

**FUSION<sup>21</sup>N**

**Fusion21 Foundation**

**Our Impact**

**2020-2021**



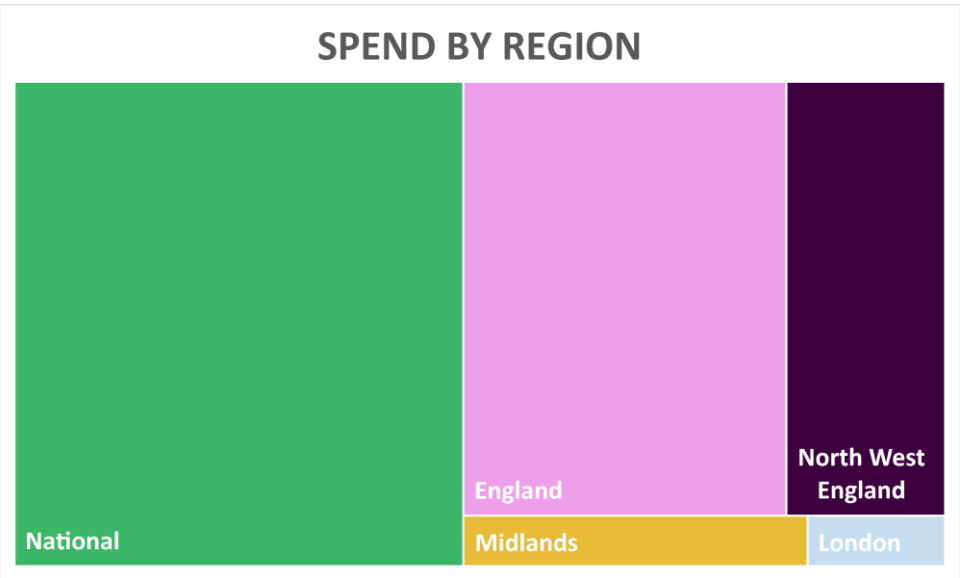
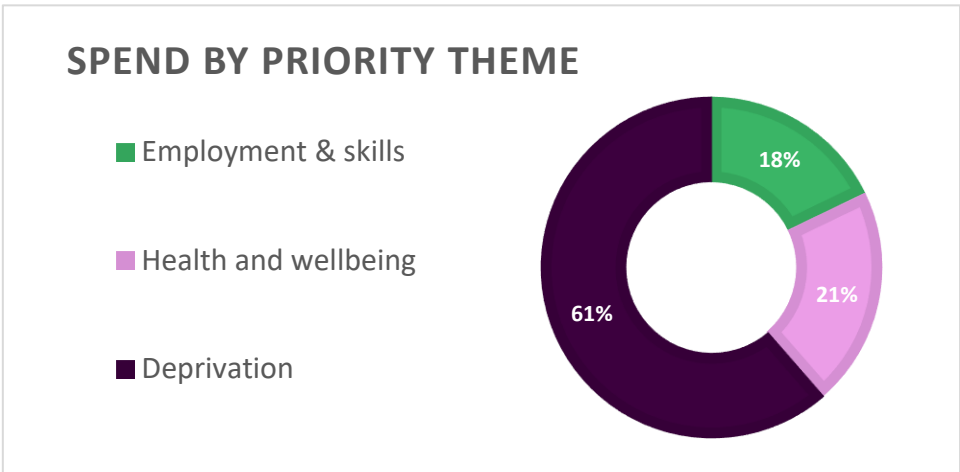
# 1. Achievements and performance

This year, the Foundation - along with many other funders - had to adapt to the challenges created by the pandemic, making proactive investments to address the immediate need and to provide support and a flexible approach to our existing grantees.

We spent **over half a million pounds** supporting projects across the country over our three priority themes: employment and skills, health and well-being, and deprivation.

