

Oasis Community
Partnerships

Annual Impact Report

2019/20

The Oasis logo consists of a stylized white circle with a gap, followed by the word "Oasis" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. The logo is set against a white background within an orange trapezoidal shape that has a white border and is tilted slightly to the right.

Oasis



Contents

Welcome	3
Financial Highlights	4
OCP 2019/20 – in brief	5
Covid-19 Response - Youth and Children’s work	6
Covid-19 Response - Family Support	8
Summer Sessions 2020	10
Youth and Children’s Programmes	12
Youth and Children	13
Building Aspirations - Daniella’s story	14
Escaping Youth Violence - Tyler’s story	15
A passion for football - Leo’s story	16
Confidence through Volunteering - April’s story	17
Advice and Support Programmes	18
When there’s nowhere else to turn - A Mother’s story	20
Freedom from debt - Fatima’s story	20
Ruth’s story	21
Community empowerment programmes	21
Hope for the future - Ahmed’s story	22
Friendship and confidence through volunteering	23
Road to employment - Shelly’s story	23



We are a movement of people who are committed to transforming the communities in which we live, learn and work. Our vision is to see our neighbourhoods, towns and cities become places that are full of aspiration, opportunity and friendship.

Welcome

2019/20 has been a year like no other; the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic has been profound for the individuals and communities we work alongside and for the projects that we deliver. Whilst the situation has thrown up challenges for so many, it has also highlighted just how incredible our Oasis Hub communities are. As we have faced some of these immense difficulties together, we have been able to grow the depth and breadth of our community work and to support many more people in the process. As you’ll read in this impact report we’ve launched an additional three Hub charities across the country.

One of the five ethos statements at the heart of the work of Oasis is ‘a sense of perseverance to keep going for the long haul’ and this has been demonstrated time and again over the last year. In March, our teams adapted quickly and changed delivery models for many of our programmes. We established and developed food security work to meet massively growing need. We developed new models of pastoral support for some of the most vulnerable children, young people and families in our communities. We worked hard to stay connected and to provide families with the ability to get online during the months of lockdown. In addition to all of this, over the summer months our teams worked tirelessly to provide holiday activities for thousands of people who needed it most. We’ve heard repeatedly from community members

that when it felt like the rest of society was closing down, they knew that their local Oasis Hub was there for them.

This year has served to remind us all of the need for strong, compassionate and inclusive communities. That’s why we are motivated to build a ground-breaking charity and movement of activists that supports communities to thrive and flourish. Across our network of hubs, our aspiration is to grow youth, children’s and community work including community cafes, farms, parent and toddler groups, debt advice centres, food pantries, family support services, Oasis churches, mentoring schemes, adult education programmes, healthy living projects and much more. We do all of this alongside our network of Oasis academies and our Oasis housing service.

We are passionate about working in partnership with community leaders, residents, local businesses, schools, faith groups and voluntary agencies. We know that it is the strength of these relationships and our ability to act together that sees long-lasting community transformation take root. So we want to say a massive thank you to you all. You really are helping us to make a difference in people’s lives and we hope you are as proud as we are of the stories and transformation that this report represents.

The OCP Leadership Team

Financial highlights

Income

Oasis Community Partnership Group are excited to report another year in which we have continued to grow financially with **£4.1 million** being raised. This represents a **24.5%** growth on the previous year.

A surplus of £768,000 (£107,000 unrestricted, £661,000 restricted*) has been posted across the group of hub charities.

OCP and the hub charities are very grateful for the financial support from many donors, grant funders and commissioners. It is not possible to list every one of these supporters but without this essential support we would not be able to serve our communities in the way we do.

