

Charity Link – finding funding for people in need since 1876

# Impact Review

Year ending 31st March 2022

Charity  
Link

# Our vision, purpose and beliefs

## **Our vision**

Everyone, irrespective of circumstances, has the opportunity to fulfil their potential in life.

## **Our purpose**

Provide timely, targeted and appropriate assistance to those facing crisis or hardship.

## **Our beliefs**

Everyone has a right to a standard of living where they are dry, warm, clean, safe, and can feed themselves.

Financial or practical support at a time of crisis or hardship can make a difference to people's well-being, health, and their future.

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



## Message from our Chairman

Since I joined the board of trustees at Charity Link some 24 years ago and during my time as Chairman, I have been privileged to see the positive impact made in Leicestershire, Rutland and more recently Northamptonshire by our wonderful charity.

The past year has been full of heart-wrenching and heart-warming stories of the desperate need faced by our clients and the positive impact our support has had on their quality of life and self-esteem. We know this not only from the conversations our team has with clients and our referral partners, but also due to the more formal analysis we undertake of the impact of our services.

As we began to emerge from the severe impact of the pandemic and the increase in need this presented, we quickly saw a cost of living crisis on the horizon. This has driven a further rise in the number of people unable to make ends meet, many of whom have never previously been in the welfare system or in need of charitable support. This is likely only to increase further over the next year.

Like many charities, we are faced with rising demand at the very time when fundraising becomes ever more challenging. But the small, dedicated and hugely experienced team at Charity Link is continuing to find ways to adapt and improve our service to ensure we can deliver help to those who so desperately require it.

Vital to our success is the need to develop strong relationships in all areas in which we work, including amongst the local business community. Our 'Proud Business Supporter Club' initiative is a very positive example of the many varied ways in which we work with local businesses for the benefit of those most in need locally. We know that many businesses have limited time and resources for charitable activity, but nevertheless do want to 'give back'. Our PBS Club offers an easy way for the corporate community to make a real difference, whilst simultaneously extending many business and CSR benefits to those companies who get involved. I am delighted to have observed many businesses seeing the value of joining the Club since its launch, from larger companies to smaller independents and sole traders; we truly value each and every one of you.

I would also like to say a heartfelt thank you to every individual, trust, group and school who have lent their support this year during such difficult times, and to the hundreds of referrers and referral agencies with whom we work so closely. You have played an important part in helping to change the lives of local people in need this year and we couldn't make such a difference – as outlined in this review - without you.

Our board of trustees, staff team and I will all be hugely grateful for your continuing support because it really has never been more needed.

**Clive Smith**  
Chairman

### CHARITY LINK

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# Our staff & trustees

Our dedicated team of staff, supported and guided by our Board of Trustees, work passionately to ensure that people in need across Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire receive the highest level of service possible from us and a compassionate and timely response to ensure they are dry, warm, clean, safe and fed and have the basics in life we all deserve.

## 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

## CEO

Susan McEniff

## Deputy CEO

Jim Munton

## Trustees

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

## Staff

Charlene Champion  
Danny Taylor  
Elise Williams  
Frank Hooton  
Hector Loudon  
Helen Lewis  
Julie Hemmett  
Linda Gibson  
Nisha Khalifa  
Rachel Gascoigne  
Rachel Markham  
Rachel Walsh  
Sophie Power  
Sue Stevenson

## Staff at The Goods Depot

Alex Grealis  
Dylan Smith  
Jonathan Warne  
Megan Hatley

Special thanks to our regular office volunteer Donna Shevas.

And thank you to everyone who has volunteered their time.

Your support is hugely appreciated and makes a massive difference.

# Highlights of the year

Supported **6,520** people during the year, **2,697** of which were children, and distributed **£1,769,626** worth of essential items.

Saw a **59% increase** in the number of grants distributed compared with the prior year.

Took part in two **ITV news pieces** on the cost of living crisis and the impact of the withdrawal of the Universal Credit bonus payment to help highlight this important issue.

**Re-launched our Leicestershire 3 Peaks** after COVID – with the start and finish now at our business supporter Bawdon Lodge Farm in Nanpantan. **120 challengers** helped to raise over **£13,000**.

Helped Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council deliver the **Household Support Grants Scheme**, distributing an additional **£578,505** in grants.

Launched a new **'bronze' level membership** as part of our **business club** offering, welcoming a number of new members, including Kangaroo UK, Total Industrial Engraving and Strategy and Governance.

