Nurturing the joy of giving

Many of us want to help our communities but it can be hard to know where to start, especially when society’s problems seem too large for any one of us to solve.

For more than three decades Quartet Community Foundation has provided expert philanthropy advice about causes that matter to local people.

We love to empower philanthropists, trusts and businesses to make a significant and tangible difference to the important causes close to their hearts. Together we give over £3.5m each year to vital community organisations based on our detailed knowledge of local needs.

We’re keen to share our knowledge to help you inspire philanthropy in Bristol, Bath & North East Somerset, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

“I have been impressed with the professionalism and reach of Quartet. It is possibly the best run charity in the South West. I am therefore delighted that we have been able to commission Quartet to manage some of our charitable funds.”

Chris May, founder and chair of the Mayden Foundation
Although larger charities may be household names, most of the UK’s 167,000 registered charities are small: 82% have an annual income of under £100,000 and 47% of these have incomes under £10,000.

Charities Aid Foundation research shows 90% of households have used a charity’s services at some point in their lives and 74% of us have relied on one in the last year alone.

It is often the smaller charities that are closer to communities, more likely to be trusted and relied on by people in need.

Despite being needed, many charities are struggling. The political and economic uncertainty of recent years, as well as changes in statutory services, have left many overstretched.

Over 75% of small charities report an increase in demand for their services and this shows no signs of changing.

Competition for resources in the charity sector is fierce. The largest 4% of charities take more than 80% of the sector’s total income.

Years of austerity have had the double impact on local groups of reducing grant funding from the public sector at the same time as increasing the level and complexity of demand.

Many of the smallest charities rely on volunteers and, with no professional fundraisers, donations received from people like you are an important source of income even though they lack the resources to fundraise to attract donations or gifts in Wills.

There are currently 4,311 registered charities in the West of England and many more community groups, community interest companies and social enterprises. They share a mission to make the West of England a fairer and better place for everyone.

It has never been more important for philanthropy to support the vital services that sustain our communities.

“'The funding enabled the recruitment of a Volunteer Coordinator. Since the start of the project we have recruited an additional nine volunteers, an increase of over 20%, who now give their time, energy and commitment to helping people rebuild their lives after stroke.”’ Bristol After Stroke
We are a compassionate and generous country: ten-year trends place us among the most generous countries in the world and yet more than a fifth of people here live in poverty and have reduced life-chances.

Through philanthropy individuals, families, businesses and trusts are helping to improve lives and enjoy the personal fulfilment that giving brings.

One parent whose child benefited from a free nursery lunch at First Steps in Bath said: “The free meal offer is great for us, as money is tight.”

In 2018, people in the UK donated £10.1b to charities. This figure hasn’t changed much in recent years but the number of people donating has dropped with a smaller number of donors giving more generously – 65% of people asked had given money to a charity recently, compared with 69% in 2016.

The drop in donors may also be because people now have other ways to do good (such as time-banking), and new data protection rules prevent charities asking for donations without explicit permission. A third of donors say they give only or mainly when directly asked so if there is a cause you are keen to support, make sure you have given them your permission to contact you.

Grants from the top 300 philanthropically-funded foundations grew by nearly 10% in 2017-18, making up 42% of total grant-making nationally and 14% of all private giving to charities.

More people are choosing to leave a gift to charity in their Wills so legacy income has now reached a £3b high. However only 6.3% of people leave a legacy in their Wills. A 1% increase in charity legacies would generate around £109m each year for good causes.

People give because they feel a deep desire to make the world better and fairer. Research among higher-level donors shows that people would give more if they better understood charities and how their funding makes a difference. Fewer charities are established in poorer areas so expert advice helps people direct their giving to where it is most needed.

It’s not surprising that we’re seeing growth in donor advised funds as more people realise that vehicles like Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) and community foundations offer a flexible and effective way to give with support.

CAF estimates that contributions to donor advised funds will reach £1b in the UK by 2025 and the UK’s 46 community foundations already have over £500m under management.
Effective giving

However you choose to give, research shows that planned giving boosts donors’ wellbeing and this is enhanced when donors see the effect of their donation.

When planning your giving, ask yourself five key questions:
1. What exactly does the organisation do?
2. How cost-effective is each of the organisation’s areas of activity?
3. How robust is the evidence? Do they have strong monitoring and evaluation?
4. How well are the activities implemented? Is the organisation well led and do they learn from mistakes?
5. Do they need additional funds? If you gave to another organisation instead, would your money be better used?

A simple rule of thumb is to check if 75%+ of your donation ends up helping beneficiaries. Anything less than this and donors should see if there is a better way to help.

Philanthropy advice

Research shows that many donors want philanthropy advice and those who get specialist advice give 17 times more than those who don’t.

Tax benefits rarely motivate people to give but donors want to be tax efficient. Schemes like Gift Aid make a major difference to charities.

Only 12% of major donors receive philanthropy advice and only one in five professional advisers offer philanthropy advice. Seek out advice on how to give well, and tax efficiently.

Here to help you

People want to know how to make their philanthropy do the most good and they are wary of making a donation and later finding that the cause did not use their money as hoped.

Community Foundations exist to help you develop your giving strategy. Our team will inform you about issues affecting local people and help you consider how to direct your giving and involve any loved ones or trusted parties in philanthropy.

There are many ways we can help you make a difference. You may decide to make a one-off gift or set up a fund that keeps giving for generations – whatever the case, we’ll help your money reach all the right places, in the right way for you.

Suggested reading

What Makes A Good Charity? 
New Philanthropy Capital

Giving Is Good For You 
John Nickson

Public Good By Private Means 
Rhodri Davies

Richer Lives 
Beth Breeze and Theresa Lloyd

It Ain't What You Give It's The Way You Give It  
Caroline Fiennes

Change The World For A Fiver: We are What We Do 
Anon

Doing Good Better 
William MacAskill

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