

Review of the Year

April 2024



About Step Change

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, awarding substantial grants to strengthen them over the long term.

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.

The Step Change Fund provides grants to charitable organisations where their projects have the greatest potential to do good. It provides a unique offering to local charities to maximise the chance of success. With a dedicated panel, local knowledge, and the support of volunteer project managers the opportunity for long-term and sustainable growth is greatly increased.

The 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.

To find out more visit www.oxfordshire.org/step-change-fund.

Chair's report

April 2024

The Step Change Fund has enjoyed another busy year, with a return to normality following the disruptions of the pandemic. The needs of Oxfordshire's disadvantaged continue to grow, and charities are now getting back to planning for the future.

Since our last review we have held five panel meetings and have considered 14 full bids (up from seven in the previous year). All but one of these bids were approved, resulting in a grants total of over £500,000. Forty-one Expressions of Interest (EoI) were also considered, of which 15 were invited to proceed to full bids, and two were asked to resubmit.

While the fund is seeing a marked increase in grant applications, we continue to focus on making grants that have permanent long-term benefits (step changes) to the grantee organisation, rather than funding charities' routine running costs.

We are striving to make grant applications less onerous, and OCF has introduced an online application process, which first ensures that the charity meets our criteria before outlining their proposed project.

On the retirement of Annette Ahern, we are grateful that her key role in administering the Step Change Fund has been taken on at OCF by Claire Hughes and Sarah Changizi-Cooper. Anne Davies has recently stepped down from her role as OCF representative on the panel and I would like to record my thanks for her very supportive contribution over recent years.

Following our successful social event at SOFEA in late 2022, we are planning a further evening event in June to thank existing donors and project managers, and also to introduce the fund to potential new donors. I know we can rely on a warm welcome from the wonderful SOFEA team.

As always, it is my special pleasure to thank our donors, whose generosity allows us to support the county's very best charities. We continue to be funded by sizeable donations from a small group of local philanthropists who value the rigour with which our grants are awarded and subsequently dispersed. As a result of our recent increase in grant approvals, we are looking to add to this donor group in the coming months.

Our project manager model sets the Step Change Fund apart from most other grant-giving organisations, and the quality of our project manager group is key to the fund's success. I wish to record my thanks to these key individuals who give so generously of their time and experience. Their brief biographies can be found at the end of this report.

We look forward to maintaining our current high level of grant awards to organisations with strong, established leadership that can use the funds to stabilise and grow in these challenging times.



"We continue to be funded by sizeable donations from a small group of local philanthropists who value the rigour with which Step Change grants are awarded and subsequently dispersed."

Sandy Arbuthnot, Step Change Chair

SANDY ARBUTHNOT

Step Change Chair

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“The funding from Step Change contributed significantly to enabling us to grow the café and shop beyond our expectations over the two years of the Step Change funding, and in the year since.

We are hugely appreciative of Step Change support and would like to thank the panel for their leap of faith in us, and for the support of our project manager John Caunt throughout.”

Annie Davy, Founder Consultant, Flo’s – The Place in the Park

1. Summary of approved projects in 2023–24

The following grants were awarded in the 12 months between April 2023 and March 2024, following a rigorous application process. This includes submission of an Expression of Interest and, following approval at a panel meeting, working with a Project Manager to develop a Detailed Bid that is then presented to the next panel meeting.