Worked with **Curve Theatre** in Leicester to offer a dedicated performance of their 2021 Christmas family show, The Smeds and the Smoos to **clients free of charge**.

**Finalist** in the **Community Impact** Category of the East Midlands Chamber Business Awards and in the LeicestershireLive Hero Award.

Distributed **£152,975** in energy-efficient white goods as part of the **Warm Homes Initiative**.

Held our first indoor and in-person event since COVID; our sell out **'A Bellyful of Laughs'** comedy night in February which raised **£1,000**.

## Focus for the year ahead

- Work passionately to meet the rise in need that we are experiencing due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic and increasingly the cost of living crisis which we know is set to get significantly worse.
- Engage further with community groups and leaders and build greater links with service providers to ensure the reach of our service is as wide as possible – some groups and beneficiaries remain underrepresented in our grant giving and efforts will continue to address this.
- Develop our internal procedures and systems, with a focus on ensuring our IT systems are able to meet the challenges we face in an ever-changing world and vital in enabling us to stay at the forefront of welfare support.
- Develop a new, more appealing and easier-to-navigate website – a vital tool for our referrers to gain information and make applications and a vital 'shop front' for us.
- Galvanise our stakeholders post-pandemic to lend further support by providing a wide range of opportunities for individuals and businesses to get involved with and engage in our work, including a new calendar of events and the development of our business club.
- Scale up our social enterprise, The Goods Depot, to achieve sustained profitability to support Charity Link's charitable work.
- Finalise a Trust Administration Service Business Plan to increase unrestricted income and social benefits in line with Charity Link's charitable objectives.

## Neil's story



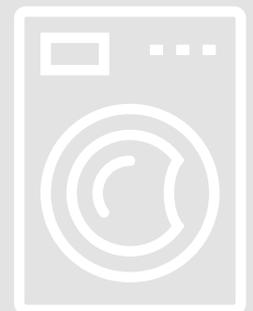
Neil, who has two school-age children and a younger child, was referred to us in need of urgent help by a support worker at the children's primary school.

Both Neil and his partner Lois have long-term health conditions and one of their children has severe ADHD and autism which impacts greatly on daily life. As the couple are unable to work money is extremely tight. It has been an increasingly tough struggle to make ends meet as the cost of all the essentials they need to buy continues to rise. This has meant the family has needed to access food parcels over the past few months.

Another huge challenge has been that the couple have been struggling to provide clean clothes, including school uniforms, for their children after the family's washing machine broke. The family had no money to buy a replacement. Neil was helping Lois who had been trying to wash all the family's clothes by hand during free moments but this was a real issue due to her existing mobility issue, for which she was already taking daily pain medication.

This physical task was causing her a great deal of discomfort and distress and was also causing an issue at school as the children often didn't have a school uniform ready to wear despite the couple's best efforts.

Thanks to your support we have been able to supply the family with a new washing machine, which means the family can now keep on top of their laundry and the two eldest children can go to school in clean uniforms each day. This one item has made a massive difference and has had a positive impact on this family's well-being and dignity.



# Responding to the cost of living crisis

Our last impact review was focused on our work meeting the huge increase in need that the COVID-19 pandemic unexpectedly presented us with in the year to March 2021.

## **Pre-pandemic we helped around 5,000 people each year**

We, like most, needed to make significant adaptations to our working procedures to ensure we could continue working throughout the pandemic. We were also challenged with coming up with creative ways to raise the funds needed to meet the uplift in need that the pandemic presented at a time when many of our usual fundraising activities were on hold. We are hugely proud of the difference we made during this time.

Whilst the past year has seen us continue to help people for whom the pandemic is having a long-term impact (including those who lost loved ones, those impacted by long-covid and those who lost jobs and livelihoods) it quickly became apparent that another 'crisis' was on the horizon for which we needed to prepare.

## **This year we have helped 6,520 people.**

We have seen many families coming to us in need of support who are not familiar with the welfare system or been in need of charitable support before.

More and more people, including increasingly working families, are finding that when they need to buy or replace an essential item there is simply no spare money for this or a realistic and timely way to save as every penny of their income is eaten up by price increases. Those who were 'just about managing' before can no longer make ends meet however much they try to cut back. The impact can be devastating.

**“ Vulnerable families have already cut back on everything possible. When there are no more savings to be made, people generally have two options – to go without or get into unsustainable debt. Throughout this year we have seen many local people facing real deprivation as prices continue to rise.”**

Susan McEniff, Charity Link CEO

## **Those on the lowest incomes are hit the hardest**

The cost of living crisis means more people are facing extreme financial pressures as they struggle with the huge increases in the cost of food, fuel, clothing, rent and mortgage payments and other essentials; they simply cannot make ends meet.

