



PROMOTED CONTENT



Extraordinary
charities
standing
up to the
pandemic

Support that local communities can bank on

UK CEO on how the bank partnered with charities tackling the Covid-19 crisis

Right from the beginning of the pandemic, there were acute needs in the community that we wanted to help support," says Matt Hammerstein, right, the CEO of Barclays UK. "We could see that we needed to do something bold and different. "Taking on this societal responsibility is at the heart of what we do as a bank."

And it's this deep sense of responsibility and longstanding commitment to society that prompted Barclays' biggest ever community relief effort: its £100 million Covid-19 Community Aid Package. Established in early 2020, the package was set up to enable Barclays to partner with charities that were delivering on-the-ground services which were a lifeline to so many.

When the pandemic unfolded, charitable organisations were quick to respond. Yet these charities were also facing major financial pressures – the Charity Commission says 72 per cent of charities in England and Wales saw their finances deteriorate during the crisis – coupled with unprecedented demand for their services.

Struck by the profound impact of the pandemic on communities across the UK, Barclays initiated its 100x100 Programme – inviting charities to apply for one of 100 donations of £100,000 each. "We were overwhelmed and inspired by the response," says Hammerstein. "It wasn't just the number of charities that asked for our help but also the breadth of the communities in need." The volume of applications received by Barclays revealed the range of different people and causes that required help. Ensuring as many people as possible were reached, the bank made more donations than originally planned – with 187 charities receiving funding.

Donations were prioritised towards selected charities delivering vital Covid-19 relief to meet people's immediate needs. From procuring PPE to keep as many safe as possible, to providing essential food to isolated and elderly people, help was tailored to local needs.

As the scale of the pandemic became more apparent, it presented significant long-term challenges to communities, such as mental health issues, financial hardship, the need for support in ethnically diverse communities disproportionately affected by



the pandemic, and the lack of digital access becoming more prevalent. Addressing this, the bank extended its 100x100 programme further, taking the number of £100,000 donations made to 250.

"Banks have always been at the centre of local communities, and that role continues to evolve," Hammerstein says, commenting on the bank's position in society and his colleagues' active involvement. "We definitely need to be out in these communities, looking for the people and organisations we can serve."

Many of Barclays' employees instinctively look for ways to get involved with local charities and other good causes. The bank recognised this early on in the crisis with its Covid-19 Colleague Matched Donations Programme, through which it matches, pound for pound, money raised by its employees.

Many of those employees have had a remarkable impact on causes they are passionate about supporting. For example, Claire Sawyer, a director in the IT department, was concerned about the lack of support services available to vulnerable people living in her area, Knutsford in Cheshire. She took quick action and set up We Are Knutsford to deliver services that were needed.

"There are large numbers of elderly people in our town who suddenly found they couldn't get to the shops," Sawyer says. "We set up a Facebook group to coordinate volunteers and we got 3,000 members. Then we leafleted every house in Knutsford, explaining what we were doing and inviting anyone who needed help to call us."

The project became a full-time job for Sawyer, which prompted Barclays to give her ten days of emergency volunteering leave.

PROVIDING HELP WHERE IT'S NEEDED

After a successful first phase in 2020, Barclays has extended its 100x100 Programme to reach a total of 250 charities across the UK

NORTHERN IRELAND

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CHARITIES SUPPORTED



Including ACTION CANCER

Delivering a range of services to those living with cancer. Helped people deal with the emotional impact of a cancer diagnosis, compounded by the isolation of lockdown. See page 8

WALES

12

CHARITIES SUPPORTED



Including ELITE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Helping people with learning or physical disabilities get into work, and partnering with employers across Wales. Offered vital support and advice during the crisis. See page 7

SCOTLAND

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CHARITIES SUPPORTED



Including NORTH EAST SENSORY SERVICES

Supporting people with visual and hearing impairments across the country's northeast. Trained people to use devices to avoid isolation. See page 8

ENGLAND

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CHARITIES SUPPORTED

Including HALIFAX OPPORTUNITIES TRUST



Working with ethnically diverse communities for 20 years to provide employment support, children's centres and meeting spaces. Was able to expand its work and reach more people. See page 6

UK-WIDE

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CHARITIES SUPPORTED

Including RASPBERRY PI FOUNDATION



Helping to identify vulnerable children and supply them with much-needed technology. Gave 500 more children a Raspberry Pi all-in-one personal computer kit. See page 4

“We need to be out looking for the people we can serve”

She spent the time organising volunteers, setting up a website, making arrangements with local shops, talking to banks about how people might pay, and handling myriad other logistical issues.

