

Annual Review 2021-22



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Welcome to our review of 2021-22 at Oxford Hub, where we reflect on what we have achieved, celebrate the impact we have had, and invite you to find out more about what we do and how you can be part of it.

This was our **birthday year**, marking 15 years since Oxford Hub was set up by a group of students wanting to make a difference in Oxford and beyond. We've grown and changed considerably since then – but have also stayed true to our core mission of building a **better**, **more equal and resilient** Oxford.

That mission is more important than ever. The past year has deepened inequality and brought huge challenges for Oxford's communities – but we have also found plenty of energy in our communities for change and social action. We are incredibly grateful to everyone who has worked with us this year and contributed their time, energy, skills, ideas, resources and passion to making Oxford a better place for everyone. Thanks to this community of volunteers, participants, partners and funders, the impact we have in reducing inequality in Oxford goes far beyond what we could do as a small charity on our own. Come join us – be part of this amazing community of people making positive change in Oxford!

Sara Fernandez
Chief Executive Officer

Our Vision and Strategy

Oxford is an amazing city: home to diverse communities, rich history, thriving industry, world-leading learning and a vibrant charity sector.

But it also has some of the highest levels of inequality and intergenerational disadvantage in the UK:

- Nine neighbourhoods in Oxford are in the 20% most deprived in the UK¹.
- There's a life expectancy gap of over 13 years between men who live in North Oxford and those who live in Northfield Brook².
- 26% of children in Oxford live below the poverty line³, and 64% of pupils on free school meals do not attain the expected national standards in reading, writing & maths⁴.



- 2 https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20127/health/457/oxfords_health
- 3 https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20131/population/497/poverty_and_deprivation
- 4 https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s44739/ESC_FEB0619R02%20-%20Education%20 Perfomance.pdf



Our vision is for a better Oxford:



more resilient



more connected



more equal





We tackle inequalities around:







Health

Education

Opportunity

We do this through:

Community development

Support for local people and groups to put their ideas for change into action

Community volunteering

Structured ways for people to get involved in social action and support others to thrive

These help to bring about:



Thriving individuals



Community participation



Systemic change

Thriving Individuals

Through our programmes, we support people to improve their mental and physical wellbeing, develop a sense of agency, and fulfil their potential. We don't make change for people – they make it for themselves, with support from the Oxford Hub community of volunteers, participants and partner organisations.

Spotlight: Big Brothers Big Sisters

Big Brothers Big Sisters helps children experiencing multiple disadvantages to build relationships and access opportunities that help them fulfil their potential.

We match children with mentors, who meet up regularly with them for fun activities and days out together for at least a year. Long-term positive mentoring relationships have been shown to help young people **build social capital** and self-esteem, increasing their resilience and opening up more opportunities.

In collaboration with Oxfordshire County Council, we match young people who are referred to us with **dedicated volunteers**, who commit to regularly meeting up with their 'Little Sibling' for regular fun activities and days out for at least a year. This year, our **66 Big Siblings** supported **75 Little Siblings** – including 13 new pairs this year. Nineteen of our matches have been running for over three years.



Together, our pairs went on 918 outings:

- 315 Active and Healthy Lifestyle (e.g. swimming, playing football, cycle rides)
- 464 Just for Fun (e.g. cinema, wildlife park, school fete)
- 106 Arts and Culture (e.g. museum visits, making badges for Pride)
- 33 Academic and support (e.g. homework support, maths festival)

Case study

In April 2021 we matched M with a committed mentor who has taken her on regular outings – now over 35 times. They have gone to parks, museums, farms, ice skating and to the theatre twice. The mentor offers M positive 1:1 attention and gives her a space to have fun and be a kid.

The mentor said: "M is an amazing skater – for her first time on the ice, she most enjoyed whizzing round at great speed and teasing me about keeping up with her."

The mentor also connected M with a summer camp which she attended last summer and again this year.



Spotlight: Schools Plus and the Twinning Programme

For 15 years, we've been tackling educational inequality in Oxford by matching local children with volunteer tutors. Through regular tutoring sessions, our pairs work together to help children to achieve their full potential.

