



QUINTESSENTIALLY FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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FOREWORD



Dr Peter Crowther, Chair
 Sir Ben Elliot, Founding Trustee
 Dr Alastair Masser, Director

Today, more than one in three children in London live in poverty, equating to over 700,000 young people. Behind each statistic is a life where opportunities are too limited, and where potential too often goes unfulfilled.

London boasts an extraordinary network of community children’s charities, working on the frontlines to provide vital support to the capital’s most vulnerable children. Yet these organisations are largely unknown and unsung, delivering essential services in their neighbourhoods on shoestring budgets.

Since the creation of The Firefly Project in 2022, we have provided small charities like these with nearly £1.5m in funding along with over 150 hours of training and support to help them overcome obstacles to their growth, to scale, and to transform the lives of more young people.

It is a model that works. Our support has enabled our charities to engage nearly 30,000 of London’s most vulnerable children over the past year, expanding their operations to now include every one of the city’s 32 boroughs. Through our networks, we have also connected them to an additional £1.4m in funding in 2025 alone, providing them with essential stability in what remains a challenging fundraising climate.

The extraordinary success of our fundraising events in 2025 is a testament to the generosity of our incredible army of supporters, every one of whom shares our commitment to drive real change in our city. Their support for our work demonstrates the power of collaborative philanthropy and shows what can be achieved when Londoners share a sincere desire to help those in greatest need.

There can be no doubt that London’s child poverty crisis demands urgent action, and for all of us to play our part. With the number of children in the city living in poverty continuing to rise, small charities have never been more important, nor in more need of our support.

Our support has enabled our charities to engage nearly 30,000 of London’s most vulnerable children over the past year, expanding their operations to now include every one of the city’s 32 boroughs.

At Quintessentially Foundation, we believe that the circumstances you are born into should not define your future. That is why we work to find, fund, and scale the small charities making the biggest difference in their communities, to give all young people in London the childhood – and future – they deserve.

WHY WE EXIST

London's small charities operate on the frontlines of the city's child poverty crisis. They provide a broad spectrum of essential services within their communities, helping to deliver security and opportunity to those young people most in need.

We know that with the right support, they can go even further. That is why Quintessentially Foundation works to find, fund and scale the small charities making the biggest difference, to give all young people in London the childhood they deserve.



Demand for baby banks has increased by over 50% since 2021, as families struggle with the rising cost of living.

> **Little Village** operates a network of baby banks across London, providing families on low incomes with essential clothes, toys, and equipment. Since launching in 2016, they have supported almost 37,000 children, including a record 11,500 in 2025.

11,500 children supported



One in four 11-year-olds leaves primary school unable to read or write properly.

Children living in poverty have typically fallen 19 months behind their peers at school by the time they begin GCSEs.

> **Team Up** provides tutors to children from disadvantaged backgrounds to help improve their English and Maths. Since launching in 2012, they have worked with more than 12,000 children, delivering an additional 7,000 hours of tuition in 2025 compared to the previous year.

> **Doorstep Library** brings the magic of books and the joy of reading directly into the homes of disadvantaged children across London. Since launching in 2010, they have worked with 2,200 children and now run 18 reading projects across five London boroughs.

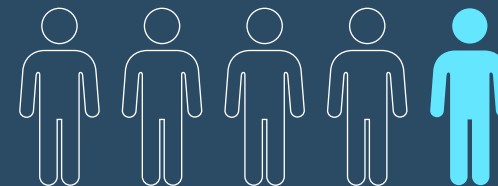
One in five children aged 8-16 has a probable mental health disorder, with those living in poverty around four times more likely to be diagnosed.

> **The Kids Network** provides mentors for children struggling with their mental health, helping them to manage challenges including depression and anxiety. Since launching in 2017, they have scaled to support over 350 children each year, with almost 90% of participants reporting improvement in their wellbeing and resilience.



Almost half of children in London say violence impacts their daily lives, and it causes a fifth to regularly miss school.

> **The Violence Intervention Project (VIP)** works with young people at risk of serious youth violence. Since launching in 2017, they have supported around 250 children considered at high-risk, delivering over 1500 hours of tailored guidance to them and their families.



27% of Black 16–24-year olds are unemployed, compared to 10% of their White counterparts.

> **20/20 Levels** empowers Black and racially underrepresented young people to create pathways into employment and entrepreneurship. Since launching in 2012, they have helped more than 3,750 young people to fulfil their potential, partnering with 185 companies across London.