"The calls came quickly," she says. "At the height of that first lockdown, we were doing 40 shopping trips a day for people." Initially, We Are Knutsford was funded through a JustGiving campaign, but Sawyer realised more money would be needed. "Everyone was getting a bit bored with virtual quizzes, so I came up with the idea of online snail racing," she says. A series of races raised £3,500, which Barclays then matched. Since those early days, We Are Knutsford has delivered

more than 6,000 community support activities including shopping and collecting prescriptions for those shielding or self-isolating, making garden visits and carrying out welfare calls. Some of the money raised supported grants to struggling families, given in the form of shopping vouchers to be spent at retailers in the town, which were hard hit by the pandemic. We Are Knutsford is still going strong. "We say, 'If you've got a problem and you're not sure how to sort it out, give us a call and we'll try to help,'" Sawyer adds. This spirit is front and centre of what Hammerstein is keen to bring to the table when he talks about reorientating to become

a more purposeful organisation. In the old days, banks such as Barclays had more of a physical presence in towns and cities. But while networks of branches have shrunk, Hammerstein believes banks can still put themselves at the centre of communities – in part by offering services in new ways, but also by embracing engagement and community action, individually and at a business level. "This isn't just about philanthropy or meeting a corporate and social responsibility need," Hammerstein says. "It's about recognising that what we do as a bank is inherently purposeful – my hope is that by engaging with people in this way, we are building enduring links."



Claire Sawyer, an IT director at Barclays, set up a group to help vulnerable people in her hometown



UK-WIDE

COVER ILLUSTRATION: ANDY TIERRE; CENTRAL ILLUSTRATION AGENCY



Giving access to financial support

Charity bridges gap for people living with cancer

MAGGIE'S

Maggie's is one of 250 organisations that received a £100,000 donation from Barclays. Laura Lee, CEO of the charity, explains how the funding enabled them to continue giving essential support to people living with cancer throughout the pandemic.

Operating centres across the country, Maggie's provides a range of support to people diagnosed with cancer, including advice on how to manage their symptoms, emotional support for anyone getting to grips with a diagnosis, and practical guidance such as how to access financial benefits.

Lee explains: "Cancer brings many physical and psychological challenges but there are practical issues, too."

People often find themselves financially worse off following a cancer diagnosis as a result of unexpected costs and a drop in income – and Covid-19 has only heightened these pressures.

The Maggie's team of benefits advisers is helping people to navigate their way to the much-needed financial support that's available. Funded by the donation, the charity's team of advisers can help people access vital support to ease their financial worries so they can focus on their treatment and recovery.

Explaining the importance of this support, Lee adds: "For a family, if you can't resolve your immediate financial crisis, then all the other help we can offer is secondary."



Maggie's centres stayed open throughout the pandemic, offering essential support

UK-WIDE

Tech gives kids chance to thrive

School closures in lockdown highlighted digital divide that affects more than a million pupils

RASPBERRY PI FOUNDATION AND LEARNING FOUNDATION

Now that I have my own computer, I'm enjoying classes much more and it has really helped with my learning,"

Samar says. Nine-year-old Samar was struggling to keep up with her schoolwork when the pandemic began because she had to share the family laptop with her three siblings.

Education charity the Raspberry Pi Foundation stepped in with the offer of a device – and Samar's mum Latifa leapt at the chance.

"It's been a lifesaver, it really has," Latifa says. "Samar is now more confident, she doesn't have to wait to use a computer and she can store her work."

