



Garfield Weston
FOUNDATION

Media Brief - 2020





What is the Garfield Weston Foundation?

The Garfield Weston Foundation is a family-founded charitable grant-making trust which has donated over £1 billion since being established in 1958, over half of that in the past ten years alone. In the most recent financial year the Foundation gave away over £88 million to over 2,200 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. 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 to ensuring that they remain well informed about issues facing the charity sector.
- The Foundation's funding was established with an endowment of shares in the family business – a successful model that 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 front line 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.

Covid-19

The Foundation has a strong reputation for the pivotal timing of its support, often making grants at a critical point for a charity. It is known for its open and straightforward approach – charities don't have to know anyone at the Foundation or have 'contacts', just an effective solution to meet a real social need. Applications are open and are assessed on their merits.

The flexible approach was especially demonstrated during the coronavirus pandemic as the Trustees held a range of extraordinary Board meetings to expedite decisions for charities supporting the most vulnerable and isolated. Over £9 million of emergency funding was released in the first six weeks of lockdown. Crucially, the Foundation also remained open to new applications and offered flexibility around timescales and reporting to those with existing grants. The Covid-19 strategy took a phased approach to grants including considering medium-term core cash flow needs for resilience as well as planning for longer-term strategic projects, and new partnerships were developed with other funders and existing relationships strengthened to ensure Foundation activity remained joined up.



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 donated 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, 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 donate.

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.

This practical way of working has characterised the Foundation since its inception in 1958 and has enabled the Trustees to introduce new and innovative projects in recent years, such as the Weston Loans Programme with the Art Fund and to develop partnerships with other grant-makers where working together increases impact, such as a pre-launch donation of £1 million to the National Emergencies Trust to encourage other donors. Recent examples of grants are below and further case studies 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 particular focus is being placed on this category due to the impact of Covid-19 and the current economic challenges. Revenue grant examples include: £300,000 over three years to the Amber Foundation for its work in youth homelessness; £80,000 over two years to Childnet International to encourage online safety; £50,000 to the Prison Reform Trust for prisoner engagement; and grants made to support and strengthen families during difficult times including Grandparents Plus, Home-Starts across the UK and Working Families.

Youth

A wide range of grants have been made to organisations and projects engaging children and young people across the UK – including Scouts, Guide and Cadets, play schemes, youth clubs and charities committed to children's wellbeing and social mobility. Grants include: £225,000 over three years to Career Ready for work improving the life chances of disadvantaged young people; £50,000 to Spark Inside for support of young people in prison; and core costs to Empire Fighting Chance, Young Enterprise Northern Ireland and LGBT Youth Scotland.



Community

Supporting community organisations has consistently been a theme for the Foundation and recent grants continue this focus and are often made to small- to medium-sized charities, embedded within their local communities. Capital grants were made to improvements and repairs to village halls and community centres across the UK from East Hartford in the North East and Orford in the South East, across to Aghalee in Northern Ireland and Llanhilleth Miners Institute in Wales. Just a few examples of revenue grants in the category include Carmarthen Family Centres in Wales, Felix Road Adventure Playground in Bristol, Open Door Furniture Recycling in Lancashire and the Leicester LGBT Centre.

Education

Grants in the education category encompass formal learning institutions such as schools and universities as well as charities such as Coram Beanstalk which received a multi-year grant of £150,000 to improve child literacy on a larger scale. Grants to organisations that help young people to raise their aspirations by engaging in education include £450,000 over three years to Teach First and £500,000 over three years to IntoUniversity.

Arts, Museums & Heritage

A significant number of grants were made to organisations to help them reach communities that typically have low arts engagement and to widen their learning programmes including £100,000 to National Museums of Wales. The Trustees partnered with another funder in order to maximise impact by granting £250,000 over three years to Jerwood Arts for the Weston Jerwood Creative Bursaries to support young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to enter careers in the Arts. Major capital grants include £150,000 to Blackpool Museum Trust and £250,000 to English Heritage Trust for the redevelopment of Belsay Hall in Northumberland, where providing better visitor facilities will create volunteer opportunities and aid the local economy by creating jobs and attracting visitors to the area.

Health

In this category the Foundation focuses on translational research with direct patient benefit, capital grants, core costs for organisations for charities caring for people with specific illnesses, and in key areas such as elderly care and mental health. In the past year capital grants include £1 million to Cancer Research UK towards the new Paterson Building; a new biomedical research institute based at The Christie Hospital in Manchester; and a pledge of £10 million to Moorfields Eye Hospital Trust to create a new treatment, research and education centre in London. A grant of £225,000 over three years was made to Age UK for the next stage of its Disconnected Mind study; Changing Faces were granted £200,000 over two years for psychological support for people with visible differences; and £300,000 over three years was granted to Mental Health Innovations for Shout – free, immediate text support for people in crisis.

Environment

The Foundation is a committed supporter of environmental work and grants in this category span a range of activity from conservation, citizen science, education and research. Grants tackling major issues in the nation's seas and rivers included multi-year grants of £250,000 to Synchronicity Earth, £100,000 to Blue Marine Foundation and £90,000 to Surfers Against Sewage. Grants to aid species and habitat conservation included £45,000 to The Frog Life Trust and £30,000 to Ulster Wildlife Trust for protecting red squirrels. The Foundation's ongoing support of approaches to encourage environmentally sustainable buildings as a key component of tackling climate change was reflected in a grant of £80,000 to Ashden Sustainable Solutions to support its UK Sustainable Buildings Award.

Faith

Grants in this category are typically for capital repairs and improvements that enable places of worship to be used by a wider community and to have more sustainable futures. Grants cover the span of the UK from Belhelvie Parish Church north of Aberdeen to Cwmifor Baptist Church in West Wales and Landolph Church in Truro.