Nearly half of all teenagers (49%) have experienced violent or controlling behaviour.

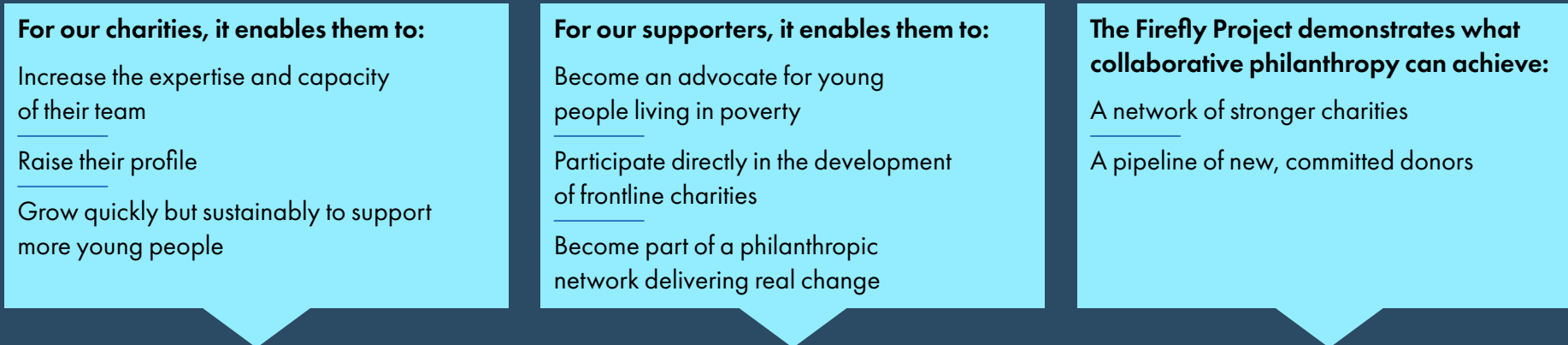
> **Let Me Know (LMK)** works with young people to prevent relationship abuse, domestic violence and sexual assault. Since launching in 2020, their workshops now reach more than 6,600 people each year across 23 London boroughs.

THE FIREFLY PROJECT APPROACH

Armed with our strong philanthropic and third-sector networks, specialist knowledge of charity development and fundraising expertise, we deliver:



Our approach delivers meaningful impact for both our charities and our supporters.



By working together, we provide essential support to young people in need

2025 IN NUMBERS

We distributed **£442,942** in grant funding, taking our total to **£1,499,137** since the inception of The Firefly Project

£1,499,137

That's an average increase of

28%

year-on-year

Over

50%

of our grants in 2025 were unrestricted



We delivered **83 hours** of training in 2025, saving our charity partners around **£35,000** in training costs – taking our total hours delivered since the creation of The Firefly Project to over **150 hours**.

Grant distribution

£166,220 restricted grants

£276,722 unrestricted grants

£1 = £3.20



We continued to leverage our power of giving and influencing, and in 2025 alone, for every £1 we gave, we connected our charity partners to an additional £3.20 – meaning we unlocked over **£1.4m** in additional funding.

> £1.4m

This is a **64%** increase on 2024

With this support, our charity partners have:

Increased their turnover by

53%

in total

Reached over

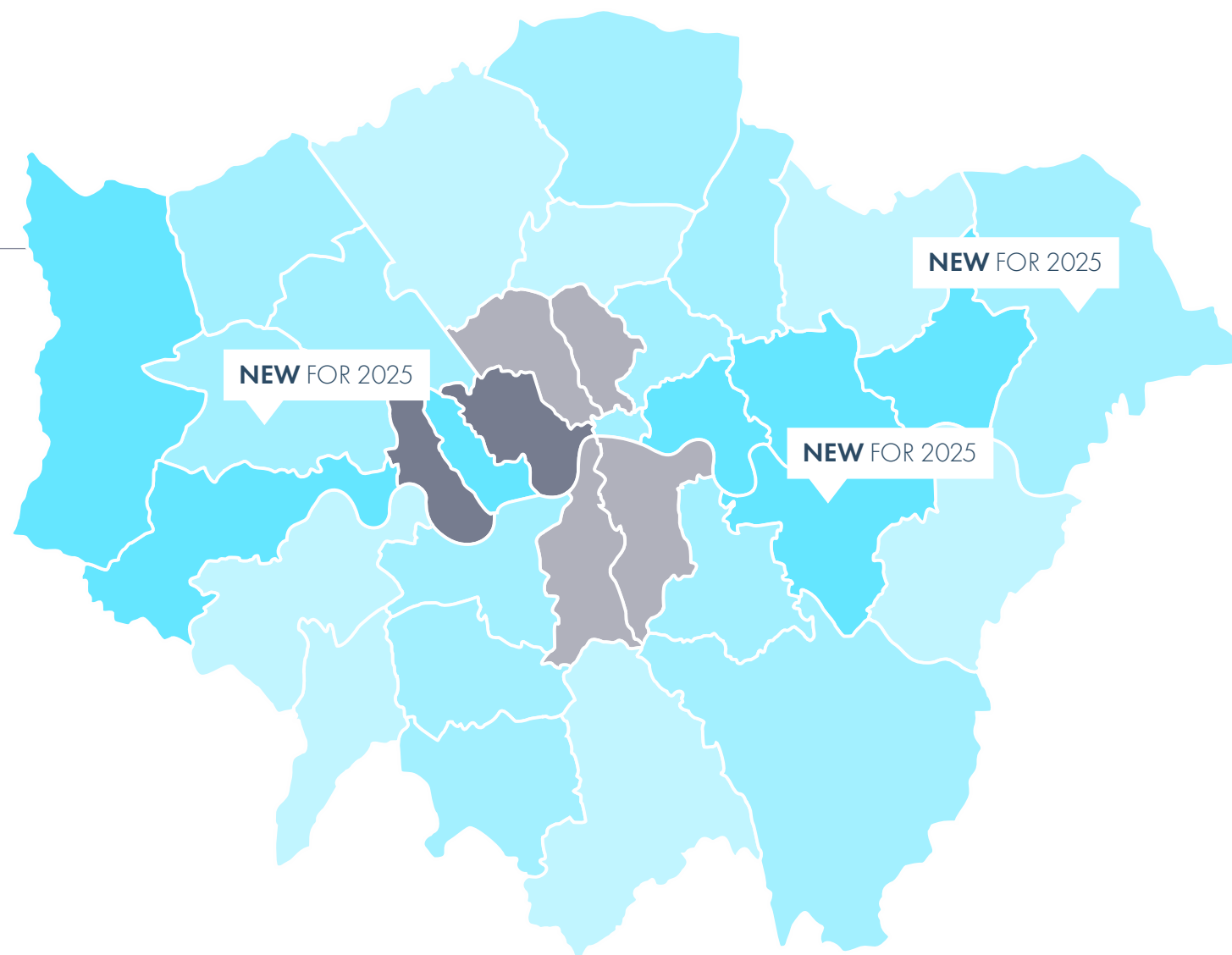
30,000

children across London

THE YOUNG PEOPLE WE SUPPORT

2025 saw our charity partners expand their work right across London. New projects were undertaken in **Ealing, Greenwich and Havering**, and fledgling programmes in **Westminster** and **Tower Hamlets** went from strength to strength.

Our charity partners are now working in every London borough, ensuring all Little Londoners have access to the support and care they need.



Number of charity partners operating in each London borough



OUR FUNDRAISING





THE BIKE RIDE

16 years of pedal-powered philanthropy

£559,281

gross raise

A highlight of our fundraising calendar, 2025 marked the 16th Quintessentially Foundation Bike Ride, bringing together supporters for an unforgettable ride through the wild beauty of the Scottish Highlands.

Our dedicated team of 40 riders covered over 500km in just four days, enjoying memorable stops at landmark destinations like Balmoral, and helping deliver the biggest fundraiser in the event's history.

To find out details of the 2026 Bike Ride to Lake Como in Italy, [click here](#) or [contact us](#)



THE FAYRE OF ST JAMES'S

A magical night of giving

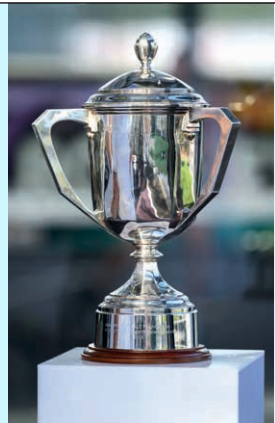
£467,961

gross raise

2025 marked the 14th year of The Fayre of St James's, London's most prestigious charity Christmas concert.

