

Charity Link – finding funding for people in need since 1876

# Impact Review

Year ending 31st March 2021



Charity  
Link

# Our vision, purpose and beliefs

## **Our vision**

Everyone, irrespective of circumstances, can fulfil their potential in life.

## **Our purpose**

Provide timely assistance in times of crisis or hardship.

## **Our beliefs**

Everyone has a right to a decent standard of living where they are dry, warm, clean, rested, safe and fed.

Financial or practical support at a time of crisis can make a difference to people's dignity, self-respect and their future.

We'll be most effective and efficient by working in partnership with other organisations.



## Message from our Chairman

It is hard to comprehend the change and challenge that we've all faced since my last update.

Whilst it has, without question, been a difficult period, I am so immensely proud of Charity Link's work throughout the pandemic. The team have worked tirelessly and by quickly adapting procedures we have remained 'open for business' throughout the pandemic to meet the increased level of hardship that has been experienced.

Having worked in Leicester for 145 years and supported local people in need through Spanish Flu and two World Wars, we were determined to meet this next challenge in our long history. However, this has only been possible with the support of the local community at a time when many of our traditional fundraising streams vanished overnight.

We are extremely grateful to the trust funds, organisations, businesses and individuals who have so generously lent their support during these tough times to ensure we were able to get vital help to the people who needed it, often when their world was unexpectedly turned upside down.

You can read more about our COVID-19 response on page seven.

It remains an extremely difficult time for so many vulnerable people in our local communities. The continued impact of job losses, long COVID, the loss of the Universal Credit bonus payment and food and utility price rises, means that many more families will find themselves in financial hardship in the coming months.

Recent events have shown us that we can all make a difference by supporting each other and, in particular, those most in need of our help. At Charity Link we will continue to innovate and transform to meet the needs of those who so desperately require our support.

We are so grateful to have you with us on this journey and I would like to thank everyone who has played their part in helping to change the lives of local people in need this year.

**Clive Smith**  
Chairman

### CHARITY LINK

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# Our staff & trustees

Our small and extremely dedicated team of staff and trustees are passionate about ensuring that local people in need receive the highest level of service possible, and a compassionate, timely response to ensure they are warm, safe and fed and have the basics in life we all deserve.

Particularly during what has been such an ever-changing and challenging year, we are incredibly proud of the difference the team have made.

## Patrons

The Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire  
The Lord Mayor of Leicester  
The Chairman of Leicestershire County Council

## Chairman

Clive Smith

## Honorary Treasurer

Tony Jarvis FCA

## Honorary Trustee

Caroline Wessel

## Director of Operations

Jim Munton

## Director of Marketing & Fundraising

Susan McEniff

## Trustees

Cheryl Pharoah  
Chris Saul  
Craig Shevas  
George Oliver  
Harinder Sahota  
Prof. Surinder Sharma

## Staff

Aisha Daud  
Danny Taylor  
Elise Williams  
Frank Hooton  
Hector Loudon  
Helen Lewis  
Julie Hemmett  
Karen Pollard  
Katie Scranage  
Linda Gibson  
Nisha Khalifa  
Rachel Gascoigne  
Rachel Markham  
Rachel Walsh  
Sophie Power  
Sue Stevenson

## Staff at The Goods Depot

Alex Grealis  
Alex Holness  
Dylan Smith  
Graham Hobbs  
Megan Hatley

And a huge thank you to everyone who has volunteered their time.

# Highlights of the year

Adapted to effectively continue our services throughout the pandemic to **meet increased need**.

Supported **6,481** people during the first year of the pandemic – **2,604** of which were children and distributed **£1,099,274** worth of essential items.

Gained funding to run a six month **Community Development Programme**, focused on helping harder to reach communities.

Launched the **There With You Fund** with LeicestershireLive and the Randall Charitable Foundation. This went on to raise over **£147,803** to support those impacted by the pandemic.

In June our Leicestershire 3 Peaks Challenge won the Rising Star Award in the Fundraising event category of the **East Midlands Charity Awards**. Also, Susan McEniff won the Charity Director of the Year award, she's our Director of Marketing and Fundraising.

**Successfully applied** to a number of one-off and non-recurring pandemic-related funding streams and successfully applied for other ad-hoc **funding opportunities** to ensure our charitable activities could continue.

Set up a new fund with Ofgem and Octopus Energy as part of the **Warm Homes Initiative**.

Saw an **80% increase in the number of grants** distributed compared with the prior year.