No parent should be skipping meals so their child can eat, no one should be facing months of cold and suffering because they can't afford to turn the heating on, and no child should be sleeping on the floor because their family can't afford to buy a bed. But that is the reality we are faced with daily.

## **2023 and beyond**

We will continue to see significant financial challenges – for our clients, partners, supporters and also, of course, ourselves. We face pressure on our income streams as individuals, businesses and trusts, which we rely on for support, review their outgoings as a result of economic climate.

Whilst, now that COVID restrictions have been eased and we are able to return to a more normal programme of activities, it remains challenging to get back to pre-pandemic levels of fundraising support and the cost of living crisis will make this even more difficult. We will continue to do all that we can to rise to the challenge that the cost of living crisis is presenting and to change lives through the essential items that we provide.

# Financial review

Here's a summary of our income and expenditure for the year ending 31st March 2022, along with equivalent figures for the previous year. A full copy of our audited accounts is available on our website.

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2020-21</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,203,837</b>	<b>£1,773,979</b>
Contracts and other income	£166,076	£230,340
Donations	£373,788	£378,912
Charitable grants raised from trusts for people in need	£1,650,132	£1,153,084
Other trading income	£13,841	£11,643
<b>Our funds at the year end</b>		
Unrestricted funds	£295,688	£196,607
Restricted funds	£137,590	£254,917
<b>How our fundraising was broken down</b>		
Charitable trusts	48.6%	67.7%
Individual giving	17.3%	15.5%
Corporate giving	14.8%	8.7%
Legacy	9.6%	–
Events	8.3%	6.6%
Community fundraising	1.0%	1.0%
Other	0.4%	0.5%
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2020-21</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,301,083</b>	<b>£1,530,322</b>
Grants distributed to people in need	£1,769,626	£1,099,274
Relief of Poverty	£443,157	£359,838
Cost of raising funds	£88,300	£71,210
<b>How the charitable grants were spent</b>		
Winter Support & Household Support	£578,505	£310,638
Pensions	£246,409	£6,480
Cookers	£212,577	£169,571
Washing machines	£143,491	£108,155
Fridges and freezers	£122,094	£103,435
Educational expenses	£109,608	£82,969
Project grant aid	£90,090	£73,802
Beds and bedding	£79,241	£77,125
Medical and mobility equipment	£47,222	£30,414
Household goods	£35,464	£35,093
Carpets and flooring	£28,748	£22,859
Heating	£23,529	£26,553
Clothing	£22,919	£18,047
Housing costs and repairs	£10,965	£13,405
Debt	£10,500	£10,712
Other	£8,264	£16,496

**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 £1,769,626 in charitable grants

£989,406

Leicester

£604,357

Leicestershire

£25,437

Rutland

£150,426

Northamptonshire



## Winter Support & Household Support fund

We distributed £578,505 from the Leicester City Winter Grant & Household Support programme to Leicester City residents.

## We helped 6,520 people and children

2,697

Children & Young People

465

Older People

2,106

Homelessness

350

Affected by COVID-19

1,726

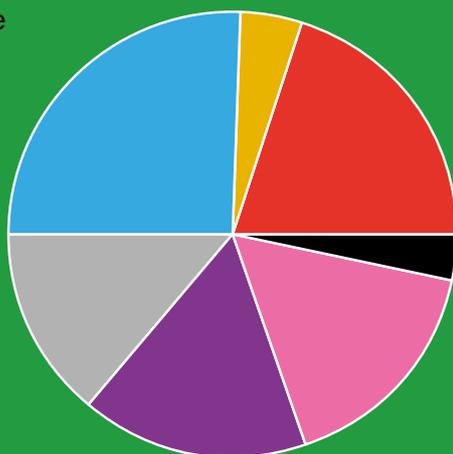
People Living with Mental Health Issues

1,736

People Living with an Illness or Disability

1,438

Carers



Note: Clients may be included in multiple classifications.

Provided 5,501 items



833

Fridge Freezers



1,506

Cookers



686

Beds & Bedding



243

Clothing & Uniforms



333

Household Goods



133

Food & Heating



1180

Washing Machines



116

Medical & Mobility



136

Carpets & Flooring



131

Help with Debts

Note: Other items also distributed.

