

# Big changes start locally

Impact Review 2019 – 2020





The Foundation made us feel we weren't simply part of a transaction, we were being valued for the ideas we have and the work we wanted to do.



Grant Recipient  
Grantee Survey 2020



Front cover image: Family Gateway, North Tyneside, were awarded two grants. A Community Anchors' Fund award of £48,000 and a Community Resilience Fund award of £20,000.

# Welcome to the 2019 – 2020 Impact Review

**We are preparing this report during a further national lockdown as a result of COVID-19. A pandemic that has impacted not only every community we fund into, but every inhabited part of our globe. In the context of the pandemic we have witnessed our funded charities become even more important to the communities they work with.**

The Virgin Money Foundation is focused upon supporting places that have experienced social and economic decline, to become thriving, diverse communities. As you will read in this report, in 2019 we developed and launched the Community Anchors Fund. In the face of the challenges COVID-19 wrought upon the world, this focus has been a timely one. Deeply rooted in their community, many of these organisations became a vital point of support and contact for their neighbourhoods, ensuring no-one was without essential items or isolated during periods of lockdown. They partnered with statutory bodies, GP surgeries, food banks and other charities to ensure that as much support as possible was offered to those facing the most challenging circumstances.

Notwithstanding the vital role played by local charities we have seen many of them adversely impacted during COVID-19, struggling for funding and capacity. These organisations needed grant makers who would act quickly and effectively to ensure funding was available to offset lost income and enable them to support local people through unprecedented challenges. In March 2020, as lockdown was announced, the Foundation's Trustees made available £850,000 to support local charities

through COVID-19. Utilising some of these funds the Foundation quickly developed the Community Resilience Fund, through which we funded a fantastic range of local organisations, each innovating to support their community to be resilient in the face of the pandemic. Their work and achievements during this period has been outstanding.

2020 marks The Virgin Money Foundation's fifth anniversary. The first five years have been rich in learning and development for the Foundation. We focused our grant making largely on the North East of England, developing a range of funds that supported local charities to tackle key issues in their community and create positive change. The Foundation has awarded almost £10million of funds during these five years and alongside funding has provided skilled volunteers, vital training and a range of opportunities for community leaders to come together, share ideas and build new networks. During 2019/2020, many of our early programmes came to a close and new funds were developed and/or launched. This report details the highlights of funds from the first five years that are now fully spent and introduces the programmes we will be investing in during the years ahead.

Much of the work you will read in this report was made possible by co-funders, donors, skilled volunteers and partner organisations, our thanks goes to each of them. Our greatest thanks, as ever, goes to the organisations we have had the privilege to fund, their work never ceases to inspire us and teach us about the pathways to community regeneration.

**Nancy Doyle-Hall**  
Executive Director

**Edward Wakefield**  
Chair of Trustees



# Strategy

During 2019 the Virgin Money Foundation began to deliver its new strategy. The strategy is informed by the Foundation's Theory of Change and sets out the new programmes it will develop and launch in order to create the positive change in local communities it strives for.

In line with this strategy the Foundation launched the Community Anchors' Fund in the North East of England in 2019, expanding into Glasgow in 2020. As this report goes to publication the Foundation is launching its second new fund, the Young Change Makers Fellowship Programme. In contrast to the Community Anchors' Fund which supports established community organisations, the Young Change Makers Fellowship Programme will help develop the next generation of community leaders and social entrepreneurs, providing them with the tools and resources to innovate and create change in their local community. If communities are to be supported to thrive, supporting both the established organisations that are part of the fabric of the community and backing entrepreneurs to create new solutions is required.

Unchanged within the Foundation's strategy is the determination to provide support beyond the grant. Wherever the Foundation provides financial support it also aims to meet the needs of the funded organisation through the provision of high quality training and skilled volunteering. The Foundation's access to staff within Virgin Money who are willing to use their professional skills to strengthen and benefit its funded organisations can ensure the impact of the Foundation is substantially greater than the funds it distributes. Over the next few years the Foundation will work with Virgin Money colleagues and external partners to grow its programme of 'Beyond The Grant' support, convinced of the reciprocal benefit to both charity and skilled volunteers of this input.