Developed our social enterprise, **The Goods Depot** and expanded our stock range (including beds) to **maintain deliveries** throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

Helped Leicester City Council to deliver its **COVID Winter Support Grants** scheme, distributing an additional **£310,638** in grants.

## Focus for the Year ahead

- Continue to develop our service and procedures to meet the need in an ever changing COVID-19 world.
- Further develop our awareness programme in the community to ensure we help those most in need, with a particular focus on targeting harder to reach communities.
- Build a strong, resilient and diverse fundraising programme as we adapt to the pandemic.
- Build on the successful launch of our social enterprise, The Goods Depot, to provide increased client support, sustainability, lessen our environmental footprint and support organisations and individuals in the community by providing a quality, fairly-priced retail option.
- Grow and develop our Trust Administration Service which supports organisations, charities and corporate clients and provides an important income stream for Charity Link.
- Develop our Proud Business Supporter Club which sees local businesses getting involved to support their local community.

# Lottie's story



Lottie, who is thirteen, is her mum's main carer. Life has been tough for the family; they live in a rural location so Lottie spends a lot of time alone or helping her mum, who has a number of mental health issues. She is also estranged from her father and receives no help from other family members.

Money is very tight. The family regularly use food banks, Lottie has no access to IT resources at home and doesn't have a mobile phone.

She is academically very bright but when the pandemic started and schools closed, she had no way of accessing her schoolwork. She found herself even more isolated and, along with missing school and the interaction with her peers, was unable to go to the community groups which had been helping her escape from her challenging home environment and try new activities.

The situation was lowering Lottie's self-esteem and she was becoming anxious about the future and how much her education was being affected.

Lottie was referred to us for help with a laptop and, thanks to your support, we've been able to provide this item which is life-changing for Lottie. She can now keep up with her studies during periods of lockdown and in the longer term can more easily complete homework as she approaches her GCSE studies.

It is also helping Lottie to engage with her peers and the wider community and is helping to ensure that she is not held back due to her family circumstances.

Thank you for the difference you have made to help Lottie to reach her full potential.



# A year like no other - our COVID response

£1,099,274

worth of essential goods distributed

5,023

items distributed

6,481

people helped,  
2,604 were children and young people

2,203

of these people  
were directly impacted by COVID-19

## Charity Link present from the start of the pandemic

As the impact of COVID-19 began we were there, including helping vulnerable clients moving from hostels to unfurnished tenancies to make way for those living on the streets.

## Launched the There With You Fund

In conjunction with LeicestershireLive, the Leicester Mercury and with a grant of £96,000 from The Randall Charitable Foundation, the fund raised £147,803 – all of which was distributed to individuals and families directly impacted by the pandemic in Leicestershire.

## Gained grants and COVID funds to ensure our work could continue

We couldn't have made such an impact without the support of many organisations and trusts this year, including The National Lottery, Leicestershire and Rutland Community Foundation, Leicestershire's Police and Crime Commissioners Fund, Wooden Spoon, Skipton Building Society, Hastings Direct Community Grants, Severn Trent Community Fund, Leicestershire Communities Fund, Octopus (Warm Homes Discount Fund) and The Sears Group Trust.

## Thought creatively to raise funds

As we faced an expected 40% loss in fundraising income, our supporters went out of their way to make a difference. From climbing Everest (on the stairs!) to virtual sleepovers or taking on their own Leicestershire 3 Peaks Challenge, supporters joined in our new fundraising activities or thought up their own! Our 'Meeting the Need' fundraising campaign also raised over £25,500.

## Conducted development work to make a difference

Thanks to a grant from The National Lottery we were able to run a six month 'Community Development' programme, focused on helping harder to reach communities who were impacted by COVID-19 and to help ensure we receive referrals for those most in need across all sections of society.

The project saw us communicate with 244 organisations, including many new and emerging organisations, such as the grassroots led food banks set up in response to the pandemic, but without established networks.

We trialled new communication avenues and gathered feedback, including on the need for materials in other languages. This work will be built on in the future and will have long term benefits.

# Financial review

Here's a summary of our income and expenditure for the year ending 31st March 2021, along with equivalent figures for the previous year. A full copy of our audited accounts is available on our website.

