



Garfield Weston
FOUNDATION

Media Brief 2021–22



Grant recipient
Akram Khan Dance Company

What is the Garfield Weston Foundation?

Established in 1958, the Garfield Weston Foundation is a family-founded charitable grant-making trust which gives away over £80 million a year to charities across the UK.

Each year the Foundation gives away its income and donations have continued to grow. Since it was established, it has donated over £1.2 billion, of which over half has been given away in the past 10 years alone. In the most recent financial year the Foundation gave away more than £98 million to over 2,130 charities across the UK.

- Having established one of the most respected charitable institutions in the UK, the Weston Family Trustees today remain highly active and hands-on. The Foundation's funding was established with an endowment of shares in the family business – a successful model that still endures today and as the businesses have grown, so too have the charitable donations.
- Typically, around 2,000 charities of all sizes across the UK benefit each year and a significant majority of grants are for projects and organisations across the UK's local communities and volunteer organisations.
- The Foundation is well known for flexibility as its strategy is deliberately responsive and adapts to need. Those at the frontline of providing services generally create the most effective solutions and the Trustees back talented people with practical ideas rather than impose direction.
- The overarching theme is an approach to quality and excellence, with work or projects demonstrating clear outcomes and benefits. Support for core costs is a particular strength of the Foundation as unrestricted income is especially valuable for charities and is often difficult to secure.
- The Foundation also benefits from having highly active and engaged Weston Family Trustees – all Trustees are related to the Founder and they volunteer a significant amount of their personal time to review applications, visit charities, conduct referencing and meet with individuals across the charity sector to ensure they remain well-informed.

Covid-19

- The Foundation's straightforward approach and nimble processes ensured it was well placed to respond effectively at pace and scale to the pandemic, while retaining the accessibility and 'family touch' we are known for.
- The Foundation remained fully open from the very first day of the Covid-19 situation and especially welcomed those with no previous relationship with us. Through a revised and speedy timetable of additional trustee board meetings, the Foundation increased donations and expedited decisions, while responding immediately to issues for existing grant holders and being open and flexible to requests for change of use and for alterations in plans and projects.
- As always, expenditure was carefully 'paced' to ensure longer term and strategic needs for charities' recovery and resilience were also addressed in concert with more urgent needs.
- A brief summary, with examples, of our response to Covid can be found in a separate brief document which can be accessed [here](#) or via the documents section of our website.



Where does the Foundation's income come from?

- When the Foundation was established in 1958 it was endowed with shares in the Weston family business – Wittington Investments – Garfield Weston effectively gave away 80% of his wealth for the benefit of the nation and this legacy has grown over time.
- The Foundation holds a majority stake (79.2%) in the family-owned holding company called Wittington Investments. Wittington has a diverse portfolio, of which the largest investment is a 54.5% stake in Associated British Foods (ABF), a publicly quoted company. Other investments include hotels (such as The Grand Hotel in Brighton), property and retail interests (such as Fortnum & Mason).
- The fact that donations have grown year on year is a direct result of the success of the underlying investments such as ABF (which owns businesses such as Primark, Twinings and Ryvita, and which provides employment for over 130,000 people). The fact that these businesses are predominantly owned by a charity enables the business to plan for the long-term which in turn creates sustainable income for the Foundation to give away.

Examples of recent donations

While the Foundation funds across a broad range of categories, the underlying ethos remains consistent – to support charities with talented people and effective ways to meet a clear need. The Trustees adopt a deliberate strategy to empower people and charities to create their own solutions rather than to impose a particular model or viewpoint – it is this flexibility that enables the Foundation to respond and adapt to changes in need, while embracing the most effective solutions and ideas.

While the Foundation is perhaps best known as a responsive funder, over the last 10 years the Trustees have increasingly taken a strategic approach to focus on specific regions and issues. In 2021 the Foundation donated over £30.2 million via the Weston Culture Fund to support the Arts sector which had been especially impacted by the loss of audiences and therefore income due to the pandemic. Arts organisations supported by the Weston Culture Fund reached a broad range of art forms from dance to literature, via theatre and arts centres, and spanned the breadth of the UK from Eden Court in Inverness to Theatre Royal Plymouth.

Recent examples of grants made in 2021 are below and further case studies and the full list of last year's grants can be found on the Foundation's website www.garfieldweston.org

Welfare The Foundation has funded organisations supporting the disadvantaged, disabled, vulnerable and elderly since it was founded in 1958 and in 2021 the Trustees placed particular focus on marginalised and vulnerable communities with grants made to frontline charities supporting ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ communities, the homeless, disabled and carers. Revenue grant examples include: £500,000 to Age UK to ensure elderly people across the UK were supported during the pandemic, £200,000 to Cruse Bereavement Care for its work with people who have lost loved ones due to Covid and £300,000 over three years to SafeLives to scale up its support to victims of domestic violence, an issue which has increased due to series of lockdowns and the economic pressures of the pandemic. In total the Trustees granted £19.3 million to Welfare organisations.





Youth and Community This year grants were made to a wide range of organisations supporting the increasing needs of communities and, particularly, young people as the impact of the pandemic continued and developed in complexity. Young people's mental health has been severely impacted by periods of isolation and anxiety about their education and employment. Grants included £500,000 to the OnSide Foundation across its network of Youth Zones, £100,000 to The Mix for its online youth support and multi-year grants to the Albert Kennedy Trust and Off The Record supporting LGBTQ+ young people. Community grants were typically made to frontline organisations delivering targeted support to their local communities. Capital grants for improvements to local facilities were fewer this year as many organisations placed projects on hold and/or suffered delays, however grants made included the Bungay Honey Pot Centre, Tweedsmuir Community Café and Llanefydd Village Hall. Grants made to Youth and Community organisations totalled £13.8 million.

Health Many grants made in 2021 related to the effects of the pandemic on the nation's mental and physical health and wellbeing. Grants focussing on mental health included £350,000 to Place2Be for its work with children's mental wellbeing, £150,000 to BEAT for its national eating disorder helpline which had seen a large increase in demand and grants across the country's network of MIND charities that provide local mental health support. Elderly people felt particularly socially isolated during lockdowns and those with dementia were especially vulnerable. Grants were made to organisations supporting sufferers and their families including Dementia UK, Dementia Society and Alzheimer's Society. In total the Trustees granted £8.3 million to Health charities.

Environment The Trustees' commitment to organisations tackling climate change, biodiversity and social action continued and the year saw the Foundation's record spend in the Environment sector. The Foundation commissioned research to learn what the key challenges for the Environment sector are and the resulting 'Prioritising Our Planet' report highlighted that communicating the scale, complexity and urgency of the climate and environment crisis is a huge concern. In response the Foundation partnered with The Media Trust to develop 'Weston Communicating Climate' a skills and capacity building programme that will benefit 30 environmental charities and countless others via free sector-wide communications masterclasses. Grants were made to a range of large charities for landscape and species conservation on a significant scale including £500,000 to the Woodland Trust for Mount Bure in Northern Ireland, over £300,000 to Yorkshire Wildlife Trust for peatland conservation and £250,000 to Birdlife International for a world database of key biodiversity areas. A total of £7 million was granted to Environment charities.