Grant	KPIs
ASSISTED READING FOR CHILDREN (ARCh)	Helps pupils in Oxfordshire who struggle with their reading with trained volunteers going into primary schools, aiming to inspire a love of reading
£43,940 Oct 2023 Increase their capacity by employing a Recruitment Officer and providing additional materials and training for the extra volunteers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruitment Officer in place by Jan 2024 2. 90 new volunteers recruited, trained and introduced to schools by April 2025 3. Up to 270 more children supported by April 2025, resulting in increased schools' contribution income (£40,500) 4. Annual Schools Report Indicators (schools surveyed June/July with results, independently analysed by Research Oxford, available Sept 2025)
BRANCH TRUST	Provides a hub in Chipping Norton to enable local access to vital services, helping individuals and families overcome barriers and release potential
£50,000 Nov 2023 Make a step change in the services offered to the community through the help of a Finance Manager and Volunteer Coordinator	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase number of volunteers working through the centre – currently 2,280 hrs, increase to 3,800 hrs in Y1 and 5,700 hrs in Y2 2. Increase number of beneficiaries who take the next step into volunteering, employment or training – currently 10, Y1 = 15, Y2 = 45 3. Increase number of beneficiaries and agencies – currently work with 275 beneficiaries pa, increase to 1,200 by Y2; currently work with 0 agencies pa, increase to 8 by Y2
BROKEN SPOKE	Provides workshop support, mechanics courses, cycle training and information for people who cycle
£40,000 Sept 2023 Develop a marketing strategy to engage with a wider audience, attract more participants and increase income generation, by upgrading the website and booking system; installing a CRM system; and developing a marketing strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sales revenue – 15% increase 6 months after completion; 23% one year after completion 2. Website traffic – 25% increase 6 months after completion; 45% increase after completion 3. CRM fully functioning and in use by a minimum of three core team members 4. Able to sustain additional staff cost beyond the term of Step Change funding
DIDCOT TRAIN	Delivers a range of services to support young people to be empowered, supported and heard, supporting young people to make informed decisions, develop their self-confidence, and access opportunities
£25,267 Nov 2023 Expand their operations to include Wallingford, as there is a gap in their provision for vulnerable young people	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of positive relationships developed between young people (YP) and trusted adults (target: 40) 2. Number of those YP whose emotional wellbeing has improved (target: over 80% improvement) 3. Number of those YP whose confidence has improved (target: over 80% improvement) 4. Number of reduced incidences of anti-social behaviour by the young people we engage with (target 30)

Grant	KPIs
FARMABILITY	Delivers an outdoor, purposeful programme for co-farmers (adults with learning disabilities and autism) on farms and green spaces in Oxfordshire
£64,962 Sept 2023 Increase capacity and reduce waiting list through better utilisation of volunteers and increasing numbers of volunteers; free management time with implementation of a CRM system to keep beneficiary records and record progress	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10 volunteers recruited, inducted and started on site; trained in First Aid and Intensive Interaction by September 2024 10 volunteers recruited (20 in total), inducted and started on site; trained in First Aid and Intensive Interaction by May 2025 10 new co-farmers recruited by July 2025 (5 by July 2024, 5 more by July 2025) Evaluation and learning reviewed, with report produced, by July 2025
THE GATEHOUSE	Supports adults in Oxford who are homeless, vulnerably housed, on low income and/or looking for company and community
£18,240 Jul 2023 Provide upgraded, fully integrated and accessible systems enabling easy sharing of documents and data amongst staff, thereby increasing business efficiency, reducing operational risks, and ensuring adherence to GDPR requirements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Selected IT platform implemented and in full use by selected staff by August 2024 Implementation of shared management system and integration with Lamplight data management system by August 2024 IT training for staff and volunteers delivered, and evaluated to demonstrate overall up-skilling in IT and systems use, including capability in use of the IT platform, shared drive and Lamplight by August 2024 All strategic project elements continue in full day-to-day use by all relevant staff and volunteers – check-in August 2025
OXFORD WOOD RECYCLING (OWR)	Reclaims and reuses waste wood to make furniture and sell for DIY, and employs and trains people with special needs/low skills
£42,160 Aug 2023 Develop and insulate the workshop so that more people can be employed and trained, and develop marketing materials explaining the mission of OWR for stakeholders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The mezzanine workshop is fully usable 300 days per annum (fully usable 160 days only in 2022 due to extremes of temperature) Sales from commercial manufacturing: £110k in 2023 (10% higher than 2023 budget) £132k in 2024 (120% growth) £158k in 2025 (120% growth) An apprenticeship or traineeship in furniture making in place 2023–2024, for beneficiaries
UCARE	Builds on NHS awareness campaigns and other national campaigns to make people aware of urological cancers, which are often left undetected through embarrassment as well as ignorance
£22,260 March 2024 Target 'hard-to-reach' communities via the services of a newly recruited Volunteer Manager, finding ways to communicate with men in more deprived areas of Oxfordshire	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Manage and maintain a team of >5 volunteers through the first full year At least two events per month being set up and run by then end of the first six months Reach 500–600 disadvantaged people within the community during the first full year Secure funding to maintain the post of volunteer coordinator for a second year

2. Other active projects and case studies

The following projects were funded in previous years and were still either receiving grant payments or were within the one-year monitoring period during the year under review. All were being supported by their Project Manager to monitor KPIs and continue to realise the benefits of the grant.