This year, we matched 98 children from **disadvantaged areas of Oxford** with volunteer tutors, most of whom are Oxford University students. Together, they clocked up **1,945 lessons** – worth over £48,000 at the standard private tutoring rate.



"[My daughter's] English tutoring with her tutor is great. The tutor has her way of getting to her and making things easier and fun, but at the same time useful. She is very easy to work with and we are very happy to have her. On a scale from 1 to 10, she is 11!" — Parent

"We are so thankful for Schools Plus input for our daughter. She is thoroughly enjoying her experience and looks forward to her lessons. She came away from her first lesson shouting aloud how she now understood Pythagoras. Her tutor is marvellous and always goes at my daughter's pace. I now think my daughter has made a breakthrough in understanding maths more. This has definitely improved her confidence. The one to one makes such a huge difference and her tutor is a perfect match for her as my daughter is quite shy at putting her hand up in class but will happily ask her tutor to explain again" — **Parent**

"Thanks so much for all you have done for our students this year! It's been brilliant and made such a difference to our students" — **Head of Year 11 Progress at a referring secondary school**

"I think I'm able to learn more with the 1 to 1 tutoring, easier to concentrate" — **Tutee**

This year, we twinned five Oxford University colleges each with a local primary school, with the aim of tackling the attainment gap and improving access to extracurricular activities. So far, twinned colleges have hosted a range of enrichment activities for their primary schools, including scavenger hunts, science days, museum visits, college tours, a history day, and lunches in college.

These events have given over 300 pupils opportunities they may not otherwise have had access to, including a chance to visit colleges and speak to current undergraduates - helping to demystify further education and allowing local children to explore part of their city that might sometimes seem shut off or not for them.



One thing that I learnt in college is that there are 50 subjects you can learn at college. When I am older I want to go to this university and study science - Primary school pupil

Spotlight: Ready Set Go & Active Reach



Ready Set Go tackles barriers to swimming and cycling - supporting children and families in Cowley and the Leys to get active, develop key life skills and make the most of opportunities.

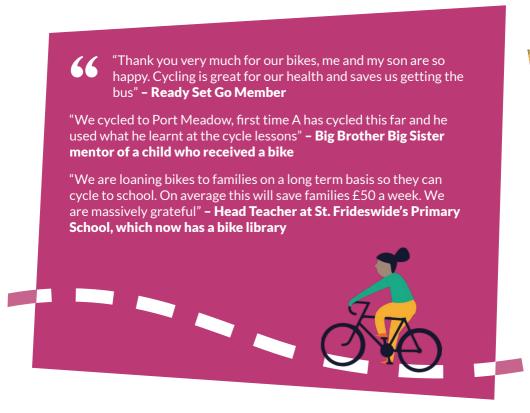
In partnership with TRAX, Broken Spoke Bike Cooperative and Joy Riders, we have provided local families with refurbished bikes, and safety equipment, and connected them to training in cycling and bike maintenance and social cycling events.



Spotlight: Ready Set Go & Active Reach continued...

This year, with the support of our amazing volunteers and partners, we have:

- Provided bikes to 191 people children and their family members
- Provided Bikeability cycling tuition to 90 people
- Run Balanceability sessions for 80 children at local primary schools
- Provided 51 bikes across five local primary schools and community groups, and supported them to set up their own bike libraries.



This year, we have expanded the swimming element of the programme:

- Running **holiday swimming provision** for 86 children, including 8 members of the Traveller community
- Supporting local children to access existing free swimming provision
- Collecting **insight into current barriers** to swimming through a focus group with local families
- Hosting a film screening and discussion of 'Blacks Can't Swim the Sequel' during Black History Month to highlight racial barriers to swimming.
 - I want to carry on swimming and get even better **Child**This has been the best week. I love swimming now! **Child**



We have also continued to create opportunities for **families to get active** in community settings, and to move more, together – with all the benefits this brings for people's physical and mental wellbeing.

We ran a range of regular activity sessions and supported local coaches to run their own. Sessions this year included Family Fitness, Music & Movement for under-5s, Roller skating, Parent Fitness and Plus Fit.