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2019-20</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,773,979</b>	<b>£1,092,998</b>
Contracts and other income	£230,340	£93,669
Donations	£378,912	£407,828
Charitable grants raised from trusts for people in need	£1,153,084	£584,088
Other trading income	£11,643	£7,413
<b>Our funds at the year end</b>		
Unrestricted funds	£196,607	£44,500
Restricted funds	£254,917	£199,367
<b>How our fundraising was broken down</b>		
Charitable trusts	67.7%	51.8%
Events	6.6%	9%
Individual giving	15.5%	11.7%
Corporate giving	8.7%	9.9%
Community fundraising	1%	9.1%
Legacy	–	8.2%
Other	0.5%	0.3%
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2019-20</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,530,322</b>	<b>£1,054,647</b>
Grants distributed to people in need	£1,099,274	£612,338
Relief of Poverty	£359,838	£370,164
Cost of raising funds	£71,210	£72,145
<b>How the charitable grants were spent</b>		
Cookers	£169,571	£121,272
Washing machines	£108,155	£54,488
Fridges and freezers	£103,435	£41,126
Educational expenses	£82,969	£69,602
Beds and bedding	£77,125	£57,870
Project grant aid	£73,802	£48,237
Household goods	£35,093	£25,967
Medical and mobility equipment	£30,414	£69,685
Heating	£26,553	£29,623
Carpets and flooring	£22,859	£21,574
Clothing	£18,047	£22,246
Housing costs and repairs	£13,405	£11,218
Debt	£10,712	£13,976
Other	£16,496	£25,454
Leicester City Council COVID Winter Grant Programme	£310,638	–

**Our reserves policy:** It is the policy of the Charity that free reserves should be maintained at a level equivalent to six months unrestricted expenditure. The Trustees consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the Charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised.

# What we achieved together

We distributed £1,099,274 in charitable grants

£635,042

Leicester

£295,815

Leicestershire

£5,867

Rutland

£162,550

Northamptonshire



## COVID Winter Grant programme

Distributed £310,638 from the Leicester City Council COVID Winter Grant programme to Leicester City residents.

## We helped 6,481 people and children

2,604

Children & Young People

384

Older People

1,856

Homelessness

2,203

Affected by COVID-19

1,492

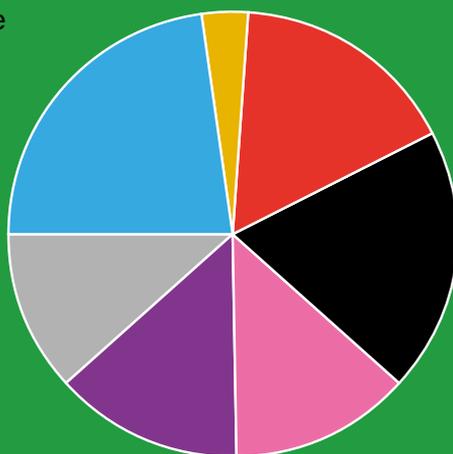
People Living with Mental Health Issues

1,525

People Living with an Illness or Disability

1,328

Carers



Note: Clients may be included in multiple classifications.

Provided 5,023 items



833

Fridge Freezers



1,093

Cookers



692

Beds & Bedding



230

Clothing & Uniforms



430

Household Goods



131

Food & Heating



863

Washing Machines



93

Medical & Mobility



136

Carpets for Home



116

Help with Debts

Note: Other items also distributed.

# How we change lives

We believe that all local people deserve a decent standard of living, with a right to adequate food, shelter and the means to keep warm, clean and rested – no matter what crisis, illness, disability or difficulty they may be facing.

For those we support, including families struggling to make ends meet due to low paid work or zero hour contracts, the frail elderly, those unable to work due to caring for others, those with a chronic illness, disability or mental health issue, and victims of domestic abuse, their basic human needs can go unmet.

We help by providing everyday items that the majority of us may be lucky enough to take for granted; clothing, a bed to sleep in, a cooker to prepare a hot meal and, in emergencies, food. These items may not cost much, but they can make a massive difference to people’s lives, both immediately and long term. They can help to restore dignity, independence, hope for the future and enable people to fulfil their potential in life.

## Our services – as relevant today as they were 140 years ago

Charity Link has been through many significant times in history and at the beginning of this financial year, we had no idea that we would need to brace ourselves for another challenging period in history.

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, poverty remained a significant issue in the communities in which we work. The recent 'Local indicators of child poverty after housing costs, 2019/20' report\* shows Leicester at 13 in the table of 20 local authorities with the highest increase in child poverty rates after housing costs (2014/15 to 2019/20), rising from 30% to 37.9%.

Three quarters of children living in poverty were shown to have at least one working adult in the household in 2019/20 – leading to concerns that child poverty could reach a record high in future years as welfare cuts continue. And all this before many families had their lives turned upside down due to COVID-19.