# How we change lives

We believe that everyone has a right to a standard of living where they are dry, warm, clean, safe and can feed themselves, no matter what crisis, illness, disability or difficulty they may be facing.

By providing everyday items, from vouchers for food in emergency situations, help with the cost of utilities to ensure people can keep warm, to providing school uniforms for families unable to meet these necessary expenses, the support we offer makes an immediate difference. These items, which some are lucky enough to take for granted, help to restore dignity and well-being and enable people to look forward with more hope for the future.

Charity Link has been providing support in Leicester since 1876 and over the past 145+ years we have developed a unique way of working that now helps to change the lives of people in need across Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire.

Whilst **we help thousands of people every year (41% of which are children and young people)** behind every statistic there is a personal – and sometimes heart-breaking – story. We have shared a couple of client stories in this Review – there are many more on our website and social media pages.

Together our impact is huge.



Will's story



Ameria's story



Brian and Susan's story



Helen's story

## Our impact

As our vision and purpose outline, we work to provide timely, targeted and appropriate assistance to those facing crisis or hardship. The essential items and support we offer help to improve well-being and health in the short term, but the impact goes on to positively impact for months, if not years, to come.

We receive regular informal feedback on the difference our service makes from both our clients and our referrers, but we also undertake more formal analysis – which helps to show the difference our service makes on aspects such as self-esteem and stress and anxiety.



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)

## Katie's story



Katie is a single parent to three children.

She works part-time in a school but her wages are low and she has been finding it increasingly challenging to make ends meet.

The cost of her daily essentials, including food and utilities, continues to rise and she also has to find the money to pay for her children to get the bus to school each day.

Katie and two of her children have celiac disease which means it is extremely important that they adhere to a strict diet. However, Katie's cooker broke some time ago and she hasn't been able to afford a replacement. This has meant that preparing appropriate and nourishing meals for the family has proved difficult and expensive.

Katie has also been sleeping on a mattress on the floor for over two years and as the property currently has a problem with damp, the mattress itself has become damp and soiled and Katie has been suffering with back issues due to sleeping on the floor for such a long period.

Katie has fallen behind on the payments on her utilities and this has been causing her a lot of upset; she doesn't want to fall further into arrears and could see no way of being able to buy or save for the cooker and bed that she so desperately needed. This has meant that her self-esteem and confidence has been extremely low in recent months.

Thanks to your support we have now been able to step in and help the family, providing a new bed and mattress for Katie and an electric cooker to not only help Katie to feed her family more easily, but to also take some of the significant strain off her daily challenges. Thank you.



# We couldn't do it without our fab supporters!

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 Trustee Harinder Sahota took part in the Action Challenge Lake District 25k in June and raised over £1,000.



The team at Brewin Dolphin (East Midlands) undertook cycle and walking challenges, dress up days and raffles during their year of fundraising.



Better IT continued their 'remote working' donation scheme which has now raised over £4,000.



Aggregate Industries supported our #leics3peaks entering a team of 20 and providing a refreshment pit stop for all challengers.



Highcross Shopping Centre successfully nominated us for a £5,000 Christmas bursary from their parent company.



NCS teams fundraised as part of their Social Action projects, raising over £1,000.



The 2022 Men's and Women's captains at Leicestershire Golf Course planned a range of fundraising activities to support us.



Full Square printing and Matt Glover Photography helped us raise funds by producing notecards and a calendar.

## 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 = to help heat a home for a week

£15 = £75 = food for a family for a week

£35 = £175 = a bed for a child in need

£50 = £250 = a cooker to prepare meals

£150 = £750 = items after homelessness

# The Charity 'link'

An important belief at Charity Link is that 'we'll be most effective and efficient by working collaboratively with other organisations.'

We regularly work with over 250 local organisations and hundreds of professionals – as we know this is the best way to get as much support as possible to people who need it – when they need it.

Our referral partners are in regular contact with our friendly casework team to discuss client needs. Applications are made on a client's behalf by our referral partners; we then assess the applications and seek out and untap appropriate funding from charitable trusts and benevolent funds for the items required.

When funding is obtained, we order the items and arrange delivery and installation in liaison with clients and their referrer.

This unique way of working ensures that together we make a huge impact and we are indebted to those we work with for the vital part they play. We also know that our work is extremely valued by those who are able to provide even greater and more holistic support to their clients as a result of our services.

**“ When I told her the news she broke down in tears and said it was the best present she could have had.”**

For a client with mobility issues who needed safer flooring.