In addition, five organisations submitted their final impact reports: My Life My Choice; Be Free Young Carers; People, Place and Participation (Flo's); Bridewell; and Reducing the Risk of Domestic Abuse.

Grant	KPIs	Achievements to date
CHILDREN HEARD AND SEEN		
Supports children impacted by parental imprisonment, those who care for them in the community and reducing intergenerational crime		
£65,763 Sept 2023 Establish a training arm allowing Children Heard and Seen to share learning across Oxfordshire and the rest of the country via CPD training courses; the step change will be the creation of a funding stream allowing Children Heard and Seen to work towards becoming self-sustaining	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Across Oxfordshire 855 participants will have completed training at the end of the two years 2. 12,825 beneficiaries will be impacted because of colleagues across Oxfordshire being more aware of the impact of parental imprisonment and being upskilled to provide an informed, empathetic and non-judgemental response 3. A minimum of five training sessions will have taken place across the country, each with 15 participants to support the development of Operation Paramount across England and Wales to increase the early identification of children impacted by parental imprisonment 4. The trainer post will be self-sustaining and provide an income stream for Children Heard and Seen 	The project has continued to progress positively, meeting all its milestones in the latest quarter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two 'Introduction to Parental Imprisonment' training and one workbook training completed. • Activities to promote training, for example, attendance at school assemblies and contact made with key stakeholders and partners such as social care, prisons, probation, GPs, health visitors, hospitals, early help, family hubs and third sector partners. In addition, training has been delivered and paid for out-of-county. • Training listed on OSCB training calendar. • Training programmes written and accredited by CPD.
Planned completion date: Oct 2024		
DEMENTIA ACTIVE		
Provides social activity groups for people with dementia		
£66,842 Apr 2023 Move away from offering dementia activities in community halls to having a dedicated centre in Banbury ("putting dementia on the map in Banbury"); increase awareness, remove stigma and provide support to members and their families	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maximise the working capacity of the building to include four session rooms, a function area, a workshop and four smaller break-out rooms; plus, two kitchens, a lift, toilets, showers, and a laundry 2. Increase the number of sessions from eight to 12 per week, and later to 16 per week by using the fourth session room 3. To offer a greater range of activities; apart from the supervised activities within a normal session, additional rooms will provide space for music, short films, a lounge area, and light therapy room 4. Create an environment that can be used for social events that include members, and their family, carers and friends working together to encourage teamwork for mutual support 	The project is now approaching completion. They are fully staffed and looking for two more trustees to complete the management team. They have 85 members, and this was forecast to increase to 100 in the New Year. Currently there are nine full sessions every week, the target was eight to 12 by now. They expect to reach 12 full sessions in the New Year and are aiming for 16 sessions later in the year. They are running a music for wellbeing session once a week and this is going well. A music therapist starts soon, and a new section dealing with carer support begins in the New Year. They are to hold one social per month where family and friends can come together. A Christmas social was held for 70 guests. The light table therapy unit is in constant demand and is going well.
Project due for completion: April 2024		

Story of success: My Life My Choice

A Step Change grant has enabled My Life My Choice to continue its Computer Buddy Project, supporting members to develop their digital skills and get access to devices.

My Life My Choice (MLMC) is a user-led self-advocacy charity run by and for adults with a learning disability in Oxfordshire. The organisation provides volunteering, training, and social and paid work opportunities that combat isolation and lead to more fulfilling lives. It is the only charity of its type in Oxfordshire.

The organisation received a grant of £48,460 to increase the capability of its members to engage digitally with their new range of online activities, as well as with more general online use. This would enable My Life My Choice to move to digital newsletters for its members, increase the number of users engaging with online and face-to-face activities, and make communication with their members more efficient and cost-effective.



During the Covid pandemic the need for digital inclusion became even more apparent when members did not have the right technology or skills to access the internet. Thus, the Computer Buddy project was born. Bryan Michell, Charity Coordinator at MLMC said at the time of the application: "the project will support 50 more people with a learning disability in receiving digital devices, and a further 70 to be digitally upskilled through our more intensive training, which will result in greater digital inclusion in general for people with a learning disability."