## The impact

Whilst our support generally offers immediate practical relief, the impact is often substantial and longer term. We collect data via a survey conducted with how clients feel prior to and a period after our support which enables us to compare the difference made.

This research shows that there is a decrease in stress and anxiety and a positive impact on aspects such as self-esteem and confidence in the future.



Representation of change in average response score from clients who completed our 'outcome monitoring survey' pre/post support; 1 being very low and 5 being extremely high. (blue = pre help, green = post help)

\* Published May 2021, Summary of estimates of child poverty after housing costs in local authorities and parliamentary constituencies, 2014/15 – 2019/20 by Donald Hirsch and Juliet Stone.

## Ana's story



Ana, who has a young son, was referred to us by her support worker.

Ana has suffered domestic violence in the past and this has left her with a number of serious physical injuries. She is still living with the repercussions of sustaining a broken neck during an attack and also long-term damage to her pelvis.

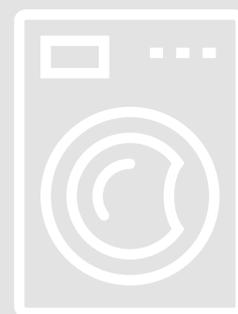
She has been left with considerable mobility issues due to nerve and tendon damage which makes it hard for her to move her arms and legs, and she also has a number of mental health issues, including PTSD, depression and anxiety. Her physical and mental health issues make it impossible for her to gain employment and her benefit payments leave little spare money after the day to day essentials.

Ana was desperate to relocate from the home she'd lived at for many years to help her move on from the terrible experiences she'd had and to start a new life with her son closer to her support network. She needed help as she had no funds to afford the

cost of a removal van to help her take her limited possessions to start setting up a new, happier home.

Thanks to your support we were able to help Ana with the cost of a removal van to enable her to take this important step. We were also able to help provide carpet for areas of flooring that were bare concrete and not safe or comfortable for the family and provided a reuse washing machine, an item that Ana was in desperate need of but unable to afford.

Thank you for helping Ana and her family to make a fresh start.



# We couldn't do it without you!

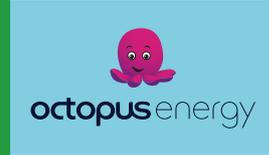
We are indebted to our wonderful volunteers and supporters who so passionately give their time, energy and ideas to change the lives of those in need! Here are just a few!



Our 'Strides Apart' Challengers who took on a different Leicestershire 3 Peaks in September 2020 due to the pandemic, helping to raise £4,000.



Our virtual Sleepover guests who experienced a little hardship for one night to raise funds.



Octopus Energy Business Solutions for pledging £25 for every business signing up to their new Leicester Business Tariff.



Our Proud Business Supporter Club Members.



Alex who virtually climbed Everest.



Better IT – who set up a remote working donation scheme which has gone on to raise thousands.



Liz and Lucy for their ball catching challenge, raising over £1,000.



Our neighbours, The Two Tailed Lion, for their Christmas Charity Drive which encouraged customers to donate and raised £340.

## Turning £10 into £50

Our expert team has knowledge of the thousands of benevolent funds and charitable trusts in the UK that have money to assist people in need. For every £10 it takes to run our unique service, we can untap £50 from these charitable funds – all of which goes to provide essential items and support for our clients.

£10 = £50 = food for a family for a week

£25 = £125 = a bed for a child in need

£40 = £200 = a cooker to prepare meals

£100 = £500 = items after homelessness

Once we have obtained the necessary funding, we purchase the item or goods required by our client and deliver and install if necessary. This innovative way of working means that we are able to make an even bigger impact to those most in need in Leicester, Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire, so our supporters know they are making a tangible difference.

# The Charity 'link'

Thanks to our long history and expert knowledge, we work regularly with over 250 local organisations that are in the community working with individuals and families in need. Using organisations already in place keeps our overheads to a minimum, increases the efficiency of our services and ensures that we get help to those who need it when they need it most. Once a referral is received, we act immediately. If the need is urgent (such as in the cases of domestic violence or for those facing homelessness) we can help the same day.

The fact that we were so quickly able to adapt our service (including producing a simplified online application process) as the COVID-19 pandemic started, shows how our long-standing service, understanding of the communities we support and knowledge of the organisations we work with serves us well.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank the many organisations and individuals whom we work with, including family support workers, tenancy officers, charity support workers and healthcare professionals. Together we make such a difference.