↑ 24.5% growth

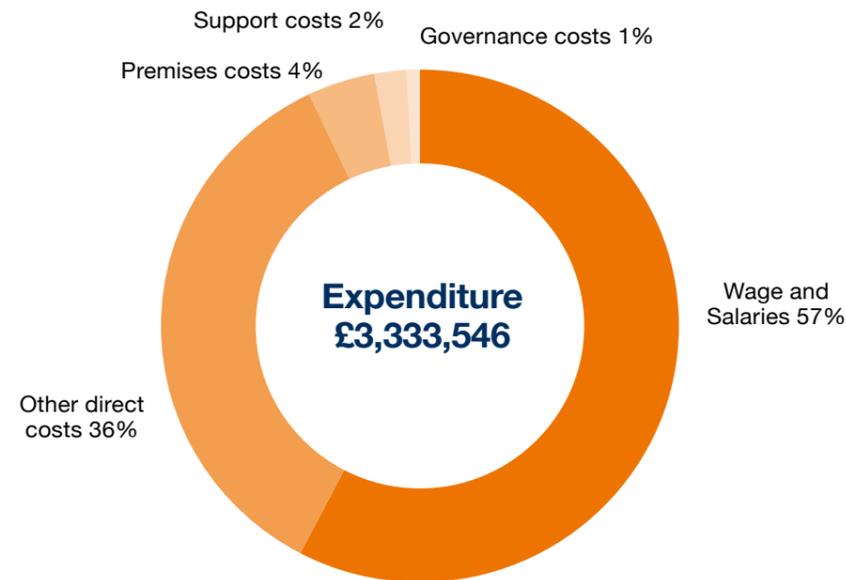
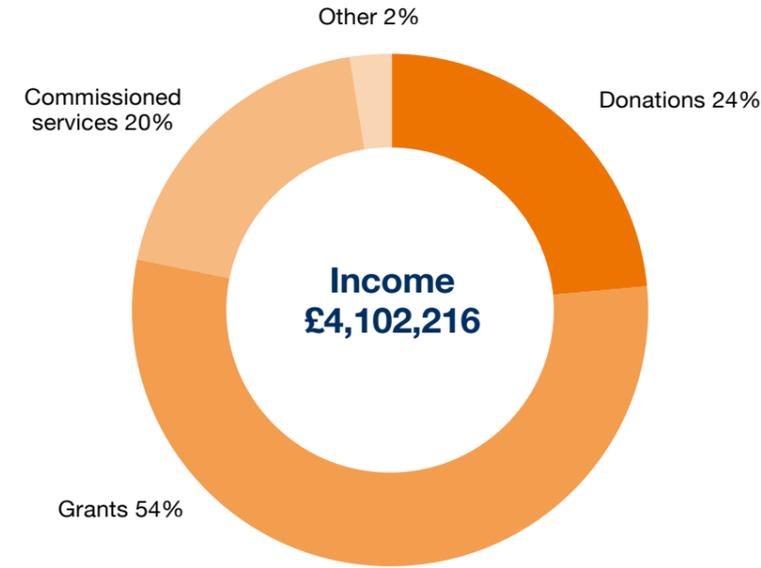
*restricted funding for multi-year projects

Expenditure

As expected with the growth in income, expenditure has also increased by **14.1%** from last year to **£3.3 million**. Salaries make up over half our expenditure and, along with other direct costs, represents 93% of total expenditure for the group.

This year has been challenging with the impact of Covid-19 but we have been well equipped to deliver many front-line services in the communities that we serve throughout the country.

↑ 14.1% increase



OCP 2019/20 in brief

Employees

130

Volunteers

714

Projects/services

209

Number of people who accessed OCP Hub Services and Projects



Covid-19 response

Youth and Children's work

Despite the restrictions placed upon us by the Covid-19 pandemic our staff and volunteers were determined to stay present in their local communities supporting children, young people and families through digital platforms and Covid secure environments.

The impact of the pandemic has hit children and young people especially hard. They have reported feeling lonely and anxious, missing their friends, missing education, unable to maintain a healthy lifestyle, feeling under stimulated and losing social confidence. We focussed our attention on keeping in touch with young people checking on their health and wellbeing, continuing with mentoring sessions, facilitating small group activities, creating and delivering activity packs and where young people had no access to our digital activities, we provided wifi dongles and laptops.