A Digital Inclusion Officer was recruited to lead the project, which resulted in 50 devices being provided to beneficiaries, which were tailored to each beneficiary's wants and needs. Ninety-three individuals were supported throughout the project, with a total of 234 support sessions being delivered. This included 1:1 support and group workshops.

Hayley is one member who received a tablet to connect to the internet. She is mute and communicates solely by writing sentences down on a notepad. She was referred to the project by Kim, a Learning Disability Liaison Nurse. Hayley's primary goal was to use email to communicate with her nursing support. Kim said: "The computer project run by MLMC has been transformative for a vulnerable lady with no verbal communication skills or ability to phone or easily talk to others. Being able to type and/or email has opened up many doors, and is empowering her to be able to communicate and resolve issues more easily and ensure access to vital health care needed."

"The computer project run by MLMC has been transformative for a vulnerable lady with no verbal communication skills or ability to phone or easily talk to others."



Bryan said: "A testament to the success of the project has been its national recognition. At The Charity Awards in June 2023 the project won the Disability category. In particular, the judges noted MLMC's commitment to being a 100% user-led organisation, that the project was embedded in all areas of work across the charity, and our excellent collaboration with numerous local groups and organisations to increase referrals to the service."

Grant	KPIs	Achievements to date
MAKESPACE		
Takes underused spaces across Oxfordshire and reanimates them into affordable spaces for purpose-led organisations and individuals		
£50,000 Feb 2022 Provide subsidised space and support to community enterprises, voluntary groups and charities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Find 20 viable occupiers over two years (who will be subsidised in early months) Min 80% of supported occupiers remain sustainable over the first 12 months 100% delivery of workshops/training plan as per agreed timing Min 80% positive feedback from occupiers 	<p>In total 30 organisations have now received rent support. 10 organisations have benefited from receiving flexible funding. 20 organisations have finished their rent support and the remaining organisations' rent support is going to be ended in Feb 24. 24 organisations are still in occupancy (80%) after their three phases. This meets the requirements KPI 1 and KPI 2.</p> <p>The workshops have now all been delivered and MakeSpace is in the process of collating the feedback.</p>
Project completed: February 2024		
OXFORD CITY FARM		
Provides valued opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to engage with farming and food production, animals, nature and each other		
£66,955 Apr 2023 Support site infrastructure to allow increased food production and greater access for community groups/site hires; this will enhance financial stability by providing more diverse streams of income	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increased community access to farm site – increase visitor numbers over one year from 1,100 pa to 1,700 pa Improved financial resilience – increase income from produce sales and site hire from £7,250 pa to £10k pa Increased community access to fresh, local food (kilos of produce) – increase weight of produce from 335 kg pa to 500 kg pa 	<p>Oxford City Farm has comfortably exceeded its KPIs. Once the Yurt is properly completed, we should see an even greater increase in revenue from site hire and visitor numbers. Funding for the project is coming to an end, with the final delay being due to the later-than-anticipated completion of fencing and installation of the solar panels. However, the solar panels should be installed by February/March and the fencing is almost complete.</p>
Project completed: March 2024		
SUNNINGWELL SCHOOL OF ART		
Creates an active participation programme, sharing its expertise with people who would not otherwise have access to art		
£28,964 May 2022 Phase 1: improve financial management and implement a professional software package to ensure it (Sage) Phase 2: implement CRM and website improvements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Treasurer appointed to board of trustees and registered with Charity Commission Accounts package implemented and management accounts produced and adopted Administrators in place to support accounts package 15% growth in enrolments during the first full academic year after the project completion Increase from 85% to 87% capacity (measured in the spring term) in the second full academic year after the project implementation 50% of all enrolments completed online Workshops running in three Oxfordshire schools 	<p>Progress is being made, although it is behind schedule.</p> <p>The initial system has now been installed, with training and user acceptance testing taking place. The plan is to complete this by end Feb for next payment in March.</p> <p>The data from their existing CRM is now synched to the new system, and they will do more intensive end-to-end testing over Feb half term.</p> <p>It is hoped to make an initial start with the new system and live website in the Easter break and through the summer term when there are fewer students.</p>
Planned completion date: April 2024		

Story of success: Be Free Young Carers

A Step Change grant went towards Be Free Young Carer's Oxford City youth worker's salary, which allowed the charity to expand their services into the city to support 100 new carers.