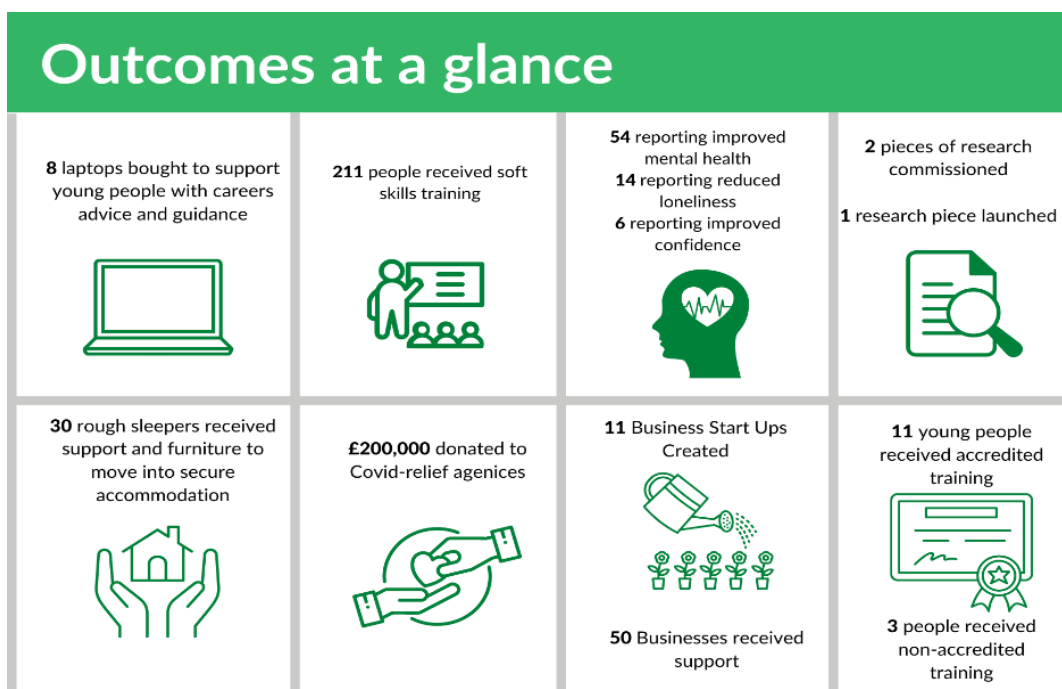
94% of spend was attributed to projects that were commissioned this year. We developed new relationships and commenced several multi-year projects this year which will drive impact in future years.

**£518,240  
invested**



These projects generated a range of outcomes across the priority themes including:

- **11** young people receiving accredited training
- **11** (social) business start-ups and **50** (social) businesses receiving support
- **30** rough sleepers supported with furniture packages
- **2** pieces of research on child poverty and social investment
- **1** research project's findings into youth homelessness launched
- **£200,000** donated to Covid-19 relief agencies at the start of the pandemic
- **54** people reporting improved mental health
- **14** people reporting reduced loneliness and **6** increased confidence as a result of projects we funded
- **211** people received soft skills training
- **8** new laptops procured for a youth-based advice and support café



## 2. Our response to the pandemic

At the start of the pandemic, we reacted quickly and effectively, supporting the immediate crisis while making sense of the 'new world' and its challenges.

We targeted two key national organisations - **Communities Aid Foundation** and the **National Emergencies Trust** - both of which had the infrastructure in place to coordinate and mobilise donations to support communities across the country. We **donated £100,000** to each of their appeals.



£6.4m raised  
1250  
organisations  
supported



£98m raised  
13,000+  
projects  
supported

### Profile: Thrive Careers

In addition, we supported a local organisation - **Thrive Careers Hub** in Liverpool - to purchase eight laptops to enable them to continue to support young people with career advice and work experience during lockdown and the tiered restrictions.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=70OZqxHAe8Q>



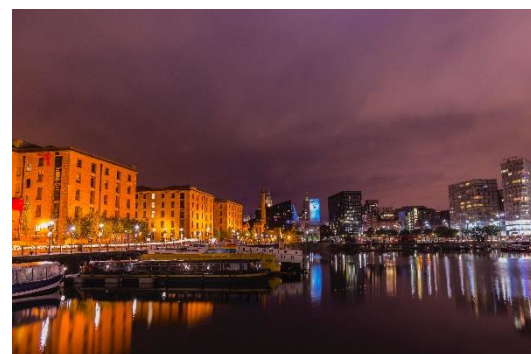
### Profile: Home for Good

**Liverpool City Council** adopted a comprehensive and radical approach to the provision of supported move-on accommodation for those in Covid-19 emergency provision and for people experiencing a crisis that made them homeless or threatened with homelessness during the lockdown period.