“ Thank you to all in the youth team. You have been amazing working with young people and helping them to maintain calm during such uncertain times. Thank you for creating a safe, friendly platform for them to explore and express their emotions.” **Parent of a young person**

“ The laptop and data was an overwhelming gift. It has made such a difference to my life and I can study better now. If I was allowed to (during lockdown) - I would give you a big hug!” **14-year-old young person**

“ Thank you so much for getting in touch with me every week – your encouragement and support helped me really manage my health and routines better during lockdown – stopped me from going crazy.” **Young person**

“ This is just such a lifeline. I don't even know what to say - this is just the nicest thing anyone has done for me. Thank you so much, I can now do my homework online and talk to my friends again.” **Young person**

“ These activity packs helped me in a massive way during isolation with 4 children stuck at home - they gave us craft things to keep us entertained my youngest was well surprised, so thank you.” **Parent**

“ The boxes are a great help and have encouraged my kids to want to do more outside. Cooking together with the meal box is an amazing idea!” **Parent**

“ The pack has helped me and my child through COVID-19 as it has given us some activities to do together. We loved the messy play and we are really looking forwards to our next pack.” **Portable Play & Stay feedback from family**

Children and young people supported

March/April

1,771

May/June

1,996

July/August

5,958

keep in touch calls with young people

1,223

mentoring sessions with young people

1,488

small group sessions with young people (e.g. arts and crafts, music, choir, games, exercise, cooking etc.)

425

resource/activity packs delivered to young people

701

IT hardware products delivered to young people (e.g. wifi dongles, laptops etc) distributed

93

Totals (6 months)

Covid-19 response

Family support

The social and economic pressures of the Covid pandemic have been enormous for families on low income, creating a perfect storm of financial hardship, lack of work, children not at school and none of the normal support networks. Parents have been dealing with loss of income, struggling to pay for food, utilities, housing and child related costs. They have been landed with unexpected home-based education and lots of isolation and anxiety.

It was clear early on in the pandemic that our two main priorities had to be pastoral support and emergency food, recognising that mental health and hunger were the real issues that families were dealing with.

We ensured that we kept in touch with families to check on their wellbeing and needs through regular 'keep in touch' calls or doorstep visits. We ran lots of fun digital activity sessions engaging the whole family in activities that supported health and wellbeing and education and, in conjunction with these sessions, we created and delivered family resource and activity packs so that everyone was able to take part. By far the biggest shift in our activities was the provision of food. We created new partnerships and sought support and funding enabling us to increase our food provision over the 6 months to meet the need.

“ Thank you Oasis for doing this you are amazing. I feel much better now I know the family can eat.” *Parent*

“ Look mum, we’ve got toilet rolls” *Child*

“ I’d like to thank absolutely everyone who has made sure we have had amazing food parcels every week. My son and I have been overwhelmed by the quality and amount of amazing items we’ve received.” *Parent*

“ We would like to thank everyone that have ensured we have such great food parcels, and given up their time and risked their own selves to deliver to us every week. *Parent*

“ Thank you, I can’t tell you what this means, if I could send you flowers I would, this is the best help ever. I’ve had a bad day, so any good news is amazing!” *Parent*

“ Thank You so much for the food parcel, really appreciate it and the game we are just about to start playing, thanks again.” *Parent*



Families supported

March/April

830

May/June

1,657

July/August

1,379

2,880

Keep in touch calls/doorstep visits with families

557

Digital activity sessions with families (e.g. arts and crafts, yoga, mindfulness, exercise, cooking digital coffee mornings etc.)

3,280

Family resource/activity packs delivered

15,294

Food parcels delivered

34,328

Cooked meals delivered

158

Emergency essentials parcels delivered

168

Emergency food or fuel vouchers distributed

“We are short of words - the Oasis Family Support team is the best of all” *Parent*

Totals (6 months)



Summer Sessions 2020

At very short notice we were able to organise 'summer sessions' in 22 locations, a covid-compliant version of our Plate-Up holiday clubs which provide children and young people with a free daily lunch in the holidays, plus fun activities such as sports, crafts and music as well as activities and outings for families. This year looked very different. We delivered 26,821 meals plus digital sessions and socially distanced activities entirely outdoors with restricted numbers.