I never thought I would be playing netball as a pensioner. This is great for my mental wellbeing and the social fun aspect — Walking Netball participant



Community Participation

We support people to get involved in their community and to build the friendships and connections that will help them to thrive. We also support people to realise their potential to make change in their local community and beyond.

Spotlight: Social Prescribing

A key area of growth and learning for Oxford Hub has been how we can work to tackle the challenges of health inequalities and social isolation that were thrown into such sharp relief by the pandemic.

We have been working together with a **local healthcare network** and community groups in South East Oxford to support people to improve their health and wellbeing in a **holistic** way.

We support people through **social prescribing**, in partnership with the **South East Oxford Health Alliance (SEOxHA)** – this covers the health centres in the Leys, Cowley, Donnington and Hollow Way. Social prescribing is an approach whereby GPs and other health care professionals help people to access things that will improve their health and wellbeing, with support from a **link worker or connector**. There's a whole range of things that people can be supported to access, depending on what's best for each person.

Two Oxford Hub staff members are working within the SEOxHA social prescribing team as **link workers**. This enables us to strengthen connections between the primary care network and the communities we work with. This includes:

- working with partners to develop **group approaches** to social prescribing

 as well as conventional one-to-one consultations, we offer people
 opportunities to come along to a friendly cuppa and chat (or knitting session!)
 with peers and link workers
- facilitating scaffolding support to help people reach their goals whether that's having a friendly volunteer to go along to a session with you, or meeting someone in the same boat and seeing where it leads.

Since we started this work in January 2022, we have directly supported **153 people** who were referred to social prescribing by their GP. The support we've provided ranges from **signposting people to support** with housing or welfare payments, to supporting someone to **improve their wellbeing** by joining an exercise group or local choir.



Case study

We have been working with someone who has discovered knitting as a way to help them manage their alcohol use – we sourced these buttons to help them finish the awesome baby items they had knitted. The person also helped to lead a knitting workshop we ran to connect other people we are supporting for conversations and a fun activity.



Spotlight: Parent Power



Parent Power employs a team of three parents from Cowley and Blackbird Leys as Parent Advocates, who support local parents one-to-one and in groups to access services and achieve their goals.

As people with lived experience of parenting in the local area, and navigating the world of early help, our **Parent Advocates** are well-placed to support peers who are experiencing disadvantage to overcome challenges.

With the help of Parent Advocates, local parents have set up groups to help each other to meet their goals,

including a weekly English class and a driving theory test support group. Parent Advocates have also helped run a school food bank, and organised events to bring parents together, including Christmas and Easter celebrations and an international food festival.

Through one-to-one support, Parent Advocates have helped other parents with a range of challenges and goals, including **support to build confidence** to apply for a job, ensure that serious maintenance issues in social housing were dealt with, apply for **housing improvement** grants, get their child into a sports club, attend school and child protection meetings, register with a dentist and go to the doctor.

Parent Power has also been a vehicle for influencing professional services to support communities: one Parent Advocate collected feedback from parents about their experiences of Early Help Assessments and presented her findings back to the staff leading the project at LCSS. The role of the Parent Advocate has also helped to shift perceptions of local parents in professional spaces.



Comic by Lydia Hall



"Speaking the English language is very important to progress and to get other opportunities. Now I do a food bank with school, and we are currently organising English classes for other parents. In six months or a year, I like to see myself like communicating with people, meeting new people, knowing other people. There might be someone who is maybe struggling like me who might need very little help, but that help will boost their everything. And after that they will be able to think: 'I can do everything.'" — Parent Advocate

"It's really weird – I've noticed a lot of people feel threatened when I say I'm a parent advocate. They don't really understand the title, and they don't really know what angle I'm coming from. So it comes with negatives, and it comes with the positives, but I see it all as a positive, because it shows me that they are threatened by the role because I am literally empowering parents to have a voice. Now I can phone anywhere and anyone and I can

speak on people's behalf. Being a parent advocate, I can get a whole lot more done. It's important to me, because it changes people's lives for the better. Sky's the limit." — Parent Advocate





Case study

The Parent Power team noticed a child visiting a community larder at the end of the school day. They talked with the child to understand their home situation and as a result, encouraged his mum to come and attend the community larder. She was initially apprehensive and nervous to come alone. The Parent Power team met her and supported her to attend for the first time, and continued to arrange to meet her at the larder for the next few weeks. Now the mum comes every week, arriving early to sit and chat with staff and other residents coming to the community larder.