And Samar is just one example of how some pupils were left isolated with limited access to education when the Covid-19 lockdowns forced schools to close. While millions of children were able to log in to online lessons to continue their learning with teachers, Ofcom estimated that there were 1.5 million pupils in homes across the UK without digital devices.

It led to a nationwide campaign to get computers to young people who needed them.

"When the pandemic hit, we were faced with this problem of kids being sent home and not having a computer to work on," says Philip Colligan, chief executive of the Raspberry Pi Foundation.

"Learning doesn't just happen in schools. Doing homework and learning informally are just as important – and children who are given devices then have the same opportunities as their peers."

The Raspberry Pi Foundation partners with more than 50 organisations that work with underserved families to identify vulnerable children in need of a computer.

With the help of Barclays' £100,000 donation, the charity will be able to give 500 more children an all-in-one personal computer kit, complete with keyboard, monitor, webcam and headphones.

"I hope the idea that every child should have a computer to learn on at home will become a reality," says Colligan.

It's not just children who are struggling with a lack of access to technology. Sometimes their teachers don't have the right equipment either.

"Almost half of teachers told us that they did not have access to a device or the

“Almost half of teachers did not have access to a device either

connectivity they needed to plan and prepare schoolwork at home," says Paul Finnis, chief executive of the Learning Foundation and the Digital Poverty Alliance.

The Learning Foundation has been around for 20 years, working with schools to help them embed technology, but now there's a fresh challenge.

"Teachers have been the missing part of the jigsaw and we need to correct that," Finnis says. "There's no point equipping every child with a device if their teachers can't match them."

The Learning Foundation – which is the driving force behind the Tech4Teachers



AMIT LENNON

ENGLAND



Engage, inspire and empower

Using the power of football to support mental health

LEICESTER CITY IN THE COMMUNITY

Covid-19 has had a disproportionate impact on the mental health of vulnerable young people, specifically those who are in, or have been in, the care system.

Foster the Future is a 12-month programme of tailored support that has been developed by Leicester City in the Community – the charitable arm of Leicester City Football Club – to address this imbalance.

"We are harnessing the power and popularity of football to engage with vulnerable young people who are struggling with anxiety, loneliness, low confidence and worries about the future as a result of the pandemic," says Emma Lowry, education manager for Leicester City in the Community.

The contribution from Barclays will fund a range of support including mentoring sessions; weekly sports sessions, which will provide opportunities to socialise safely while getting young people active; and activities that will enable young people to enjoy new experiences.

"We've been working with young people like Sofia, who's ten years old and cares for her disabled mother," Lowry explains. "Over the past year she's grown in confidence."

"This funding will allow us to continue to support her and other young people. Thanks to Barclays, Sofia came to our Christmas party at the stadium and left with a food box. She's coming on a residential soon, too."



Confidence boost: Sofia

'Every intervention is a ripple of hope'

Underserved students get their career kick-start

SPONSORS FOR EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

The pandemic has disrupted opportunities for students looking to start their careers, with internships cancelled and job interviews moved online. Coupled with already intense competition for positions in professional industries, it has taken a particularly heavy toll

on young people who come from ethnically diverse communities.

"Inequalities have been magnified," says Andrew Fairbairn, CEO of Sponsors for Educational Opportunity (SEO) London.

"Communicating on Zoom from a crowded house with poor wi-fi puts people at a severe disadvantage."

For 20 years, SEO London has delivered training and mentoring to young people from diverse backgrounds, providing them

with industry knowledge and access to professionals in order to help kick-start their careers in the corporate world.

When Covid-19 prevented face-to-face training, the charity leapt into action with a virtual programme of mock assessment centres, CV and application workshops, interview practice and lunch-and-learn sessions, bringing together alumni and industry experts to showcase their career paths.

"Numbers went through the roof," says Fairbairn. "Before the pandemic, 5,000 diverse students were registered with us. Now we have 23,000 – not just from London but from all over the UK."