Summer Sessions	Children aged 5-11 engaged	Young people aged 12-16 engaged	Number of families reached	Digital Summer Sessions
753	977	487	997	143

Attendances to digital sessions	Face-to-face sessions	Attendances to face-to-face sessions	Volunteers supporting delivery of Summer Sessions	Meals provided at Summer Sessions
1,277	610	5,009	232	26,821



“ My son had lots of fun this morning and was happy to see some of his old friends from pre-school, thank you!”

“ Thank you for doing the forest school, my son had so much fun and wants to know when it's on again!”

“ It feels good to be back and know what the school looks like, I feel better about September already.”

“ We were extremely worried about how much lockdown had affected Sam but over the last few weeks we have seen our bubbly outgoing boy return. Thanks to the summer sessions we are ready for September whatever it may bring.”

“ Thank you for creating a safe environment and providing games and lunch.”

“ Lovely to be back at the farm, it's such a nice local space and the kid's love it.”

“ This has been a lifeline for my family, I don't know how I would have coped without the summer sessions.”

“ I have loved being with my friends and not staying at home bored.”



“ The summer sessions have been absolutely brilliant for all 3 of my children, something for them to look forward to during the day, it has kept them motivated and with something different to try.”

“ My son has had the pleasure of attending a variety of sessions from the beginning and it has been a wonderful enriching learning and social experience.”

“ The craft session was really enjoyable and fun, enjoyed making the furry monsters and making bracelets out of beads.”



“It feels good to be back and know what the school looks like, I feel better about September already”

79 Youth and children's programmes



IN TOTAL WE SUPPORTED

7,509

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR PROGRAMMES

5,631

IN OUR UNIVERSAL PROGRAMMES

1,878

IN OUR TARGETED PROGRAMMES

Growing our youth mental health support

We are seeing increasing numbers of young people with mental health issues.

Covid-19 has exacerbated the situation with more and more young people feeling anxious and afraid about the future. In 19/20 we expanded our early help provision to support young people through mentoring and counselling.

We recently launched our 'Talk it out' wellbeing campaign



Youth and children

In our targeted work we use 'Outcomes Stars' - a family of evidence-based tools for measuring and supporting change. In 2019/20 we mapped the progress of 122 young people accessing one to one mentoring support. A 'distance travelled' report measures the change achieved for young people who completed two or more Star readings between July 2019 and August 2020. The distance travelled was measured between service users' earliest and latest Star readings in this period.

Young People making progress

IN 1+ OUTCOME AREAS
Percentage of young people making progress in at least one outcome area

85%

IN 2+ OUTCOME AREAS
Percentage of young people making progress in at least two outcome areas

66%

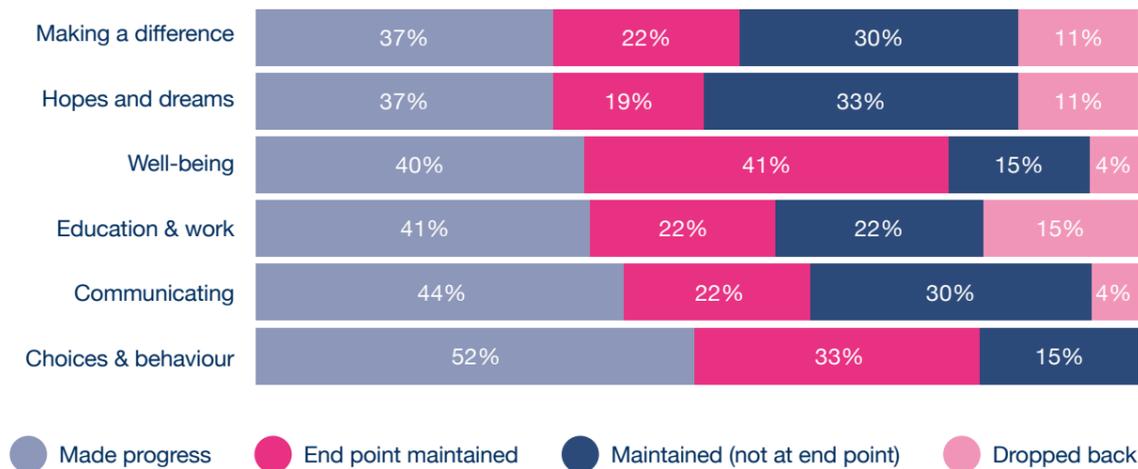
IN 3+ OUTCOME AREAS
Percentage of young people making progress in at least three outcome areas

48%

OUTCOME AREAS SHOWING PROGRESS
Average number of outcome areas in which someone is making progress

2.5

How much progress are people making in each outcome area?