**“ I really appreciate the support you give to our clients which makes such a difference, helping those leaving hospital who are returning home or those moving into a new home following a period of homelessness.”**

We were able to provide this referrer's client in need with a washing machine.

**“ I was on the phone with the resident and his support worker when I got your email, so I told him the news. He screamed out and kept saying thank you. He wanted me to express his thanks to the team. You've made a vulnerable young man very happy and he is looking forward to starting 2022 a lot stronger.”**

For a client who was awarded a cooker, fridge freezer and help with kitchen items.

**“ Thank you, he will be over the moon. He was wondering how he was going to be able to cook, which is something that he is struggling to do – so thank you. Keep up the good work – it's much appreciated.”**

We delivered and installed a cooker for this vulnerable client.

**“ Fantastic news and what a turn-around! Thank you very much. She was so stressed when I spoke to her yesterday, in tears and distressed. This news will cheer her up loads.”**

For a vulnerable client we were able to help with a new cooker, fridge freezer and washing machine.

# The Goods Depot - our trading arm



Diversified supply chain, to also include beds and mattresses

Took on two Kickstart placement roles

Delivered a total of 2,265 units of domestic white goods for people in need facing hardship

As the number of people needing our help and the essential items we've been able to award has risen, as has the demands on our social enterprise, The Goods Depot.

The small team, led by Manager Alex Grealis at our warehouse based in Glenfield, needed to rise to the challenge of more items to source, deliver and install to Charity Link clients across Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire over the past year (The Goods Depot is now able to provide quality new and re-used cookers, washing machines, fridges/freezers, mattresses and beds).

The team has also been working to raise awareness of the service amongst housing associations, student housing, community groups, charities and other organisations with a view to expanding

our customer base and it becoming a sustainable income stream for Charity Link (as all profits are fed back to support our charitable work).

## **New collaboration**

In November 2021 The Goods Depot developed an exciting new collaboration with Be Inspired and Braunstone Community Shop. This sees us displaying a retail offering in the shop with our aim of increasing our supply of high quality, value for money goods to the community.

The team are looking at developing further relationships of this nature in community settings. If you may be interested in finding out more, or would like to learn more about The Goods Depot in general, please visit [www.thegoodsdepot.org.uk](http://www.thegoodsdepot.org.uk)

# Supporting trusts and charities

Ever since Charity Link was founded over 145 years ago, we've worked in partnership with charitable organisations to co-ordinate relief for people in need. Our Trust and Grant Administration services are founded on this significant expertise.

Our Trust Administration Team, provide governance and administration support to other small charities and organisations. These may not have enough time or capacity to manage their charitable work, give out grants, co-ordinate and service meetings or achieve their objectives in the way they would like. We can also assist when a charity has decided to close and needs assistance with the challenges this can present. Unfortunately, this is likely to be something facing even more charities over the next few years.

Our aim is to make life easier by providing knowledgeable and tailored support, which can be on a one off, fixed-term or ongoing basis. We also work closely with solicitors and accountants who provide services to their charity/trust clients and may need additional resources.

All profits from the Trust Administration Service are fed back in support of Charity Link's charitable work, so by engaging our services, our clients are further helping to support people in need.

It was another busy year, as we expanded the portfolio to include an additional new client and undertook consultancy advice as we look to develop a business plan for the service to take us forward in the medium and longer term.

£564,934

administered in grant funds held externally by our client charities

£28,049,966

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

£3,990,410

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



## Supporting City of Leicester's North Memorial Homes

The North Memorial Homes is a charitable trust in Oadby, set up to provide independent living for ex-service personnel in possession of some sort of disability pension.

City of Leicester's North Memorial Homes Chair of Trustees, Tony Nelson, said:

**" It is now some time since I and my fellow trustees decided to engage Charity Link's Trust Administration services, firstly in providing secretarial & clerkship support, and shortly afterwards, financial responsibility.**

**This decision is one of the best things we have done, as the professionalism, knowledge, expertise and guidance have been second to none.**

**The team have brought our governance into the 21st century, and nothing is too much trouble. We have recently embarked on a project to modernise our properties, and the advice and support has been outstanding. I have no reservations in wholeheartedly recommending Charity Link."**

If you would like to find out more about our Trust Administration Service or receive a personalised quote for services, please visit [www.charity-link.org/trust-administration](http://www.charity-link.org/trust-administration) or contact the team on 0116 222 2200.



Together we are improving  
the lives of vulnerable people  
facing hardship or crisis.

#### CHARITY LINK

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