Our friendly Casework team are on hand to offer advice to referring partners and to discuss our application processes. Our team also sends regular communications, give presentations and attend exhibitions to highlight our services. We are always keen to develop our unique service so that it is as accessible as possible, particularly in light of the significant workloads and pressures facing referring agencies and the ongoing changes that the pandemic has presented.

“ We work with people of all backgrounds and in lots of different situations. It is quite common for families to be unable to have hot food, as they are without a cooker, or for someone who has been homeless to move into a tenancy and for there to be no bed. Sustaining a tenancy is difficult for so many people in our communities.

The work that Charity Link do compliments our work brilliantly. They provide white goods, furniture and many other items for our clients, which means we can focus on helping them with all of the other housing and homelessness prevention related issues which they need support with.”

Paul Snape, Deputy Chief Executive – The Bridge, East Midlands

“ I would like to thank the whole team at Charity Link for the amazing work they have done in supporting the Adhar project and some of our existing clients who had experienced severe deprivation.

The team throughout the whole process assist with completing applications with a very friendly approach.”

Rana Rajput, Team Leader – Adhar Project



## The Goods Depot

Our social enterprise The Goods Depot, based out of our warehouse in Glenfield, Leicester, continues to go from strength to strength, offering high quality reuse and new white goods to Charity Link clients and the wider community, including the general public.

Thanks to this social enterprise, we can now provide more items to Charity Link clients, whilst improving our environmental footprint. In addition, any profits made from sales to the wider community are donated back to Charity Link. This means we can help even more local people and children in need by providing a new sustainable long-term income stream. As we have learnt to a greater extent this year, this is vital in the challenging and ever changing world we live in.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, The Goods Depot really came in to its own. Whilst it was a huge challenge to get stock, which meant additional trips to suppliers, having direct control meant we were able to maintain good delivery levels throughout the crisis. The small team worked extremely hard to keep the show (and delivery van!) on the road and we also expanded our range to include beds and mattresses.

The Goods Depot will continue to develop relationships with housing associations, student housing, community groups, charities and organisations. A key focus over the next two years is to launch an e-commerce service to expand the retail offering to the wider community.

Find out more about The Goods Depot here: [www.thegoodsdepot.org.uk](http://www.thegoodsdepot.org.uk)

# Supporting trusts and charities

Facing unprecedented challenges this year, our Trust Administration Service, which supports Charity Link's own charitable aims, has continued its well established services throughout the year and worked in partnership with many other local charitable organisations to co-ordinate relief for people in need.

With a growing portfolio of diverse charity clients prior to the pandemic, our small, dedicated team have received praise and recognition for their support during an extremely difficult year in which they helped to ensure compliance was maintained and advised on new technology opportunities to maintain meeting schedules and grant distribution.

£422,614

administered in grant funds held externally by our client charities

£21,544,000

the combined assets of the charities to which we provide administrative support

£3,980,000+

the combined assets of trusts to which we provide full charity management services

Using our in-depth knowledge and expertise, our Trust Administration Team supports local charitable organisations who may not have the time or resources to manage their charity, distribute grants or achieve their objectives in the way they would like. The service is tailored to the needs of each charity and ranges from purely clerking meetings to a full range of financial, administration and governance support services.

For more details of our Trust Administration Service, please visit [www.charity-link.org/trust-administration](http://www.charity-link.org/trust-administration) or contact the team on 0116 222 2200.

## Supporting the H A Taylor Fund

The Trust Administration team have worked hard throughout the pandemic to ensure that the charities we administer could continue to meet the needs of their service users.

The H A Taylor Fund, a charity supporting people in need in Syston, Leicestershire, has a large Board of 11 Trustees. Many lacked confidence in using video conferencing software, and coupled with the retirement of the charity's long-standing Chairman, the Board faced a crisis at the start of the pandemic and urgently needed to embrace new ways of working if they were to be able to continue helping local people in need.

Trust Administrator Katie developed step-by-step instructions for video meetings and provided a small group training session for the Trustees who were most anxious about using the software. After the training, the Trustees felt confident enough to give it a try and continued to meet by video conference until government restrictions were eased.

New Chairman, Glyn Lilley, said:

"During the Covid pandemic the Trustees were initiated into the world of Zoom. Although some were both sceptical and indeed nervous at the thought of online meetings, you encouraged us to give it a try. Under your patient guidance, support and tuition, we were able to conduct the meetings successfully. When restrictions allowed us to meet face to face, you made sure that Government guidelines were followed to the letter thus allowing meetings to continue safely. Thank you for your help during these trying times."



# Always thriving to make a difference

## CHARITY LINK

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