This chart shows the percentage of service users who made progress, maintained at end point, maintained not at end point and dropped back in each of the outcomes areas.

The highest percentage of service users making progress between their earliest and latest Star reading in this period was in the area 'Choice of behaviour' (52%). The highest percentage of service users dropping back was seen in the area 'Education and work' (15%). In each area a high percentage of service users maintained their reading between their earliest and latest Star.

These service users either 'Maintained at end point' - meaning that they had a reading of 5 on their earliest reading in this period and maintained this reading by their latest Star.

Escaping youth violence

Tyler's story



A year later, Tyler has just been signed off from OYS. He returned to school and, despite missing so much education, he gained several GCSEs. He began eating healthily and attending the gym regularly and both his fitness and his confidence have improved. He has been accepted into a sixth-form college and is keen to forge a career as a nurse or police officer.

Says Youth Worker Matt, 'Tyler's case highlights the fact that when clinical staff are able to really communicate with their patients and ask the right questions, underlying concerns can be addressed. This lad is such a lovely young man, it was a shame that he lost so many months of his young life to the fear of gang violence but now he has a really bright future ahead of him.'

Matt and his team supported Tyler and his family in their meetings with the Education Welfare Officer to find a new educational placement where he could feel confident.



Oasis Youth Service workers are attached to two North London hospitals and are called to support young people arriving at A&E due to violent assault or self-harm.

Tyler (name changed) was one such young man. Aged 15, he arrived in A & E in July last year seemingly with a medical complaint. The on-duty consultant spoke to him at length and

learned that he had been assaulted by members of a local gang twice in January and February of 2019 and had subsequently not left the house for fear of further gang violence. Only when his father was able to drive him, did he leave the house to go to church or visit a friend.

The young man disclosed he had missed six months of school. He was also suffering from weight gain and had lost all hope for his future. The hospital referred Tyler to the Oasis Youth Service (OYS) and Matt, a trained mental health youth worker, arranged to meet him at home.

‘This lad is such a lovely young man, it was a shame that he lost so many months of his young life to the fear of gang violence but now he really has a really bright future ahead of him’

OYS worked with Tyler to rebuild his confidence in gradual steps, first taking short trips out to local parks and then accompanying him on various activities, such as dog walking.



think about her future career path. A great opportunity arose through a partnership with a drama company 'Odd Arts' which resulted in the company delivering a 'doorstep' drama workshop with Daniella at her home.

Daniella has now returned to school and has entered year 10. She has a much stronger sense of self, her confidence and self-esteem have improved, she is getting on better with her peers and is staying in class. She now has a real sense of purpose and an ambition to study at drama school. 'The mentoring sessions have really improved my self-image. They make me feel good about myself. I want to be an actor and study at drama school.'

Rowan says, 'Daniella has remained engaged throughout the past few months, even during the turbulent times of the Covid pandemic, she has volunteered in the Hub community kitchen project and our summer holiday provisions and she has really worked hard on her wellbeing and communication strategies.

'We both know that the next two years are really important and there is still work to do, but I am really proud of what she has achieved to date.'



Daniella, aged 14, was struggling with her self-esteem and had anxiety issues as well as not sleeping, finding science classes difficult and experiencing problems with her friendship circle. All of which resulted in her refusing to engage fully in her education, even choosing to opt out of some of her classes.

Rowan, the Education Achievement Officer at Oasis Hub Oldham began working with Daniella at the beginning of 2020. 'We began by building relationship, understanding what was going on in Daniella's life and finding out what she enjoyed and what pushed her button,' said Rowan. For example, when Daniella found it hard to stay in class it was agreed that she could see Rowan, who would spend time with her doing calming exercises and developing strategies to deal with the anxieties that caused her to leave the class. When she felt better she returned to her lessons.

‘The mentoring sessions have really improved my self-image. They make me feel good about myself. I want to be an actor and study at drama school.’