Through its work to date, the Foundation is persuaded of the importance of having a diverse group of people around the board table developing its strategy and informing its grant making. During 2019 the Foundation commenced an open recruitment process to bring onto its board two younger people and in 2020 it worked with its funded organisations to refresh its panel of Youth Advisors. The insights and activity of this panel has been instrumental in developing the Young Change Makers Programme and the future of the #iwill Take Action Fund. Continuing to develop a diverse board that is connected to the communities into which the Foundation funds will continue to be a priority as the Foundation moves into the next phase of its work.



**Thanks to the Foundation Youth Advisors:** Angelica Akika, Rochelle Artus, Josie Ball, Shakira Begum, Sam Ward-Hardy, Tessy Idemudia and Astrud Turner.  
**And thank you to the Foundation Board Attenders:** Laura Christer and Abi Walker.



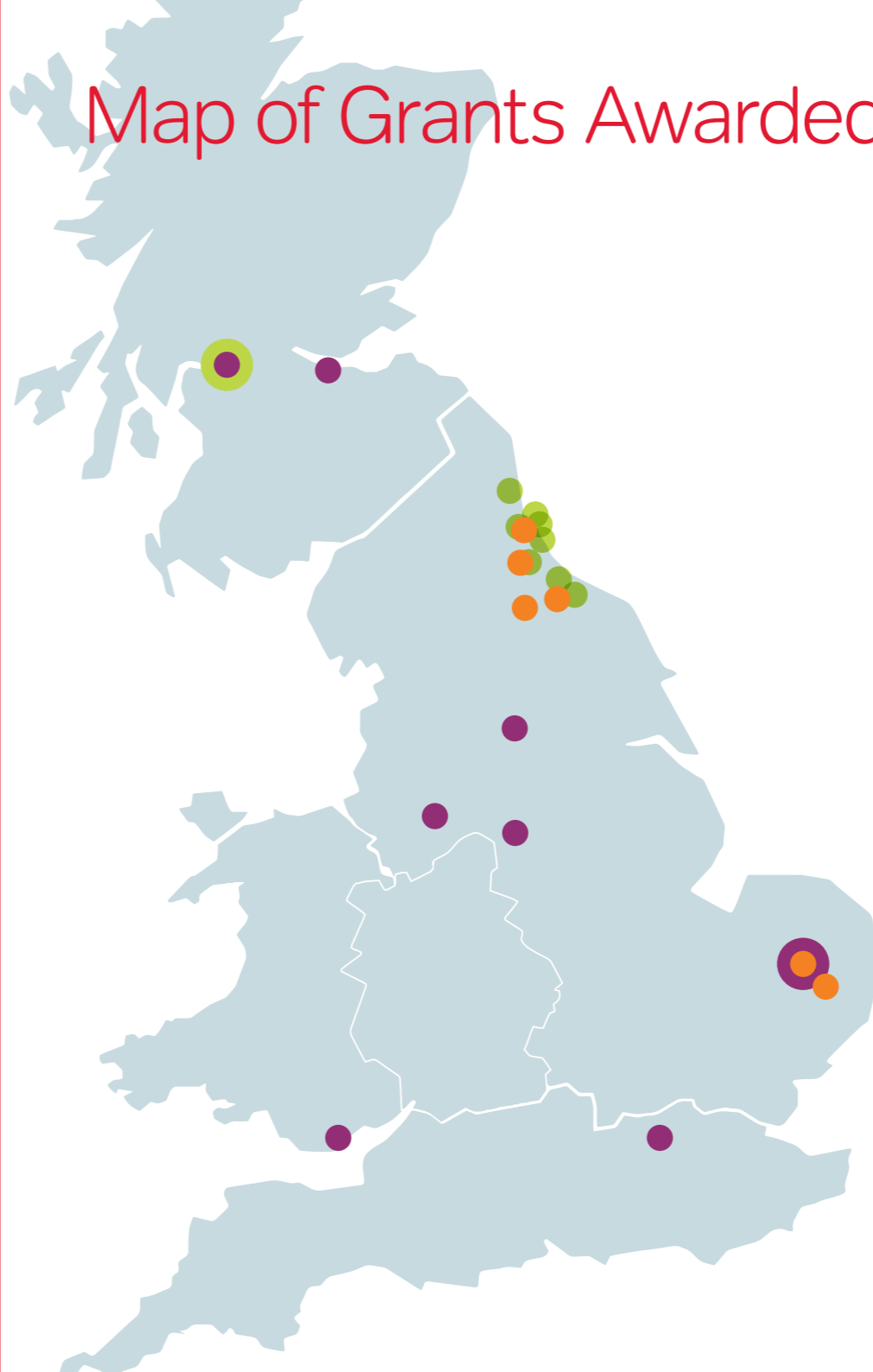
Being a Board Attender for the Virgin Money Foundation has been an incredible experience and given me a real platform to have my voice heard. It's the first time I've felt like being a young person isn't a barrier to making the change I want to see – it's an asset!