Be Free Young Carers (BFYC) is the only independent charity in Oxfordshire working exclusively with young carers aged between eight and 17 years old. Their mission is to improve the emotional and social health, resilience and development of young carers by widening their life options and empowering them to reach their full potential.

Fundraising Coordinator Kizzie Wilson explains why they applied for Step Change funding: "Within the city of Oxford there was no-one offering support to the thousands of young carers based there. They were left on their own to face

the struggles of their caring responsibilities with no-one they could reach out to. As a charity, we knew that this could not continue." Young carers face numerous challenges that can have a profound impact on their lives. Often feeling isolated, with few or no friends, they are at a higher risk of being bullied at school, experiencing depression, and even self-harming. Furthermore, young carers are more vulnerable to substance abuse, grooming and sexual exploitation. The application to the Step Change panel described how the funding would go towards a youth worker to cover the Oxford City area, allowing them to expand their services into the city to support 100 additional carers.

Be Free Young Carers initially found it was hard to engage with schools, despite knowing that there were approximately 2,000 young carers in Oxford with no access to support. However, following success with The Oxford Academy, the demand quickly snowballed, allowing them to launch their respite activities in the summer holiday. The young carers had the opportunity to try flying on a trapeze, ice skating, bowling and laser combat. This gave the young carers the chance to enjoy themselves, forming new friendships and relaxing.

Young carers face numerous challenges that can have a profound impact on their lives.



One beneficiary of this project is 'B'. B was referred to Be Free Young Carers by his school counsellor after they discovered he was caring for his mum. B's mother has severe mobility issues meaning she is bedridden and has frequent trips to hospital. She had also just come out of a domestic violence relationship. B has taken on huge responsibilities in his caring role. He often does the family shop, manages the household chores, watches over his young sister and mum, especially if she has just come out of hospital. He often struggles to sleep due to worrying about his mum. When B was referred to BFYC, he had not been able to talk about the violence he had witnessed in the home. He was immediately referred for their one-to-one emotional support sessions with BFYC's Senior Youth Worker.

One parent summed up what BFYC means to her: "just wanted to say thanks for taking L on such a great day out yesterday. He had such a good time and loved seeing his new buddy M and meeting some new guys. You all do a great job and I really appreciate what you do to help our kids have a day of freedom and fun!"

A list of all historic projects and their outcomes is available at:
www.oxfordshire.org/step-change

