

A guide to UK charitable trusts and foundations

An effective and transparent form of giving



Key facts and figures*

In 2023-2024, foundations gave **£8.24bn** the highest level ever

They excel at getting money to where it is needed, being nimble in a crisis, funding overlooked causes, backing brilliant ideas, with an ability to take risks for long-term impact

The largest 300 foundations collectively hold assets of nearly **£89bn**

Income may come from historic endowments, living donors, businesses, funds from government or raised from the public. Foundations use their assets to further their mission: particularly through grant-making and investments

There are over **12,000** trusts and foundations in the UK

Regulated by the Charity Commission for England and Wales, the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator and the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

Big achievements

Steve Morgan FOUNDATION

Funds Cradle to Career - a £6.7m cross-sector partnership with Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and local services to improve child outcomes, now being rolled out elsewhere.

HOWDEN Foundation

Leveraged financial support and business expertise from corporate founder Howden Group to support 340,000 people become more resilient to climate change impacts.

JRF JOSEPH ROWNTREE FOUNDATION

Founded in **1904**

Over 100 years ago, Joseph Rowntree established a family of trusts dedicated to tackling the root causes of social problems - their work continues to drive change today.

Community Foundation North East

Launched the North East Roots Fund to unite people and businesses behind a vision of a vibrant, competitive region full of opportunity.

Foundation Scotland

£15m Regenerative Futures Fund

The fund is a 10-year collaboration of funders working with communities to address the root causes of poverty, racism and climate change in Edinburgh.

Give Out

Mobilised £400k through its Urgent Response Fund, rallying donor support to sustain LGBT+ organisations in the Global South affected by US government funding cuts.

What are charitable trusts and foundations?



Charities with an independent and sustainable income source.



They use their assets in pursuit of their mission, primarily through grant-making and investments and sometimes advocacy.



They may be family, corporate or community foundations or livery companies.

Who is ACF?



- The leading membership association for foundations and independent grant-makers in the UK
- ACF strengthens trusts and foundations so they can rise to the challenges of our times
- ACF has around 440 foundation members

*Data source: UKGrantmaking, financial year 2023-2024