The city's approach was based on a strong **partnership working between the Council, the major housing associations, and voluntary sector accommodation to support providers.**

We invested **£50,000** in this 'Home for Good' project to enable 30 of the previously homeless people to receive furniture packages as part of their tenancy. Alongside receiving support, this enabled them to sustain their tenancy.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVR7juC3zCk>



### 3. Projects adapting to a Covid-19 environment

Our priority was to act as a responsible funder in these unprecedented times which meant working with our existing projects to provide assistance and adapt our monitoring requirements accordingly.

#### Profile: Tunza Centre

The Tunza project pivoted its sensory room provision during lockdown to provide loaned equipment for families in need at home. As restrictions started to lift, they adapted their outdoor space to attract families back to the centre - especially those who were becoming increasingly isolated at home but also fearful of using indoor public spaces.



#### Profile: Dream High

Dream High continued its support of small businesses by providing networking events, panel meetings, and 1-2-1 support via Zoom. The start of the pandemic created an increase in demand from existing businesses that needed support to pivot their business models. The second 'wave' of the pandemic saw more people exploring entrepreneurial ventures following redundancy which required specific business start-up advice.



#### Profile: Manchester Youth Zone

Manchester Youth Zone used the closure of their centre at the start of the pandemic as an opportunity to complete the construction of their learning kitchen, co-funded by us and **Guinness Housing Partnership**. Although the original outcomes for the project were based on developing employment skills, it was initially utilised to create hundreds of food parcels for the community instead, as well as providing cooking lessons over Zoom.



As restrictions eased and the centre reopened, the kitchen was used as a great way to reconnect with young people, building their confidence and social skills, while gaining cooking skills and advice on healthy eating.

" Me and Hugo (brother aged 9) learned to make fajitas in the kitchen – we can't wait to teach our Dad how to make them from scratch, it's his favourite with lots of cheese and no burnt chicken"

**Tomasz, aged 12**

## 4. Research and policy advocacy

A key emerging priority was to explore innovative ways to create and support impact across communities. One of the ways we did this was through commissioning research and, crucially, using findings from that research to contribute to policy advocacy and systemic change.

We commissioned a piece of research by the **Child Poverty Action Group**: *'improving the experiences of people experiencing mental ill-health using the social security system'*. A series of recommendations for improving the support provided by work coaches will be developed and CPAG will advocate for these recommendations, together with partner organisations and the wider sector, to policy and decision-makers, and others, so that people experiencing mental ill-health get the personalised support they need through the social security system.



As a social enterprise ourselves, we appreciate the important role social enterprises and social investment play in the economy and wider community. As such, we sponsored **SEUK**'s work for the Adebowale Commission's inquiry into the state of social investment.



**Social  
Enterprise UK**

We also co-funded a report into youth homelessness in London, alongside the Berkeley Foundation. The research findings were launched in November 2020 and resulted in three recommendations which are being reviewed by the **Together Alliance**. Working groups have been established to address the report's findings and we continue to be in conversation with them to support the delivery of outcomes arising from their work.

**Sustainable housing solutions  
for young people have never  
been needed more.**

A new report exploring how to support young people in housing need during, and beyond the pandemic.

An isometric illustration of a house with a grey roof and yellow walls, with two stylized human figures standing in front of it. The background is a solid yellow color.

## 5. Capacity Building

As a funder seeking transformative change, we also embraced opportunities for collaboration around wider strategic goals. This included working with industry-leading organisations to address key challenges and opportunities for our members. Examples include our work with the TAROE Trust and HACT.

### Profile: TAROE Trust

In July, news broke that the trustees of tenant charity, **TAROE Trust**, had taken the decision to close the charity. We recognised that the Trust has a valuable role to play within the housing sector and so took the decision to support them over a three-year period to deliver on their new business plan and update its commitments as set out in the charity's Manifesto for Change.

"We are really thankful for the generosity of Fusion21 and their recognition of the value we bring in raising the interests of tenants in national level housing debates...this funding means that we should now be able to properly invest in creating a platform where tenants can highlight their experiences so that this can shape our priorities for change..."