**Abi Walker, Board Attender**

Meeting and working alongside so many other passionate and enthusiastic young people is such an inspiring environment to be a part of, and gives me hope for the future.

**Josie Ball, Youth Advisor**

# Map of Grants Awarded 2019-2020



**Heart Of The Community Fund**

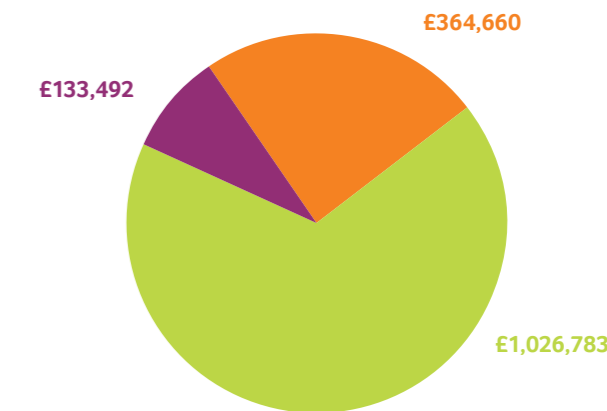
Cardiff	£17,498
Edinburgh	£16,500
Glasgow	£17,500
Leeds	£7,000
London	£19,248
Manchester	£19,248
Norwich	£19,248
Sheffield	£17,250

**Community Resilience Fund**

Darlington	£10,000
Durham	£85,770
Gateshead	£10,000
Middlesbrough	£30,000
Newcastle	£39,750
Norfolk	£10,000
North Tyneside	£40,000
Northumberland	£10,704
Norwich	£10,000
Redcar & Cleveland	£30,000
South Tyneside	£30,000
Stockton	£40,000
Sunderland	£18,436

**Community Anchors' Fund**

Durham	£177,953
Glasgow	£218,642
Hartlepool	£37,884
Newcastle	£100,000
North Tyneside	£148,000
Northumberland	£37,635
Redcar & Cleveland	£77,730
South Tyneside	£118,960
Sunderland	£109,979





# Community Anchors' Fund North East

**In September 2019, the Foundation awarded its first grants through the Community Anchors' Fund.**

Community anchors are those vital, neighbourhood based, locally-led organisations, committed to driving positive economic, social or environmental change within their community. They act like "anchors" – there for the long-term, trying to providing stability as the world around them changes, constantly adapting to different circumstances. They are independent, but work in partnership with other agencies and organisations operating in the area. They are often the driving force in a local neighbourhood, the facilitator and supporter of community activity and a way that local people of all ages can be involved in determining their shared future.

The focus upon community anchors has been timely. These organisations were critical during the pandemic, ensuring that community members had access to food and medicines, that parents were supported with schooling their children and that those isolated in their home were not forgotten.

The Community Anchors' Fund provided organisations working in the North East of England with grants between £10,000 and £50,000 for up to

three years. The funds were used to cover core costs, or to design and launch a new activity.

In March 2020 the Foundation awarded a grant to Pallion Action Group, a community anchor organisation based in the Pallion area of Sunderland. In operation since 1997 it provides a range of services to support some of the most vulnerable members of this community. It has an authentic committed leader in Karen Wood who understands the needs of a community struggling with county lines drug gangs and the impact of Universal Credit on the area.

When the pandemic hit Karen told us:

"The call to say we had been awarded the Virgin Money Foundation grant was a huge blessing and came at just the right time. Our staff and volunteers are working 12 hour days to meet demand and we are doing absolutely everything we can to support our local community through this crisis.

We started by picking up prescriptions and making up food parcels. We have now made and distributed just over 1,000 emotional and wellbeing packs for children right across Sunderland. The grant from Virgin Money Foundation allows us to continue to do just that. It has been amazing to see the community pull together during this time."