“With ongoing support, they can gain knowledge and skills

The donation from Barclays' programme has made it possible for SEO London to build on this success by securing psychometric tests for students to practise with, engaging professional trainers and taking on additional staff to help deliver the programme and make it available all year round.

"With ongoing support, young people can gain knowledge, skills and grit," Fairbairn continues. "Grit is important. It's amazing what they can do with it."

"Every intervention we make is a ripple of hope. A kid from Toxteth who becomes a big shot in a law firm influences his whole community. If we can upscale that, we can change society."



From a tough start to a positive future

Dedicated help for adopted young people

ADOPTION UK

Before being placed with adoptive parents, three quarters of young people have been through trauma, abuse and neglect, leading to two thirds of them eventually seeking help with their mental health, according to statistics from 2020.

These mental health challenges have been exacerbated by the huge levels of uncertainty brought about by the pandemic and have led to Adoption UK establishing the first specialist nationwide youth provision for adopted young people aged 16 to 25, with the help of Barclays' funding.

"We want to help children who've had a tough start in life create a positive future," says Adoption UK chief executive Sue Armstrong Brown. "Our new programme will enable them to build skills and confidence by helping them connect with each other and raise their voices on issues that matter to them."

ENGLAND



Support for carers in the Covid-19 crisis

Help for the people who are helping others

CARING TOGETHER

The pandemic has been especially hard for carers. Help from family and friends fell away or stopped altogether, and the people being cared for often had to shield. A Carers UK survey in April 2020 reported that 70 per cent of unpaid carers were providing more care during the pandemic and 55 per cent worried they were going to burn out.

“The effect has been cumulative,” says Andy Barber, engagement manager at Caring Together. “Carers had months of managing alone and it’s taking a huge toll on their mental health.”

Caring Together offers support to the most isolated carers and their families across Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Norfolk. With 40 years’ experience, it provides training, information and advice, runs services in the local areas and campaigns for carers’ rights.

The charity has adapted to the crisis in numerous ways, including helping with vaccinations. “If carers were unable to get to the clinic, we booked taxis and sorted out all the logistics. They are dealing with so much, so just having one less thing to worry about makes a huge difference.”

The donation from Barclays’ £100 million Covid-19 Community Aid Package will allow Caring Together to support 500 carers, offering breaks, counselling, help to pay for equipment, access to technology and training to reduce the feeling of isolation.

Inner growth

A community garden project in Halifax plants seeds of change

HALIFAX OPPORTUNITIES TRUST

Identified as being in the top 10 per cent of the UK’s most underprivileged neighbourhoods, Park in central Halifax is densely populated and lacks green spaces. Long-term underlying health conditions are above the nationwide average and Covid-19 mortality rates have been high.

Halifax Opportunities Trust is pushing for change. One of the largest charities in Calderdale, it has been working with ethnically diverse communities for 20 years to provide employment support, children’s centres and meeting spaces, and to help to create a vibrant community.

Through a flagship project, the Outback Community Garden, the charity has focused support on tackling diabetes, obesity and

vitamin D deficiency through lifestyle changes rather than medication. The garden houses 25 vegetable beds and two polytunnels, growing a variety of produce, which is available to purchase at affordable prices.

During lockdown, Outback grew in importance, offering outdoor activities and a way to continue face-to-face support. A beekeeping group and mental health peer support group aimed specifically at Pakistani men have both been particularly successful. A community meal service began in September 2020 – using surplus food from a supermarket supplemented by fresh produce grown in the garden, it provides hot takeaway meals for up to 60 people a week.

“It’s been a real lifesaver,” says Tess, who has been coming to the community garden for a couple of years.

“I would not have a life now without this place. It’s prevented



Outback’s garden has 25 vegetable beds and its volunteers now run a community meal service

“I would not have a life now without this place – I had nowhere to turn

loneliness and suicidal thoughts. I didn’t feel I had anyone to turn to. I love the people here. You can come to relax or you can get stuck into the work.”

Food-related activities include cook-and-eat sessions for families, peer support groups based around growing, cooking and eating, encouraging more volunteer gardeners and enabling more schools and nurseries to use the garden.