Daniella engaged in regular mentoring sessions with Rowan. 'We worked on Daniella's wellbeing, how to look after herself, sleeping strategies, how well she was communicating, her relationship building with peers and her aspirations,' said Rowan. Initially these sessions were face-to-face and then when the Covid lockdown came into effect, the sessions went online. During lock down, Daniella became an avid watcher of the Netflix series 'Riverdale' and Rowan took this opportunity to start working with her on becoming a fan fiction writer, working with her on her story telling and English grammar. It became clear that Daniella was starting to take an interest in drama and acting and so Rowan began practising monologues with her, using this as a tool to help her

Building aspirations Daniella's story

Confidence through volunteering

April's story

‘Through my involvement in the youth health and participation project, I am now able to deal with my feelings and emotions. The staff have helped me with my confidence and I am so proud of my involvement in the body positive project. It felt good knowing that by doing this project, I was able to help other young people as well as helping myself.’



April is 16 and is now in her first year of Sixth Form. She has been involved with Oasis Hub North Bristol's youth health and participation project for four years. In the beginning, April attended a one-to-one support programme based around personal and emotional development and twice-weekly drop-in sports and fitness sessions.

When April first became involved in the project she was very shy, struggling with lack of self-esteem, anxiety and lack of confidence. However, over time, she gained enough confidence to volunteer in some of the Hub projects including helping the youth homeless project, a 'random act of kindness' project and a body positive project.

More recently, April has expressed an interest in working with younger children and started running her own arts and crafts activities during the Oasis Hub drop-in. This led to her volunteering at a local after school club for 4-11 year-olds where she has just been employed as a sessional worker.



Leo is 15 years old. He has attended holiday provision at Oasis Hub Hobmoor for the last 4 years. Leo has been diagnosed with autism and found attending his local secondary school extremely challenging. His mental health deteriorated significantly until he no longer attended. He is passionate about football and sport, playing in local teams as a goalkeeper. He has a season ticket for Birmingham City F.C. and attends every match. Leo was not able to participate in formal education but signed up to the Sports Leaders Level 1 course. During the course he learned new skills and grew in confidence.

He completed the course gaining his Level 1 but also received 'The Spirit of Leadership' certificate for his dedication to the holiday club. He is now too old to be a participant at the holiday provision but has committed to coming along as a volunteer and leading activities for other young people. He is very proud that he has achieved his first formal qualification and this has given him a tremendous boost.

He now attends a local college four mornings a week studying GCSE Maths and English and volunteers at the Community Centre when he feels able to, putting to good use his new skills. In the future his goal is to become a Sports Coach.

A passion for football

Leo's story

59 Advice and support programmes

Growing our response to food poverty

The UK has one of the highest rates of food poverty in Europe. Covid-19 has made things worse and lifted the lid on the hidden extent of food poverty.

In 2019/20 we supported 25,808 people with food parcels and cooked meals compared with 3,459 in the previous 12 months!

In total we supported 30,737 people in our advice and support programmes



Health and wellbeing

2,772

Personal & spiritual

953

Debt advice

79



“We can’t help kids unless we help the parents. I honestly don’t know what I would do without the level of support that Oasis provides.”

One-to-one family support

872

Advocacy

253

Food poverty

25,808

When there's nowhere else to turn

A mother's story



Imagine being homeless, chronically ill, with a dependent child and no entitlement to any help at all. This was the case

for a mother and her 16-year-old son referred to the Oasis community team through Oasis Academy South Bank in London. Their immigration status was 'No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)' which means they had no entitlement to welfare benefits, home office support for asylum seekers or to public housing. The mother had a serious chronic health condition and was unable to work.

'We provided some emergency food through our Foodbank,' explains Community Worker, Felicity Maries.

'We then helped her to negotiate support through the Council's NRPF Team, who were able to provide one small room between the mother and son, and a small amount of subsistence. We then helped her get in touch with the local MP, who applied to have the NRPF decision lifted. This was granted by the Home Office.'

Later Oasis staff and volunteers helped her find more permanent accommodation in a two-bedroom flat and to apply for various benefits and bus passes for her and her son. 'We were also able to source a fridge and other items for the flat,' says Felicity.