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**Karen Wood,  
Manager, Pallion Action Group**

Through the Community Anchor Fund the Virgin Money Foundation has awarded

**£808,000**



Pallion Action Group were awarded a grant of £50,000 through the Community Anchors' Fund North East





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The Woodlands Community Development Trust were awarded a grant of £10,000 through the Glasgow Community Anchors' Fund.

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## Community Anchors' Fund Glasgow

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In 2020 the Foundation expanded the Community Anchors' Fund into Glasgow with the support of local partner the HFD Charitable Foundation. The HFD Group is the developer of 177 Bothwell Street, which is set to become Virgin Money's new headquarters and the city's largest single office building.

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Being new to Glasgow the Foundation talked to a number of organisations involved in the voluntary sector, listening to their thoughts and held a round table discussion to learn more about the needs in the city, the anchor organisations and the work being done.

As the pandemic broke, the Foundation recognised the need to expedite the fund's launch, to ensure it got funding out to organisations on the ground without undue delay so that local charities could meet the needs of their community effectively. It amended the proposed criteria for the fund, making funding available for community anchors who required new funding to offset reductions in income and/or to cover the additional costs of providing support to vulnerable members of the local community as a result of the lockdown.

With the very valuable support of colleagues from the Corra Foundation, the Robertson Trust and the Development Trusts Association in Scotland the Foundation agreed a shortlist of around 30 community anchor organisations which it invited to apply to the fund. Many of the first grants were made to cover lost revenue as organisations were forced to close their buildings and the purchase of emergency food, fuel



Govanhill Baths Community Trust were awarded a grant of £15,000 through the Glasgow Community Anchors' Fund.

and data. As organisations came out of lockdown applications became focused on recovery, requesting funds to provide additional support to families and young people and to focus on the growing tide of unemployment that was anticipated.

Thanks to Robertson Trust, Corra Foundation, DTA Scotland and our funding partner HFD Charitable Foundation.

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Through the Community Anchors' Fund Glasgow the Virgin Money Foundation with HFD Charitable Foundation has awarded

**£205,000**

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# Community Resilience Fund

The Community Resilience Fund was the Virgin Money Foundation's rapid response to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on previous grant recipients in the North East of England and Norwich.

During the first national lockdown, organisations previously funded by the Foundation were invited to apply for grants to replace lost income or contribute to the cost of innovating to meet need in the community. The Foundation asked organisations to apply for awards of up to £10,000 with the ability at assessment to increase the requested amount to up to £20,000 if the assessor felt this was required.

The Virgin Money Foundation recognised that it needed to make decisions very quickly and set up new ways of working to achieve that. It provided organisations with the reassurance many needed that funding would be available at a time of unprecedented crisis. The simplicity of the application process and the flexible nature of the funding were also welcomed. As the first national lockdown ended the demand for the fund began to tail away as organisations began to adapt and reopen some of their activities.

Since its launch in March 2020 the Foundation has awarded £366,660 through the Community Resilience Fund.



West End Women and Girls Centre were awarded a grant of £10,000 through the Community Resilience Fund.

In addition, in recognition of the need to work together to ensure as many community organisations as possible were supported through the pandemic, the Virgin Money Foundation awarded a grant of £100,000 to the Community Foundation for Tyne and Wear and Northumberland for onward grantmaking through its joint Coronavirus Recovery Fund.



The grant from Virgin Money Foundation made a really big difference to me as Chief Executive at a really worrying and uncertain time. It gave me confidence that solutions would be available for our charity and the time to make plans to adapt our services.

**Lucy Parish, Chief Executive Officer, The Feed, Norwich**



YMCA Newcastle were awarded a grant of £20,000 through the Community Resilience Fund



# #iwill Take Action Fund

Through the #iwill Take Action Fund the Virgin Money Foundation asked young people what challenges they faced, what they would like to see change in their community and how they would make that change.

Working alongside a Youth Advisory Panel the Foundation backed young people's ideas, distributing 28 grants to 26 organisations. To date, 5,664 young people have taken a lead in designing or delivering social action and that social action has benefited and involved nearly 46,000 members of their wider community. One such organisation is Streetwise Young People's Project in Newcastle. Streetwise has always been youth-led and its young people's volunteer group, YouthWise, are involved in all aspects of their work, from project design to recruiting and interviewing new staff.