Spotlight: University of Oxford students

We work with the University of Oxford to support students to contribute to communities across the city and step outside of the college 'bubble'. They bring their energy and skills to volunteering programmes and they tell us that this helps them feel connected with Oxford.

As part of this, we work specifically with **Crankstart** and **Lloyds Scholars** at the University of Oxford. This is part of a programme supporting low-income students with financial support and one-to-one support to make the most of the university experience.

This academic year, we engaged **184 individual Crankstart Scholar volunteers** in 225 volunteering positions. Scholars participated in volunteering opportunities across Oxford Hub, **contributing to the impact** of our programmes. For example, 36 of our Schools Plus tutors this year were Scholars.



We also marked our 15th birthday by creating and hosting an exhibition at Oxford Student Union to celebrate the amazing contribution that students have made through social action and volunteering since Oxford Hub was founded in 2007, and to inspire current students to get involved.

The exhibition featured art from collaborative workshops, a history of student volunteering, a deeper dive into the Town and Gown discussion, an overview of the volunteering programmes we have facilitated over the past 15 years, and a look at our current work building a better Oxford.





66

"I really enjoyed researching and finding out more about the Oxford Hub and everything they have been up to over the last 15 years. Their impressive work has definitely inspired me to get involved with volunteering more next year" — Scholar and placement volunteer

"Participating in [this placement] was really rewarding for me. I not only learned useful skills like the art of story-collecting, but I also got to truly appreciate the impact of the charity throughout the pandemic. Doing this has widened my perspective and has allowed me to see that Oxford is not just constrained to a student bubble" — Scholar and placement volunteer

"I really liked being a volunteer for FELLOW, teaching English as a foreign language; I became great friends with my learner, and it felt great knowing that her English was improving. The Oxford Hub team was also fantastic and incredibly friendly, so easy to reach and eager to help whenever I had questions. I definitely recommend it as it's a great way to give back to the Oxford community, and with such a kind team behind it all, I can't encourage it enough" – Scholar and FELLOW volunteer



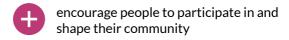
Spotlight: Highlights from the Community Impact Zone

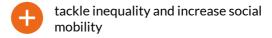
The Community Impact Zone (CIZ) aims to create more opportunities for children and families in areas of South East Oxford experiencing high levels of deprivation.

We're working with communities, organisations and local authorities to:









Some highlights of our CIZ activity this year include:

Holiday provision for children

We delivered holiday provision during the Summer holidays, for children who receive free school meals or were otherwise considered vulnerable by referrers.

These activities were delivered in partnership with **local schools**, **Thames**

Valley Police, **local charities** and **community groups**. Children took part in a range of active or creative sessions such as roller skating and swimming, received support with reading, and ate a hot lunch as well as an optional breakfast.

130 children took part in Summer 2021, and 92 children took part in Summer 2022. We are also facilitating and supporting other organisations to provide holiday activities. In the Easter holidays, we partnered with **Pegasus Primary School** to deliver holiday provision for 31 children across four days.



The Leys Community Fund

We ran a participatory grant-making process, bringing together a panel of local residents in Blackbird Leys to make funding decisions about local projects for the first round of our Community Fund. The panel, distributing funds donated by the **Lankelly Chase Foundation**, chose to fund six projects led by local residents, including a community choir, a family fitness class, a multicultural association and support spaces for women and people from minoritised groups. **Oxford Hub** facilitated the process, and has provided the projects with ongoing mentoring and support.

The Leys Community Profile

Working with **Public Health at Oxfordshire County Council**, we coordinated community insight gathering for the production of the new community profile for Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook. We recruited two local residents as community researchers and provided opportunities for over 300 Leys residents to share their views on the assets and challenges for health and wellbeing in the Leys.