The lady and her son have gone from despair to living in their own home with benefits they are entitled to. She has since completed English and Maths NVQ Level Two courses and is currently undertaking a Teaching Assistant qualification. Her son excelled in his GCSEs.

Freedom from debt

Fatima's story

Fatima was referred to an Oasis Debt Advisor by a member of staff at her children's school. She was at risk of being evicted within a week due to rent arrears and had a number of other urgent debts. She had been working part-time on a low wage and her previous benefit payments had been stopped. Due to the health needs of one of her children, she was unable to work more hours and soon did not have enough money to pay the bills or feed her family. 'She wasn't able to work out how to fill in the forms she needed to submit to re-start her benefit payments,' explains Food Bank and Advice Centre manager, Rebekah Gibson.

'We were able to give her an emergency food parcel from our foodbank and she met with one of our debt and benefits advisors. The advisor went to court with her, to try and help save her home.'

Finally, after three trips to court, Fatima was allowed to stay in her home. Her advisor helped her reapply for benefits and her income more than doubled. This allowed her to set up repayment plans for her other debts.



Fatima's children excelled in their exams and the mental and physical health of the whole family has vastly improved since having some financial stability.

Fatima is now well on her way to becoming debt free.

Ruth's story

'Just because you need help, you should not feel shame or blame. Everyone needs a little help sometimes'

Ruth is a local activist within her community and a strong advocate of local people coming together to support each other. 'Just because you need help, you should not feel shame or blame. It is too easy to feel demeaned and helpless when you find yourself and your family in difficult circumstances.'

When Ruth discovered that Oasis Hub Foundry and Boulton (OHFB) in Birmingham was launching 'Your Local Pantry' she stepped in as a community volunteer. OHFB opens once a week and for a small payment of £4, offers community members a selection of food to the value of £15-£25. 'Ruth now co-manages the Pantry and is entrepreneurial in her approach with lots of creative ideas about how

to organise and lead the project,' says Meg, the Hub Leader, 'she is really compassionate but also fair, and she advocates that community members pay a small sum rather than get the service free, giving people power and dignity.' Ruth has recently launched a 10p raffle at each pantry opening and in the first week she made £20. The proceeds go back into the project and will pay for a Christmas Hamper. Ruth says, 'I don't think I will ever fully understand what I bring to the team as I'm just being myself, but I know what every other person brings to the team. I'm truly blessed to have my FaB Family, as they are all amazing and work so hard to make the pantry work every week.'

Ruth knows from her own life experiences that we all need a little help sometimes. She is really excited about taking on the leadership of the project and ensuring that families in difficult circumstances can access support with dignity and empowerment. Not a hand out but a hand up, offered by local people who know something of how it feels to be in hard times.

38 community empowerment programmes

In total

3,490

people were regularly involved in our empowerment programmes

Community and social action projects

2,797

Pathways to work projects

623

Farm & growing projects

45



Hope for the future
Ahmed's story



Ahmed is a Syrian refugee originally from Damascus and now living in Scunthorpe in the North of England with his wife and two young children. Ahmed and his family have experienced indescribable fear and destruction and have lived not knowing whether they would survive each day. Civil war has stolen Ahmed's independence and his children's childhood. Ahmed is a master craftsman, his trade upholstery, having trained with famous companies both in Syria and Beirut. Because of the Civil war Ahmed's livelihood was destroyed and he was unable to support his family. Determined to provide a better life for his children, Ahmed did not give up and he found help through the United Nations Refugee Organisation, who have helped him to find a safe home in Scunthorpe.

Tyrone the Oasis Hub Leader in Scunthorpe, met Ahmed in early 2019 in the playground at Oasis Academy Henderson Avenue as Ahmed dropped his children off at school. At this point Ahmed had already been in England for four years and although he had spent time learning English, he had struggled to get any work or volunteering opportunities. As the relationship grew, Tyrone learnt about Ahmed's life back in Syria and his skill as an upholsterer.