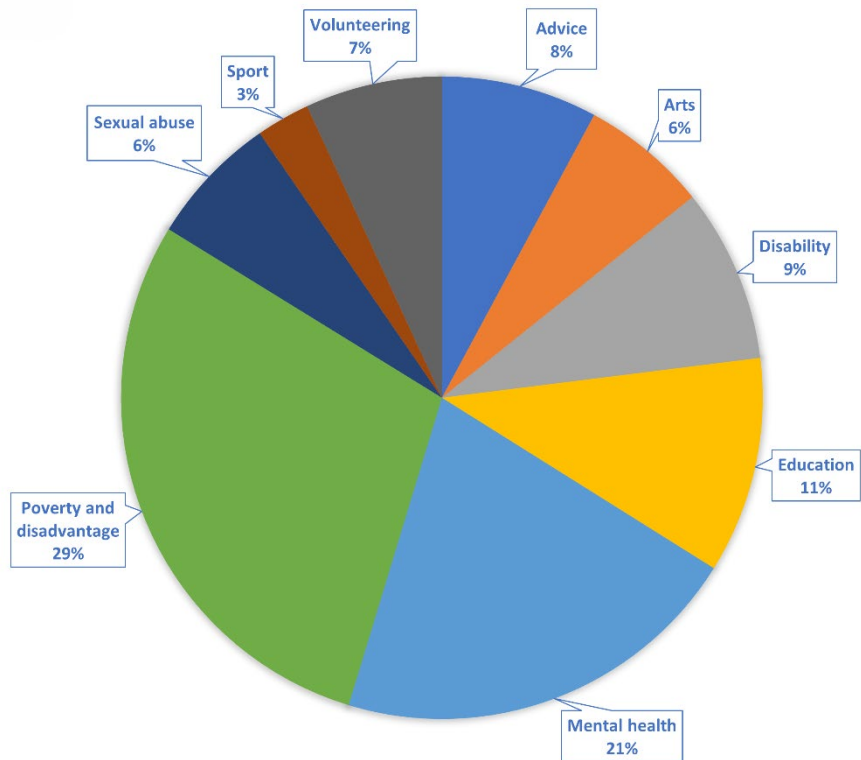


“The project was more successful than we ever could have imagined. With Step Change funding we commissioned **Birmingham University** to undertake a review and found not only is there no research nationally, but there is also no research globally on the intersectionality of rurality, domestic abuse and older individuals. This project could be a ‘step change’ not only for us but for the domestic abuse community in general.”

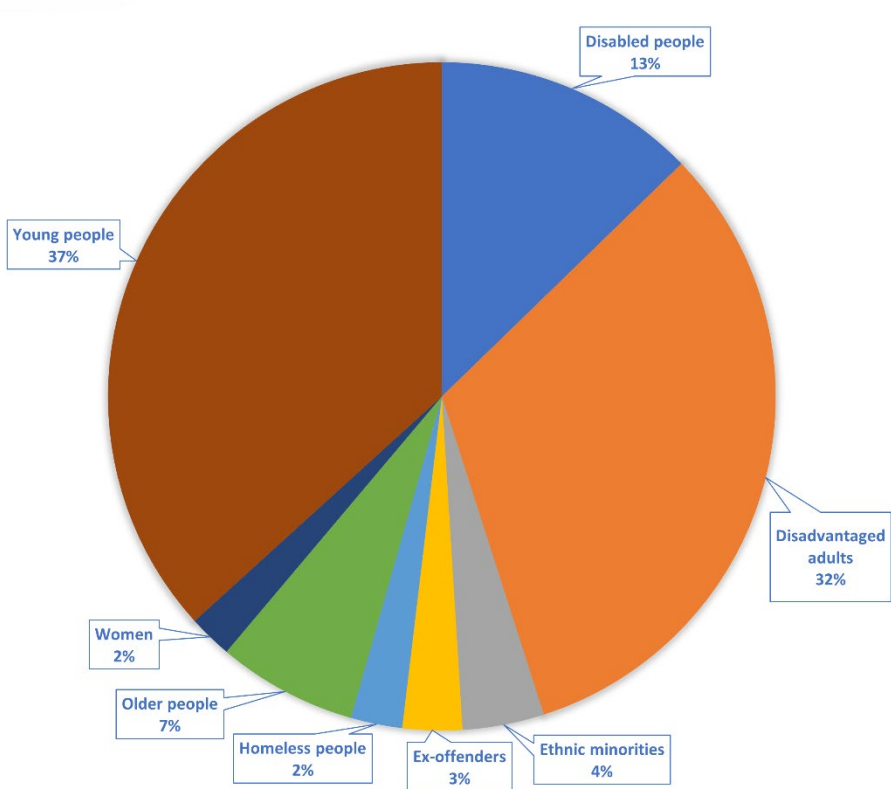
Dawn Hodson, CEO, Reducing the Risk of Domestic Abuse

The charts that follow describe the successful bidders and their projects since May 2014.

Themes that have been funded:



Beneficiaries who are benefiting from the funding:



3. Financial summary as of March 2024

The financial position of the Step Change Fund remains strong with £985k in cash currently available for charitable projects. However there has been, over the past year, a substantial increase in both Expressions of Interest (EoIs) and grants awarded, as explained below.

Our historical aim has been to award grants of approximately £400k in any one year. During the Covid years of 2020–22 we fell well short of this target for reasons explained in last year's annual report. In the past year the outcome has changed significantly. At our panel meetings (five a year) we now regularly review up to eight or even ten EoIs. Following the approval of full bids, this has resulted in grant awards of £507k in the year under review, and at our last meeting alone in April 2024, we awarded five charities a total of £222k.

In the absence of new donors, if the above rate of award continues the fund will exhaust its resources within the next two to three years.