YouthWise identified period poverty as an issue they wanted to tackle and developed the M Card. To get a M Card young people come in to meet with a detached youth worker and talk to a member of the team about their period, ask any questions about what is and isn't normal for a young woman to experience, find out when and where to get help if needed and understand the different types of period products available. They are then given access to free period products; importantly these are products of their choosing including many different types of pads, tampons and menstrual cups. Young people designed the promotional material, the card itself and contacted



other charities and local businesses to get donations. Donations came flooding in. The Foundation supported Youthwise to access legal advice to license the M Card and expand it across the North East. As part of the project Youthwise commissioned a Young

Women's theatre company, BRASH, to create a period poverty production. The performance of 'Raising Shame' at Northern Stage was a sell out with rave reviews. It also toured as a pay as you can production at Byker Community Centre.

Streetwise Young people's Project, Newcastle, were awarded a grant of £39,154 through the #iwill Take Action Fund. Members of the YouthWise group are pictured meeting Social Media Influencer Hannah Witton. ©Streetwise Young People's Project

©BRASH Theatre Company, performance of Raising Shame at Northern Stage, Newcastle.



Through the #iwill Take Action Fund the Virgin Money Foundation has awarded

**£1,525,356**

Proudly supporting youth social action



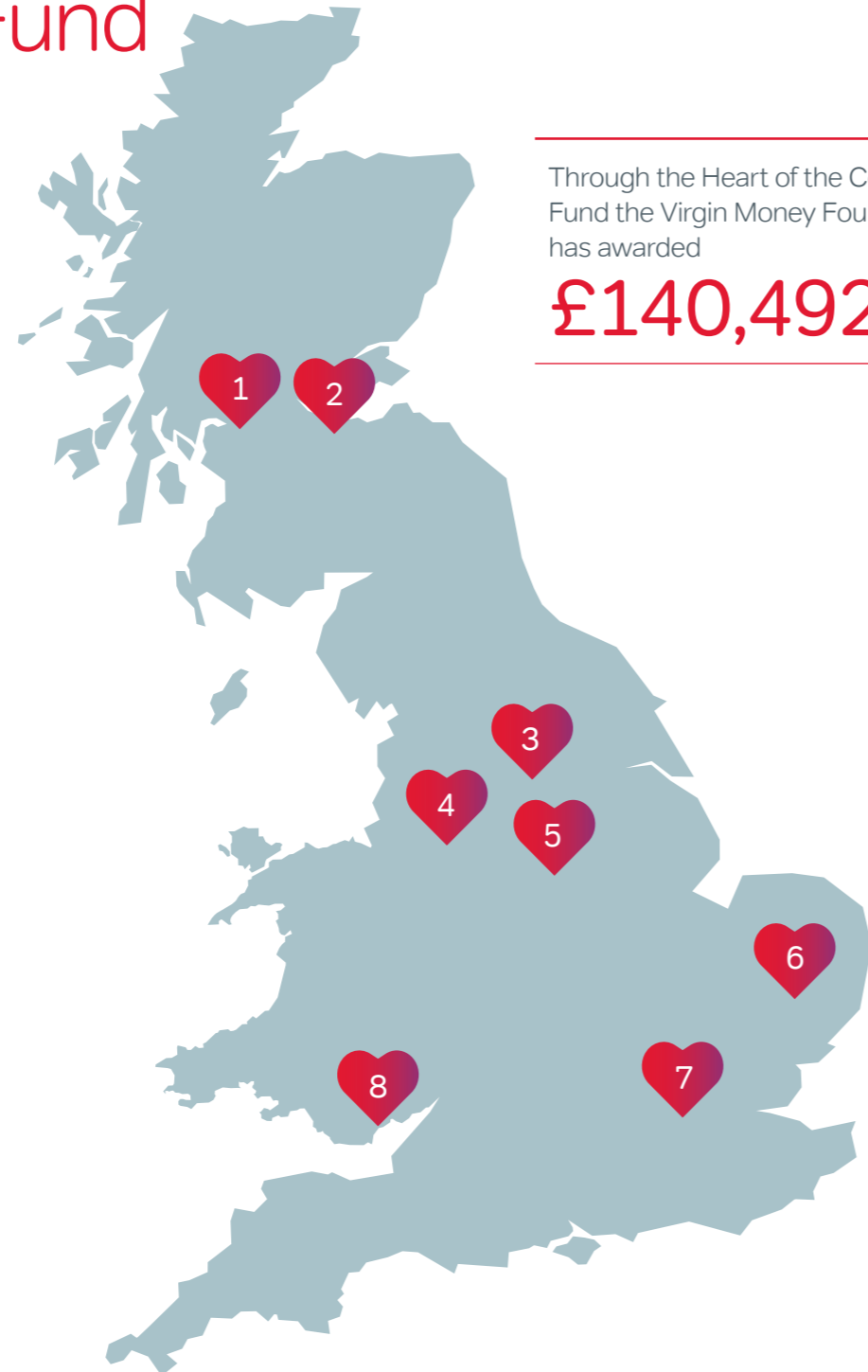
I have been so inspired by Virgin Money Foundation's thoughtful approach to investing in communities with young people at the heart. Meeting young people at Streetwise Newcastle has been one of the highlights of #iwill, showing us what's possible when young people are empowered to lead change in their communities. I was so impressed by their thoughtful and inclusive campaign to tackle the stigma surrounding periods. It was a real privilege to witness young people use their passion for social justice, creativity and energy to bring 'Raising Shame' to the Northern Stage, shining a light on the real stories of young people living in Newcastle. This is what the Power of Youth looks like!