“The service is staffed by workers from a different arm of the trust who can then signpost other support services and identify those in need of intervention,” says Sarah Waddington, Outback manager.

Funding from Barclays enables the trust to expand its work and reach more people like Tess. “Before, I felt I was nothing,” she says, “but now I have an important role. I’ve learnt how to be myself and can laugh again. It’s given me a reason to live.”

WALES

‘We couldn’t just abandon them’

Disabled people given chance in the workplace

ELITE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

We had to change our services overnight when Covid-19 struck,” says Andrea Wayman, the CEO of Elite Supported Employment agency.

Since its launch in 1994, the charity in south Wales has helped several thousand people with learning or physical disabilities get into work, partnering with employers across Wales to help them overcome the barriers limiting their recruitment processes.

“Suddenly, many of those people weren’t able to work because their employers had shut up shop during lockdown, or because they needed to shield for health reasons,” Wayman says.

It was a leading concern for the charity, which had been helping 500 people a year to get a job, gain new skills and access education.

Wayman was desperately worried that many of those that Elite had helped would be stuck at home, isolated and losing the confidence they’d gained from being afforded new opportunities.

“It was so crucial for us to continue the support we had always offered, so that people could continue to participate in their communities while feeling safe,” she explains.

Elite secured Barclays funding to recruit a team of mental health champions with the skills and experience to



No barriers: Elite helps people get into work and feel safe there during the pandemic



provide one-to-one support to the charity’s clients and their families, either online or face to face.

The aim of the project was to ensure people’s mental and physical wellbeing did not deteriorate during the crisis, as well as to provide practical assistance, from offering advice on benefits and other financial

“It needed to offer new types of support

support to helping people return to the workplace, either with their existing employers or in a new role.

“Barclays’ support has been a lifeline for us,” Wayman says. “Having helped people to raise their ambitions for work and education – and supported employers to share those ambitions – we couldn’t

just abandon them.” Today, Wayman points out, Elite’s mental health champions are still providing crucial support.

“The need to equip people with the mental strength to get back into work is more acute than ever,” she says. “Our role has never been more important.”



Making mental health a priority

A homeless charity adapted to serve even more vulnerable women and young people

LLAMAU

Llamau is a charity that supports young people and women who are facing homelessness.

“We want to help people rebuild their lives, but we immediately recognised the pandemic was a huge step back for many,” says Fran Beecher, CEO of Llamau, which secured funding from Barclays’ Covid-19 Community Aid Package.

It offers interventions to prevent homelessness, and services for those who are already without a home.

“The way in which Covid-19 hit vulnerable young people was brutally stark, and many of those we support already had significant

“Without question this has saved lives

mental health difficulties,” she says. Like her peers at Elite, Beecher was determined not to walk away from Llamau’s mission, even though the Covid-19 crisis had caused a funding squeeze. “With the right support, the people we work with can live their lives and make a huge contribution to society,” she says.

With the bank’s funding, Llamau was able to expand and enhance the in-house counselling service it had launched. It recruited and trained counsellors to deliver more than 100 six-week blocks of one-to-one counselling to young people and women identified as needing mental health support.

“We wanted people to be able

to get the help they needed before their health deteriorated any further,” Beecher says. “We could see what was going to happen: Covid-19 was limiting the ability of other services to help, just as an explosion of mental health need was coming.”

Beecher is keen to stress that the crisis isn’t over, but she is hugely relieved that Llamau was able to act.

“Without question this programme has saved the lives of some of the people that our counsellors have supported,” she says. “We have been able to support people who could see no way out of their situation.”

Strength in connections

Tech help is a lifeline for remote communities

NORTH EAST SENSORY SERVICES

Founded in 1879 as the Grampian Society for the Blind, North East Sensory Services (Ness) had a three-pronged objective: to provide support for people looking for employment, to make home visits to those struggling to get out and about, and to provide scripture in braille format.