Systems Changers

As part of our work with families and professionals in the Leys, we have been exploring how to improve the system of early help for families, delivering more **community-based support**. Through participatory action research and training, participants have developed their skills and understanding about how to make change in their community and beyond. From reclaiming the local leisure centre so that it serves the community, to engaging parents to make schools more inclusive, participants explored what could be possible if they worked together. Participants spent over 100 hours together to build skills, relationships and motivation for change.

Systemic Change



Through our programmes, we test alternative ways of doing things – like including people with lived experience in service design and delivery, and promoting community participation in and ownership of decision making.

We also work to **influence wider systems** to adopt these approaches – often by inviting people from partner organisations and the public sector into the work, and sharing our learning with a wider audience.





Spotlight: Participatory approaches to grant-making

In April, as part of the Marmalade Festival, members of the Oxford Hub team and the Community Fund panel shared key learnings from the participatory grant-making process at an engaging event attended by funders and commissioners including Oxfordshire Community Foundation, Oxfordshire County Council and Lloyds Bank Foundation.

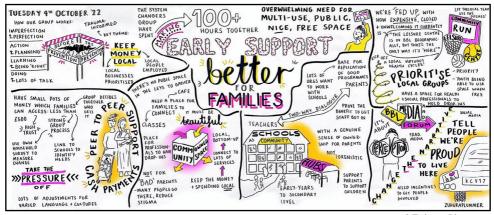
Active Oxfordshire, who were involved in the first round of the Community Fund as a learning partner, have gone on to run their own **participatory grant-making** process alongside Oxfordshire County Council. Following our work on the Leys Community Profile, we are developing a participatory process to disburse funding from Oxfordshire County Council to implement the recommendations of the Profile. This is important to ensure that **local ownership and leadership** are at the heart of the response to the community profile.

Spotlight: Systems Changers

Systems Changers culminated in a lunch where the group hosted other local residents and professionals from agencies and organisations, including those relating to early help and public health.

The group shared what they have been working on so far and invited participants to contribute ideas about where **Systems Changers** goes next.

In their work so far, programme participants have mapped the system and **interviewed local families** and people who have positions of power in the area, from local charity leaders to the director of Children Services at Oxfordshire County Council. In addition, they have focused on **exploring power and community organising**, with training from Citizens UK on relational power and how participants can use this to take action and achieve wins in the areas that are important to them.



©Zuhura Plummer

Over 60 attendees explored the learning from the programme to date, and the ideas for change that had been designed by programme participants. Residents and professionals are motivated to **find more public space** in the Blackbird Leys area, connect schools with parents, test direct cash transfers for local families experiencing challenges, make the leisure centre more accessible, and change the narrative in the Leys.

We know all of these things are complex and we will not be able to achieve them on our own, so we will be **working closely with partners** to explore what we could do together to improve family support in OX4.

Thank Yous

Key individuals, volunteers, placement students, staff and trustees

Our staff and trustees; Rebecca Almond, Yannis Baur, Sharon Highton, Laura Hutton, Andrew AJ Jones, Daniel Maani-Hessari, Hannah MacDiarmid, Leillah Naiga, Peter Nowland, Moreblessings Nyamukanga, Yolande Smith; the Radley College Young Sports Leaders; our Community Fund panel; and all the Big Brothers and Big Sisters.

Oxford Hub Placement Students: Chanelle Scantlebury, Weronika Glinka, Lily Ashton, Raisha Islam, William Lowry, Aram Masharqa, Emmanuel Boakye, Malwina Kozlowska, Olivia Hersey, Anouska Brooks, Gala Hills, Millie Davidson, Elika Charlton, Jardine Barrington-Cook, Gloria Morey-Picking.

Our wonderful student committees: the Oxford Hub Student Committee (2021-22): Bethany Shouk, Evie Sutcliffe, Farheen Muhammed, Phoebe Mumby, Matt Hedges; our incoming Student Committee (2022-23): Nathan Ashby, Jardine Barrington-Cook, Millie Davidson, Kelsey Monteith, Charlotte Morgan, Bianca Pasca; the Schools Plus Committee (2021-22): Nelson Fernandes-Serrao, Leah O'Grady, Nick Kuenstler, Jack Jenner, Katie Rennie, Ahmed Imran; the incoming Schools Plus Committee (2022-23): Ellen Salter and Somesh Sharma; and the OxUnboxed Committee.