Since inception		Funds out	Funds in	Balance
Funds received from donors, including Gift Aid			£3,720,000	
Less contribution to OCF		£181,000		
Net available for grants				£3,539,000
Grants				
Projects completed	£1,891,000			
Current projects – grants given to date	£398,000			
TOTAL GRANTS GIVEN TO 31/03/24		£2,289,000		
Cash balance as at 31/03/24				£1,250,000
Future commitments on current projects		£265,000		
Cash available for new projects				£985,000
Future pledges of donations (net of contribution to OCF)			£147,000	
Forecast total cash available for future projects				£1,132,000



“During the project, the support of a Step Change Project Manager provided secondary benefits, for example, identifying the opportunity to work with Charity Mentors, and through the regular check-ins prompting reflection on strategic direction and development opportunities. The momentum of the project has led directly to several new investments, including the recruitment of a new Recovery and Employment Coach and a new Communications and Fundraising Officer.”

Ruth Madder, Director, Bridewell Gardens

4. Project managers' update

Every project that succeeds in getting a grant from the Step Change Fund is allocated a Project Manager. This is a key differentiator of the Step Change Fund. It helps us to gain a better understanding of how our funds are bringing about a 'step change' for a charity's beneficiaries, and gives some support to the charity in meeting the requirements of our fund.

Step Change Project Managers monitor two key variables: milestones and impact measures. The milestones are all about project management, and the gradual release of funds over the life of the project. When a plan slips, we reassess payments, and Project Managers work with the charities to get things back on track or to pivot. Occasionally, if things veer too far from plan, we will terminate a project.

The impact measures are how we recognise a step change. How have our funds helped beneficiaries? For instance, how has a new database made life better? Has it reduced costs for the charity? Or, possibly, allowed the charity to reach more beneficiaries? Or both?

Our Project Managers are all volunteers with extensive experience of running projects – very often from the commercial world. We look for people who can appreciate the environment within which charities operate and who can respect the boundaries of their involvement. They understand that their role is stewardship and support, and recognise that charity CEOs are best placed to make decisions about the way forward.

We would like to thank all the Project Managers who worked with us during the year of this review: Bradley Bain, John Caunt, Andrew Colleran, Anca Davies-Rusu, Gary Gibbs, Lisa Mynheer, Nick Paladina, Tahmina Sultana, and Phillip Wootton.



ROSALIND WARREN

Step Change Panellist

APPENDIX 1 Panel member biographies

Sandy Arbuthnot (Chair) graduated in Geology and spent his early career as a site engineer on civil engineering projects around the world. Following an MBA, he worked briefly in investment banking before taking a number of roles in corporate strategy and general management. In 1997 he was appointed Managing Director of a small subsidiary of Burmah Castrol. Having led the buyout of this business he subsequently sold it to an Australian multinational. Between 2010 and 2018 he was on the board of Oxfam's Enterprise Development Programme. He is an angel investor and has been a director of two successful Oxford University spinout companies. In 2019 Sandy completed a full-time MA in Art History at the Courtauld Institute.

Brian Buchan studied at Jesus College, Oxford before embarking on an international career in consumer good companies such as Procter & Gamble, SSL International, RHM, Burtons Foods and R&R Ice Cream. He was Treasurer or Chair of Trustees for OXSRAD, a disability centre, for 18 years and is now their President. He also chairs the Finance Committee of the Story Museum in Oxford, and is a former member of the Jesus College Development Committee. He is a Life Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. Brian was appointed Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Oxfordshire in January 2019.

Anne Davies is a trustee of OCF and Chair of the community foundation's Grants Panel. She is a senior IT professional with international experience at large multi-national corporations. She thrives on sorting out difficult situations and delivering business transformation and value through technological innovation across all areas of an organisation, including content and intellectual management, business analysis, supply chain management, financials, sales and distribution. After a 26-year career delivering IT systems for a series of high-profile publishing houses, she now works as an independent consultant, and is a regular speaker at seminars and conferences.

Elizabeth Paris spent 20 years in corporate finance at Chase Manhattan and JP Morgan, becoming a Managing Director in 1991. She has since been an Associate Fellow at the Saïd Business School; the university lead for several Goldman Sachs Foundation initiatives; and a consultant for the World Bank. She is a patron of SOFEA, a charity mentor, and a trustee of Be Free Young Carers. Other Oxfordshire roles have included Chair of the Select Committee on Affordable Housing in Oxford, and Director, Common Purpose Oxfordshire. She is a Deputy Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, with a focus on Didcot and on families and children.