“All these years later, we’re still doing a version of all those things, plus a million more,” says Graham Findlay, the charity’s chief executive, when explaining the outreach work of his staff and volunteers for those living in northeast Scotland.

As one of Scotland’s longest established charities, Ness has seen a lot of change, but nothing has challenged the communities it seeks to support as much as the past two years when living through a pandemic.

“It has been a huge pressure in so many ways,” Findlay says. “Suddenly, so many more people were cut off from their friends and family.”

Ness has evolved to support people living with visual and hearing impairments across Aberdeen, Moray, Aberdeenshire, Dundee and Angus with a range of services – from helping them to access job opportunities to training in sign language and lip reading.

Reaching often remote and rural communities, the charity’s Connect, Include and Support (CIS) programme already supported more than 6,000 people who were at risk of feeling isolated and alone because of a visual or hearing impairment. Covid-19 piled on the demand, and with large numbers of people off work and locked down at home, the number of people needing help increased.

The fear was that isolation wouldn’t allow access to vital services, and that it would also take a mental toll. And while technology proved to be a lifeline for many of us to continue to work, study, socialise and complete day-to-day tasks, for Ness’s clients, these same technologies proved much harder to use.

“Much of our financing comes from fundraising events,” Findlay explains, “but most of those have been cancelled at a time when we’ve seen the need for so many of our services increase dramatically because of the pandemic.”

It was thanks to a successful application for funding to Barclays’ £100 million Covid-19 Community Aid Package – which was offering £100,000



Ness clients like Heather Bishop in Aberdeen rely on their devices every day

“We focus on the needs of the individual – not everyone with an impairment is the same”

grants to community groups all around the UK – that the CIS programme could be scaled up to respond.

In particular, Ness was able to ensure service users were trained and supported on how to use electronic devices so that they did not feel completely alone in their own homes – and so that they could access crucial services such as online shopping and be able to manage their household bills.

Staff and volunteers made home visits – sometimes even providing advice from the garden in order to maintain social distancing.

“We are person-centred, focusing on the needs of the individual rather than assuming

everyone with an impairment is the same,” Findlay says.

The funding also helped pay for other initiatives, often in areas that might seem trivial to those without an impairment, but which could be transformative for those in need.

For example, when clinics were taking 28 days to clean and repair hearing aids, Ness launched Hear to Help, a free service that collected people’s hearing aids, did the work, and returned them on the same day. The charity also gives out spare batteries, supplied by Audiology, to avoid the obvious frustration. “If someone can’t hear without their device, not having it for 28 days is unthinkable,” Findlay says.



Putting community needs first

How a cancer charity is providing local support to patients

ACTION CANCER AND BRYSON CHARITABLE GROUP

Many people living with cancer were forced to shield to protect themselves against Covid-19, and a number of support services had to close their doors.

“People should be able to access the support they need without having to travel miles and miles,” says Ruth Fleming, therapeutic services manager at Action Cancer. “It’s all about identifying what each local community needs and seeing where we can help.”

The charity offers counselling to help people with the emotional impact of a cancer diagnosis, which has often been compounded by the isolation of lockdowns.

It also runs physiotherapy sessions for those struggling with the pain and fatigue of cancer treatment; complementary therapies to alleviate pain and reduce stress; and scar tissue therapy, which can help improve mobility following surgery.

Founded in Northern Ireland more than 40 years ago to provide a range of prevention, detection and support services, the charity was able to secure a donation from Barclays, and allocated the £100,000 across a range of services, enabling it to help fill gaps where other support services were having to retreat. “The demand is huge,” Fleming says. “In Belfast, waiting lists for many services have doubled.

“Like most charities, our finances were hit really hard. Ninety-five per cent of our funding comes from donations and fundraising events, but that income fell very quickly. The key for us is to be in as many local communities as possible.”

The Bryson Charitable Group is another charity in Northern Ireland to have partnered with Barclays, using the £100,000 funding to provide emergency relief to underserved families, including assistance with energy bills and food vouchers, and offering a range of emotional support services. Over the next six months it aims to support more than 1,200 households affected by the pandemic.