**Dr Rania Marandos,  
Chief Executive,  
Step Up To Serve**



# Heart of the Community Fund

The Heart of the Community Fund launched in Glasgow in February 2018 and by 2019 was being delivered in cities across the United Kingdom. Virgin Money customers participate in the fund, voting for community organisations in their city to receive an award. Through the fund to date the Foundation has made 150 grants to 141 organisations.



Through the Heart of the Community Fund the Virgin Money Foundation has awarded

**£140,492**



During 2019-20 Heart of the Community grants have included:

- 1. Glasgow – Free Wheel North £2,000**  
Free Wheel North provides access to the outdoors and to cycling at its Glasgow Green Cycling Centre. It was set up to address the chronic lack of exercise and loss of freedom experienced by people with a disability.
- 2. Edinburgh – The Colinton Tunnel £2,000**  
The Colinton Tunnel SCIO are bringing the local community together and raising funds to renovate and bring the tunnel back to life. The award was spent on paint and materials to help with the renovation project.
- 3. Leeds – FareShare Yorkshire £7,000**  
FareShare Yorkshire were awarded an exceptional grant to support food banks across South Yorkshire to provide food parcels to those impacted through Covid.



- 4. Manchester – Cyril Flint befrienders £1,000**  
Cyril Flint Befrienders offer a befriending service to help prevent social isolation amongst elderly members of the Trafford community. The award was used to support the running costs of the service from management referrals to recruiting new volunteers to ensure their service users are supported.
- 5. Sheffield – The Ethel Trust Community Barge £1,000**  
The Ethel Trust provide day and residential canal and river experiences on their community barge for vulnerable groups in Sheffield. They used the award to pay for a day trip for up to 40 children with learning or physical disabilities.
- 6. Norwich – Sue Lambert Trust £2,000**  
Sue Lambert Trust provides free, long-term counselling, practical and emotional support and self-help groups for survivors of abuse in Norwich. The award was used to clear their courtyard of dirt



- 7. Inner London – Islington Pensioners Forum £500**  
Islington Pensioners Forum champions the rights and dignity of local pensioners with the aim of reducing isolation and loneliness. The award helped cover the running costs of a new workshop designed to help older members of the community with smart technology.
- 8. Cardiff – Skills & Volunteering Cymru £1,000**  
Skills & Volunteering Cymru provides volunteering opportunities for students to give back to their local community. The award was used to fund training and support costs for their volunteers.





# Collaboration Action Fund

The North East Collaboration Working Group formed in July 2017 with a vision to support greater collaboration and innovation across the Voluntary Sector and beyond. It brought together a group of funders to create a fund. This fund offered grants to collaborations who would work together to create positive change, exploring new ideas to improve local communities or address social issues. The Virgin Money Foundation contributed to and managed the fund.

Awards were decided by a public vote. Seven collaborations, each led by a voluntary sector organisation were awarded grants of £5,000 each. These grants covered the cost of the collaboration and externally facilitated planning sessions. The collaborations included:

- **The Angelou Centre and Changing Lives**  
Working together to improve access to culturally competent drug and alcohol services in Newcastle.