'I now have a real hope for the future for me and my family and I am determined to make a success of this opportunity'

In 2020 Oasis Hub Henderson Ave launched an employment project 'Crosby Collective' funded through the European Structural Investment Fund. The project seeks to drive regeneration in the local community by providing an inclusive, flexible and affordable work area and programme of business and pastoral support. This includes a makerspace and a portfolio of training that enables local community members to test ideas, explore opportunities and set up micro enterprises.



Tyrone encouraged Ahmed to get involved in the project and through collaboration and the support of the funder 'SIT Scunny', a small upholstery enterprise has been launched. Ahmed now has a workspace within the Crosby Collective, access to tools for his upholstery trade and his first commissions. Tyrone continues to support Ahmed to develop his business model and the hope is that he will eventually have a thriving upholstery business.

For Ahmed the impact of being back in a workshop doing what he loves and what he has spent many years training for has been transformative. 'The support from Ty has been amazing, I am so excited about the workshop and having access to the tools of my trade, I now have a real hope for the future for me and my family and I am determined to make a success of this opportunity'

Friendship and confidence through volunteering

Amber and Jackie



impact on Jackie was compounded by the financial impact and Jackie found herself struggling to pay for food for her family and the transport to get to see her husband in hospital 50 miles away. The Hub was able to provide emergency food parcels for Jackie and support her to access the financial help she required.

Now both Amber and Jackie are key volunteers within the Hub. They lead the food pantry project, sourcing donations, placing orders, taking referrals, and making up parcels. Most importantly, they befriend the people who access the service, taking the time to listen to them and refer them to other Oasis Hub provisions that provide holistic and empowering support.

Hub Leader Michelle says that Amber and Jackie have become key members of the team. 'Their enthusiasm and commitment to the food pantry is incredible. I have seen their confidence and leadership blossom and the food pantry project is now run totally by them supporting many who are struggling financially in the South ward of Grimsby.'

Amber is a local parent with a young family. She first became involved in Oasis Hub South Grimsby through 'Friends of Oasis' as a way of meeting people, making friends and getting involved in the local community. With no family close by to help, Amber was supported by the Hub through some really worrying times with her children's health. Amber quickly became a volunteer helping out at events and activities run by the Hub. It was Amber who referred Jackie to the Hub's food pantry for emergency support. Jackie had suffered a major family crisis when her husband was involved in an accident suffering massive brain damage. The emotional

Road to employment

Shelly's story



A stay-at-home mum with few qualifications, Shelly lives in a small flat with her partner and three young children. Shelly was suffering from a long-

term injury to her arm which needed lots of physio treatment. She also has dyslexia and struggles with anxiety and depression. Consequently, she spent more and more time at home and gradually lost the confidence to go outside and mix with people.

Oasis Hub North Bristol runs a charity shop selling donated toys and clothes and offers volunteering opportunities for local people. Shelly had heard that there was a volunteer opportunity at the shop and plucked up the courage to find out more, 'It took three attempts before I had enough courage to come through the door. It was the best decision I've made in ages,' she says.

Shelly's confidence grew as she became more involved in the shop and she was subsequently successful in her application for the shop assistant role. She now works three

days a week in the community shop sorting donated clothes and toys ready for sale, serving customers, learning how to use a sewing machine to make items for the shop and cashing up at the end of the day. She is starting to look forward and plan for the future and will be starting an emergency first aid course next month followed by English and Maths courses. Shelly says, 'since coming to the shop my pain and depression have both improved and my anxiety has dramatically reduced. I feel lighter.'

"My mental health has improved since starting here and I've learnt lots of different skills already. I'm looking forward to learning other new things which I hope will help me find employment later this year."

Who Are Oasis?

The Oasis vision is for community – a place where everyone is included, making a contribution, and reaching their God-given potential.

We have been pioneering sustainable, holistic community development for 35 years. We work in many communities affected by inequality that impacts all areas of life. We work in a joined-up way across our communities to create change – economically, socially, physically, and

spiritually – in education, housing, justice, health, youth, and family support; and with people of all ages and in all situations.

We believe that things can change. Where systems leave communities disadvantaged, we're bold about pioneering alternatives and trying new things. We're not satisfied with the status quo where it keeps people trapped in poverty, or constantly at risk of exclusion.



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