Rosalind Warren ran Charity Mentors Oxfordshire from its inception in 2013 until 2021. This experience gave valuable insights into the strategic challenges and governance structure of many of Oxfordshire's charities. Prior to this she was involved with OBX, a local charity that encouraged entrepreneurship in school-aged children who were less inclined to engage with traditional educational approaches. Her background is in agricultural economics, and she worked as a consultant with LMC International as Director of their Sugar and Sweeteners' group, as well as a lecturer in the School of Agriculture and Policy Development at Reading University. She is also Chair of FarmAbility Oxfordshire.

Martin Wilkinson is a qualified accountant (CIMA) who spent his career in a number of business organisations in the UK and Canada. He held senior financial positions in three multinational businesses, particularly an Oxford-based academic publisher where he was Financial Director for 15 years. He has held several non-business positions in educational institutions (primary, secondary and Oxford Brookes University governorships) and local charities. The latter category includes Chair of Oxfordshire Family Mediation, and Treasurer of Earth Trust and St Luke's Hospital, amongst others. He joined the Step Change panel in early 2016.

APPENDIX 2 Project manager biographies

Bradley Bain moved to the UK to work in the market research consultancy space five years ago, after receiving his MSc in Marketing and Consumer Studies and working in academic research in Canada. He has worked on a number of projects, including new product design, brand positioning, proposition and concept testing, and user experience research over this time. He is now leveraging his consultancy and academic background to help charities solve similar problems. Bradley lives in Oxford.

John Caunt has had a long career in scientific instruments, has a Masters in Nuclear Physics and has his own company. He has a wide range of activities and started North Parade Community Market in 2013. He is a member of Oxford Real Tennis Club and is an active member of Park Town Residents Association. He was the Master and past Master of a Livery Company, The Worshipful Company of Scientific Instrument Makers.

Andrew Colleran has spent his career in IT, working throughout Europe with a variety of organisations, in retail, information services, academia and security, to help them use technology to their advantage. He is now helping several local charities in the same way. Andrew lives in Oxford.

Anca Davies-Rusu is a change maker – bettering people’s lives through sustainable omnichannel strategy and convergent customer engagement and experience, while driving the change journey at individual and organizational levels. She is a certified practitioner in agile change management and scrum product owner, strategic marketer and business technologist, with experience across industry sectors including life sciences, education, telecommunications and management consultancy. She is now leveraging her know-how for the benefit of charities in Oxfordshire, where she lives.

Gary Gibbs started his career in the chemical industry, working in research and development before moving to the food industry. He spent many years developing food products, and as a senior manager set the strategic direction for innovation, generating and delivering the business case for each product. More recently Gary used this experience to project manage setting up a new dementia joint research centre. Gary lives in Woodstock.

Lisa Mynheer worked in leukaemia research before becoming a founding director of a biotechnology start-up. She then set up and managed the UK’s first fully equipped micro-incubator for new diagnostic technologies, helping entrepreneurs turn their innovations into businesses. Lisa has a PGCE in coaching and facilitation and is now focused on using these skills to support the change in culture required for effective innovation management processes. She lives in Horton cum Studley.

Nick Paladina is a Chartered Accountant and has spent most of his career in senior management positions in the not-for-profit sector, including in film and theatre, a national museum, professional societies and international education. He has also held several charity board roles, including Chair of the Oxford Literary Festival, St Peter’s College Audit Risk and Remuneration Committee and Treasurer of the Temple Music Foundation. He currently works providing financial guidance to theatre companies and is a trustee of Phosphoros Theatre and a mentor with Charity Mentors.

Tahmina Sultana has worked in online retail business, education, and financial service organisations. She has a diverse and multi-cultural background and has helped various local educational charities to gain more value through efficient management. She is currently managing an online retail business.

Philip Wootton worked for a large British multi-national for 35 years in senior management positions, then spent 14 years with Business Link, a public-sector organisation helping small enterprises thrive. When government funding was withdrawn in 2011, he continued to work for the operating company developing and marketing EU grants to businesses. Philip has been involved with several charities in Oxfordshire and lives in Oxford.

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

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