

# Why Community Foundations?

## Community foundations take a leadership role in the community

**Community foundations provide practical, financial and creative leadership in their local communities. This leadership is based on extensive local knowledge, strong links into communities and a reputation for successfully facilitating change.**

### What makes community foundations good local leaders?

Being independent and committed to a geographical area rather than to any specific cause, community foundations are ideally placed to bring people together in a 'safe space' and lead the local response.

- ◆ Some community foundations take a lead in fundraising for a significant local project, like The Birmingham Foundation, which helped to raise £3.7 million to restore a local landmark building and convert it into an enterprise and community centre.
- ◆ All community foundations act as catalysts, bringing together residents, business people, statutory staff, donors and people from all walks of life who share the common goal of wanting to strengthen their local community.
- ◆ Some community foundations take a lead in building community resources, like the Badger Centre in North Somerset which is

a new, welcoming centre for individuals and voluntary groups developed and owned by Quartet Community Foundation.

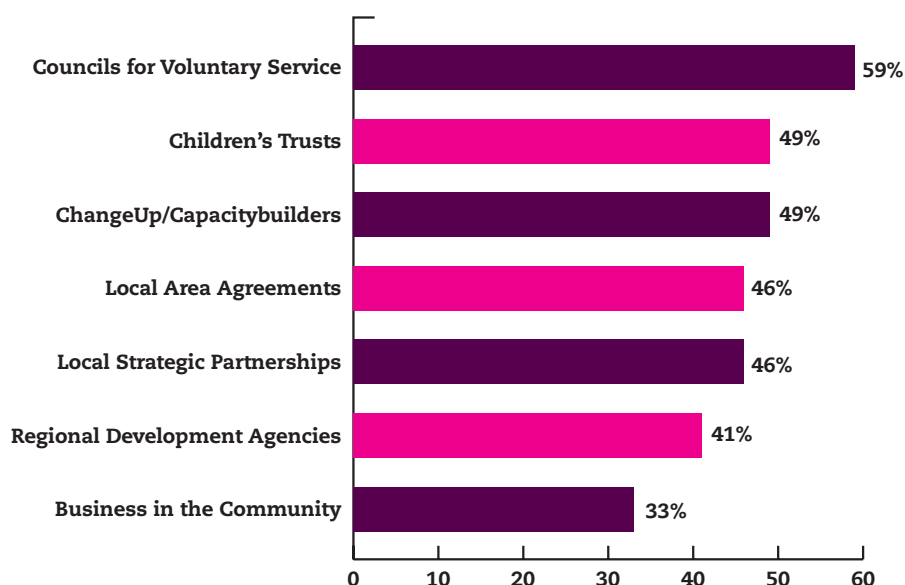
### How do community foundations show leadership?

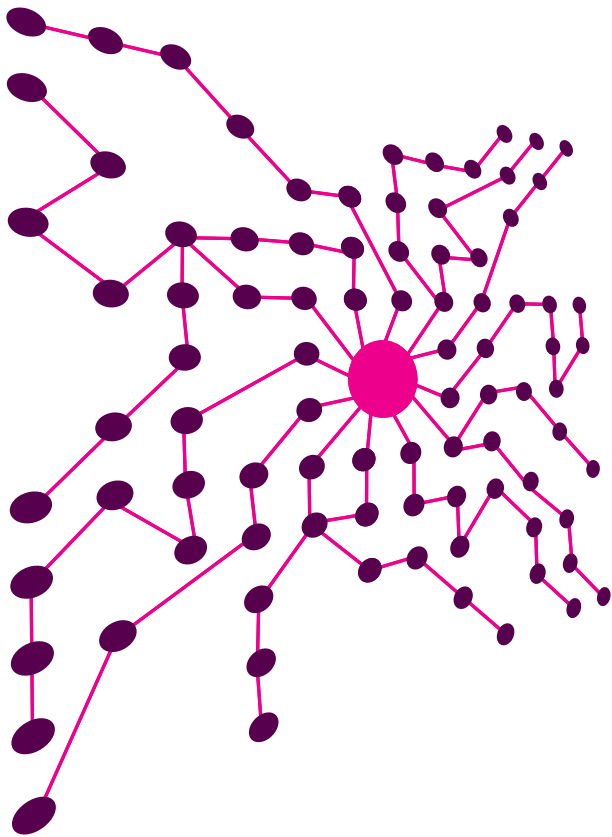
There is far more to community foundations than making grants. They also undertake research, build community resources, develop partnerships, promote strategic relationships and rise to the challenge in difficult circumstances when leadership is required.

### Community foundations are widely welcomed as partners

The strong relationships with local public and voluntary sectors, illustrated in this graph, ensure community foundations can successfully take a leadership role in their local community.

**Percent of community foundations involved in partnerships with significant local organisations**





The staff and trustees of community foundations are involved with a wide range of other local organisations. For example, the Community Foundation for Wiltshire & Swindon identified over 100 connections between itself and the wider local community.

### **Community foundations promote strategic relationships**

Being a community leader is about far more than handing out money. It also involves helping local voluntary and community organisations to make connections with local philanthropists and businesses so that they can generate their own income and develop assets to ensure their long-term financial security.



Community  
Foundation  
Network

Registered company no. 2651777;  
registered charity no. 1004630

[www.communityfoundations.org.uk](http://www.communityfoundations.org.uk)

### **CASE STUDY** **Northern Ireland**

Working within, and between, the divided Protestant and Catholic communities of Northern Ireland has been a central goal of the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland since it began in 1979. During the years of the Troubles, cross-community schemes were funded; but the foundation also took the initiative of bringing together people who were working in their own 'single identity' communities around issues of shared concern. The aim was always to break down divisive stereotypes and to promote peacebuilding. Since the 1994 ceasefires, the foundation has shown proactive community leadership. A Community Survey was undertaken to identify the needs and opportunities created by peace, which led to an ongoing Peacebuilding programme. The strong reputation and deep community links built up by the foundation over nearly three decades mean it can undertake sensitive work with victims and politically motivated ex-prisoners – from all sides of the conflict. The foundation also uses a programme of networking conferences and seminars to keep in touch with developments at community level and also to link local communities with developments at the often turbulent governmental level, as the latter switches between Direct Rule and Devolution.

### **CASE STUDY** **Taking the lead when disaster strikes**

In January 2005 Cumbria experienced one of the worst storms in living memory. It was immediately apparent that thousands of people would need financial, emotional and practical support to cope with the devastation. Cumbria Community Foundation immediately took a leadership role and launched the Cumbria Flood Recovery Fund which received donations of well over three quarters of a million pounds from a wide range of sources including individuals, trusts, local councils and even HRH Prince of Wales. The money was successfully distributed due to the foundation's unparalleled local knowledge. As one grateful recipient of a grant wrote, "Your foundation has been a lifeline for many displaced and troubled families, individuals and small businesses who would have struggled without your support".