted.

## Story of hope: My Life My Choice

This charity is run by and for people with learning disabilities in Oxfordshire.



They work to ensure people with learning disabilities are treated without prejudice and are able to have choice and control over their own lives. "Computer Buddy" is a project supporting members to develop their digital skills. The project supplied the charity's membership with free laptops or tablets and provided support and training to help members learn to use email, video conferencing apps and other tools, as well as how to stay safe online. One participant, Charlene, has learnt how to use Facebook. She is now able to chat online to her family.



People with learning disabilities are also vulnerable to digital exclusion, further widening the social inequality gap. Nationally, 15% of disabled people have never been online compared to 3% of non-disabled people.



**people aged 75+ in Oxfordshire have never used the internet**

## Story of hope: Office of Care Leaver Advocacy

This charity supports young adults leaving the care system to embark on independent living, addressing the gaps in support for employment, education, wellbeing and life skills.



OCF funding has helped them to establish the 'Care Leavers Together' project, which combats loneliness and isolation through planned social activities and events for all local care leavers. It also provides training, qualifications (first aid, safeguarding etc), career advice and one-to-one support to make sure willing individuals are equipped with transferrable skills to increase their chances of employability.



## Lack of support for care leavers

The number of cared-for children in Oxfordshire has been increasing for over a decade, at a much faster rate than nationally. As care leavers transition to independence, they face a lack of opportunity in suitable housing, employment or emotional support. In addition, they are at a greater risk of social exclusion, health problems and offending. In 2022 there were 332 care leavers in Oxfordshire, of which 45% were not in education, employment or training. This figure is worse than the regional average.

Take action by giving through  
Oxfordshire Community Foundation.  
To join our giving community visit  
**[www.oxfordshire.org/giving](http://www.oxfordshire.org/giving)**.



## Acknowledgements

Oxfordshire Community Foundation would like to thank the following people and organisations who have been instrumental in creating this second edition of Oxfordshire Uncovered:

- **The High Sheriff of Oxfordshire 2023–24 Sally Scott**, without whom this publication would not have been possible
- **Magda Charlton** from Research Oxford, who pulled together the initial research report
- **Daisy Hickman, Margaret Melling** and colleagues at Oxfordshire County Council, whose Joint Strategic Needs Assessment informed much of this report
- **Ansaf Azhar**, Director of Public Health at Oxfordshire County Council and colleagues, whose annual report informed this report
- **Katy Barrow-Grint** and colleagues from Thames Valley Police, who agreed to be interviewed for this report
- **Sam Hampton** from the Oxford University Environmental Change Institute, who produced a report for OCF on the environmental picture in Oxfordshire
- **Our Patrons, Friends, donors and fundholders**, whose support has made it possible for OCF to spend time pulling this report together
- **Our colleagues from across the charitable sector**, who we rely on entirely to have an impact on the issues identified here.

*"I highly recommend Oxfordshire Uncovered to anyone who wants to understand how global and national issues – ranging from energy security to refugee movements, from our ageing population to mental health – are playing out locally in this fabulous county that I'm proud to call home."*

**Professor Irene Tracey,**  
CBE, FRS, FMedSci,  
Vice-Chancellor, University of Oxford

*"This excellent report shines a spotlight on health inequalities in Oxfordshire and the essential role of the charitable sector for improving residents' mental and physical health."*

**Ansaf Azhar,**  
Oxfordshire Director  
of Public Health

ocf@oxfordshire.org  
01865 798666  
www.oxfordshire.org  
3 Woodin's Way, Oxford, OX1 1HD



Charitable Incorporated Organisation (England & Wales) No. 1151621

© Copyright 2023 Oxfordshire Community Foundation. All rights reserved.