- **North Tyneside VODA**  
Convening a partnership to work on the regeneration of the local Town Centre.
- **Meadow Well Connected**  
Bringing together a range of organisations and local people to consider how a community garden could be used to increase the availability of fresh produce for the local community.

Through the Collaboration Action Fund the Virgin Money Foundation has awarded

**£35,000**



# More than Money

The Virgin Money Foundation provides grant funding to support positive change in local communities but also believes that to accelerate change more than money is needed. Community organisations need opportunities to come together, hear what is working in other places, and learn from one another. They need support to access skilled volunteers and external expertise, and they need new platforms to raise their profile. Through its Beyond The Grant Programme the Foundation has provided a broad range of non-financial support to its funded charities.

The Virgin Money Foundation has the unique opportunity of being connected to Virgin Money. Its staff support the Foundation and give their time to the charities it funds. Since the Foundation launched, 227 colleagues have used their professional skills to support the Foundation's charities through pro bono volunteer support. This is one aspect of the Beyond The Grant Programme. Through the programme the Foundation has also:

- Hosted 12 masterclasses, providing 1290 learning opportunities to 590 individuals
- Worked with Virgin Money to deliver 17 workshops, offering training to 321 charity leaders
- Worked with Virgin Money to design and deliver CV writing workshops and work readiness workshops to 80 people looking to enter work
- Provided learning circles for grantees, with 31 charity leaders regularly participating in these
- Offered funded places at national conferences for 30 charities

The Virgin Money Foundation is keen to support volunteering in local communities, understanding that volunteers are a lifeline for many local charities. In 2020 it launched the Colleagues In The Community Fund, awarding grants to organisations that Virgin Money colleagues provided long term volunteer support to.

Through the Colleagues In The Community Fund the Virgin Money Foundation has awarded

**£52,000**

Equi-Power Central Scotland were awarded a £500 grant through the Colleague in the Community Fund.

Virgin Money Foundation GLT Masterclass held at Virgin Money's Newcastle offices. Copyright GLT Partners Ltd.





# A Look Back at the first five years

At the beginning of 2019, the Foundation established a new strategy, aligned to its Theory of Change. During the period a number of its earliest programmes came to an end, making way for new funds to be launched. The outcomes and learning from these programmes has been instrumental to the Foundation, informing how it best supports community organisations to create communities in which all people can thrive.

Action Foundation, Newcastle, were awarded a grant of £49,768 through the North East Fund



## North East Fund

The North East Fund was launched in 2015 and closed in Spring 2019.

Through the North East Fund the Virgin Money Foundation has awarded

**£4.225m**

As a result of grants awarded through the North East Fund:



**1,143**

young people entered sustainable employment



**1,293**

people exited homelessness, gaining a home



Nearly **100** jobs were created and over 160 salaries supported in the North East community sector



# Ripple Fund

The Ripple Fund was a proactive grant programme, offering multi-year grants to organisations with a unique ability to create replicable positive change in local communities.

Highlights from the fund included:

- **Edberts House**  
A community hub the Foundation supported to expand had over 21,000 visits during the term of the grant.
- **Back On The Map**  
Purchased four properties in Sunderland, bringing them back into use as affordable homes for the local community.
- **Cornerstone Supported Housing**  
Expanded its social enterprise, employing people impacted by homelessness. Their woodwork workshop turned over £17,500 in revenue sales in July 2020.



The ripples have been significant, certainly beyond our expectations three years ago and, on occasion, probably more accurately described as waves.

**Edberts House Final Report**

Through the Ripple Fund the Virgin Money Foundation has awarded

**£1.548m**

# Making a Splash

Making a Splash supported enterprising organisations across Norfolk, each working to create positive change in their communities. During 2019 funded organisations carried out activity regenerating local communities, addressing homelessness, launching new social enterprises and developing community assets.



The Feed, Norwich, were awarded a grant of £50,000 through the Making a Splash Fund.



Back on the Map, Sunderland, were awarded a grant of £288,935 through the Ripple Fund.





Our Virgin Money Foundation grant helped us to continue to offer much needed support to families, older members of our community and to people experiencing domestic abuse, during a period of real uncertainty. The grant helped us to ensure our community got the right support to be able to stay well and safe.



**Tony Cutmore,**  
**Chief Executive, The Cornforth Partnership**

360 data on all grants awarded <https://virginmoneyfoundation.org.uk/grants-awarded/>

Photo credit: Images throughout Bigger Picture Agency

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