A special thanks to all our Oxford Together volunteers, especially our Local Pod leaders Asif Salarzai and Robert Johnson, and our Phone Links Pod Leaders: Sarah Bowers, Kathryn McNicholl, Judith Piggott, Lee Gray, Joelle Mann and Julian Kaptanian.

Community partners and supporters

A huge thank you to all the organisations, their staff teams and volunteers who have helped us build a better Oxford this year, including: Bernard Grenville-Jones, John Kelly and Danielle Sterrenburg at Activate Learning; the team at Active Oxfordshire; Jacqui Gitau and African Families in the UK; Clare Winterboottom and the ARCh Readers; Ark-T; Aspire; Asylum Welcome; Barton Community Association; BBC Children in Need; Nigel Roberts and the Blackbird Leys Community Larder; Blagrave Trust; Broken Spoke Bike Cooperative; Carfax College; Common Ground Oxford; Emily Lewis-Edwards at Community First Oxfordshire; Jon Hyslop at Community Glue; DCR Allen Charitable Trust; The Dragon School; Ali McKay and the East Oxford Good Neighbours Gardening Scheme; Eleanor Hamilton Educational Trust; Emmanuel Kaye Foundation; Flo's The Place in the Park; Fusion Arts; John Thaw Foundation; Annette Pattinson at Joy Riders; Lankelly Chase Foundation; Richard at Leys

Pool and Leisure; Annette MacDonald at Lloyds Banking Group; Mactaggart Third Fund; Magdalen College Boat Club; Museum of Oxford; The National Lottery Community Fund; Laura Price and OCVA; Emma Coles, Clayton Lavallin and Jeremy Long at OIEP; the team at the Old Fire Station; the staff at Orchard Meadow and Pegasus Primary Schools; OSEP; Ian Brooke, Amber Giles, Jayne Watson, and all the locality hub teams at Oxford City Council; Vicky and Tom at Oxford Code Lab; Oxford Lottery; Oxfordshire African Caribbean Multicultural Association (OACMA); Oxfordshire County Council (especially Clare Campling, Jessie Dobson, Maria Godfrey, Natalia Lachkou, John Pearce, Rosie Rowe; Kate Austin, Ros Jones, Fiona Ruck and the team at Public Health); Oxford Students' Union; Margaret Coombe at the Oxford Study Skills Centre; PF Charitable Trust; Pye Charitable Settlement; Pete Bennet and the team at Radley College; The Rank Foundation; Robert and Margaret Moss Charitable Trust; SEOxHA and the Wellbeing Team; Singer Foundation; The Souldern Trust; all the staff at St Christopher's Primary; Robert Swallow; Thames Valley Police, especially the Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys Neighbourhood Policing Team; Judith Condor-Vidal at Trading for Development; Steph, Will and the team at TRAX; the Turville Trust; University College Oxford; Josephine Allen, Katie Hickman, Fiona Whitehouse and Leia Yaniv at the University of Oxford Careers Services; Mat Hickman, Vickie Porritt and Leah Thompson at the University of Oxford Research Services; Steve Martin and Helena Palmer at the University of Oxford Student Fees and Funding; Jan Royall and all the primary schools, colleges and their staff and students involved in the Pilot Twinning Programme (Primary Schools: Rose Hill, Woodfarm, St Frideswide, St Christopher's, John Henry Newman; and Colleges: St Johns, New College, Somerville, Trinity, Exeter); Jen Parkin, Payam Yuce Isik, and everyone who participated in the Systems Changers Programme; our brilliant coaches, including Kim Barresi, Paula Denton, Tia Denton, Inez Kretzchmar, Cynthia Lomaguiz and Keilee Sharkey: the Oxfordshire charities who took part in our EDI peer to peer series; the artists who have supported our work this year, including Dionne Freeman, Lydia Hall, Rosemary Linnell, Patrick McGuinness, Miranda Millward, Zuhura Plummer and Rawz; and all of the wonderful donors who have supported our campaigns and ongoing work this year.

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Be part of what we do!

Get in touch at hello@oxfordhub.org

Visit us at 36 Little Clarendon Street or **Blackbird Leys Community Centre**

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