**TAROE Trust Chair, Michael Gelling OBE**

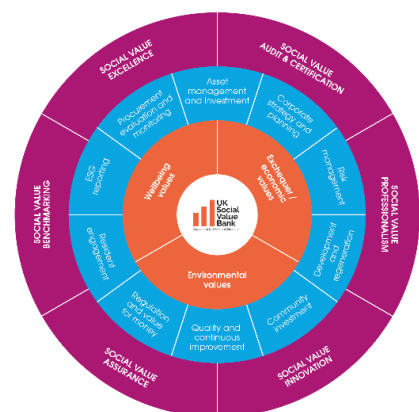
### Profile: HACT

In January 2020, **HACT and Simetrica-Jacobs** convened the UK Social Value in Housing Taskforce, which included Fusion21, social housing organisations, national membership bodies, developers and contractors, and the Regulator of Social Housing.

The Taskforce agreed that the sector needed to work collaboratively to standardise approaches so that social value information is better understood and respected, is available to measure performance, and can be used to support and enhance regulatory returns.

Fusion21 and a range of partners co-funded a new roadmap, developed by HACT, that included an expanded UK Social Value Bank, along with resources and tools that could be used by any project in any social housing organisation looking to improve, demonstrate and maximise its social, economic, and environmental outcomes.

Work started on the project in November and will continue into 2022.



## 6. Partnerships

Integral to the Foundation's ambition is to establish partnerships that extend beyond a grant-making relationship - creating meaningful engagement and facilitating connections alongside the provision of funds.

In March 2021 we launched our 3-year partnership with the **Prince's Trust** as part of their national youth employment programme - supporting young people into careers in the health and social care sector across England.

As part of our partnership, Fusion21 employees will be getting involved in volunteering opportunities such as CV workshops and mentoring. We will also facilitate connections between public sector organisations we work with through Fusion21's procurement services (our 'members') and the Prince's Trust. Not only will members benefit from being able to refer young people onto courses, but the Prince's Trust can support sectors such as housing and local government with recruitment challenges in their social care provision.



**Prince's Trust**



## 7. Building on our success

Next year will see us build on the successful engagement we have enjoyed with our members to support their priorities. We will increase the number of projects we co-fund with our members across the country, particularly with reference to mental health, loneliness, and isolation for both the younger and older populations.

The Prince's Trust launch in March this year was an important one for us and we will embed the partnership next year - encouraging and supporting our staff to volunteer as well as facilitating discussions and connections between the Prince's Trust programmes and our members across the country.

### Moving towards sustainable solutions

This year, we have reacted promptly to emergency needs exacerbated by the pandemic through our collaboration with CAF and NET. This has included funding for food banks. In 2021-22, we want to develop more sustainable solutions to food insecurity and will commission research and projects to develop our thinking in that area.

Through commissioning a range of pilot projects across all our priorities, we will be able to 'test and learn' from different approaches and share the learning across geographies and sectors to advance understanding and best practice, as well as increase our profile as a funder or transformative change. The findings from the research pieces commissioned in 2020-21 will be launched in 2021-22 and we will share the knowledge from those findings with members and partners to develop practice and inform future investments. We will continue to look for opportunities to fund research based on our priority objectives as a fundamental part of our strategy.

As champions of social change, we will develop and launch our first social investment product in 2021-22, to support charities and social enterprises across the country that have been hardest hit by Covid-19. We know our members' communities benefit from the vital work of VCSE organisations. By being part of supporting the sustainability of the sector, our investment will enable organisations working locally to continue to deliver great work, building brighter futures for communities, while achieving sustainable, positive, and life-changing outcomes.

### Future funding strategy

Our funding strategy will continue to evolve based on our members' changing priorities and relevant policy drivers. We will grow and develop our approach based on the emerging issues of the 'post-pandemic' landscape. As a funder we want to play our part to mitigate the impact that Covid-19 has had on individuals and communities. In order to do this - and to achieve our ambition to create social impact at scale - we will seek out like-minded funders for collaboration as well as identify strategic networks that will inform and shape our priorities and investment decisions for the future. We have already identified several potential partners and will progress our conversations with them in 2021-22.

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