The event attracted more than 600 supporters including an array of celebrity guests to enjoy an evening of stunning performances from Mica Paris, Dame Joan Collins, Dominic West, Billy Crudup, and Sophie Ellis Bextor.

The concert was followed by a spectacular dinner and live auction at the renowned Loulou's of 5 Hertford Street, helping to deliver the biggest fundraising in the event's history.



THE WORLD PADEL CHARITY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Game on at Battersea Power Station

£65,383 gross raise

2025 saw Quintessentially Foundation launch the inaugural World Padel Charity Championships, bringing together eight teams, 64 players and over 150 spectators at the iconic Battersea Power Station on the banks of the River Thames.

Alongside competing for the illustrious WPCCTrophy, participants were able to learn from the very best, with an exhibition match featuring Team GB stars including Sam Jones, while those attending were able to try their luck in the luxury raffle held at the close of play.



OUR PATRONS' PROGRAMME

OUR PATRONS' PROGRAMME

At Quintessentially Foundation, we believe giving should go further. Our Patrons' Programme is for individuals who want to do more than donate – they want to transform lives.

Together, we identify and incubate small, frontline charities with the vision and potential to make a big impact – but who are often overlooked and underfunded.

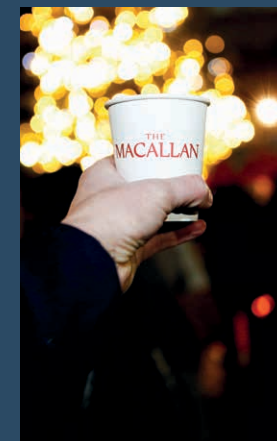
As a Patron, you don't just support this work – you become part of it. From helping choose new charity partners to joining site visits, training sessions and strategic discussions, you'll see firsthand how we nurture small charities to become resilient, high-performing forces for change.

This is collaborative philanthropy done differently: bold, strategic and deeply connected. You'll join a community of like-minded changemakers, gain unique access to our work, and use your time, skills, and networks to supercharge the causes you care about.

To find out more about our Patrons' Programme and how to join, visit our [website](#).

'Many donors want to find a way of getting their money to vital grassroots charities that tackle and resolve the most pressing social issues. That pathway is notoriously difficult to navigate. But Quintessentially Foundation does that hard work for donors. Participation in their Patrons' Programme ensures that donors' money goes to carefully chosen charities supporting children and young people in London.'

Rory Brooks CBE





OUR CHARITY PARTNERS

THE KIDS NETWORK

The Kids Network was founded in 2017 to support London’s children with their mental health during the transition from primary to secondary school. Volunteer mentors provide weekly sessions that focus on each child’s individual needs, helping to build confidence and resilience as they navigate adolescence.

Total QF funding in 2025:

£78,500

£28,000 restricted grants

£50,500 unrestricted grants

In addition to funding, we supported The Kids Network to

Strengthen their marketing output with a new staff member.

Develop their fledging Tower Hamlets (one of the most affected boroughs in terms of child poverty) and Westminster programmes, and expand their programmatic reach into a new borough (Greenwich).

Undertake a long-term, independent evaluation to enable them to better understand the impact of their programme, as well as to capture long-term outcomes for children and their families.



In 2025, The Kids Network

Reached over

350

children through their mentoring programme.

Reported that over

90%

of children felt calm and relaxed after their mentoring sessions.

Reported that over

95%

of mentors felt they could really make positive change within their community.



LET ME KNOW

Let Me Know works with young people to prevent relationship abuse, domestic violence and sexual assault, through an educational programme designed to help young people identify the signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships.

With our support, Let Me Know

Developed a new age-appropriate programme for younger children (Yr 6), reaching over 900 participants across 2024 and 2025.

Created their first ever marketing strategy, ensuring they can prioritise their audiences and approach and attract more support.

Further strengthened their infrastructure through training opportunities, HR support and ongoing recruitment of new team members.

Total QF funding in 2025:

£105,938

£50,000 unrestricted grants

£55,938 restricted grants

In 2025, Let Me Know

Reached more than

6,600

children across 23 London boroughs.

Held over

250

workshops, working with 50 schools and community groups.

Reported that over

85%

of young people would know how to get help if they were in an abusive relationship.

THE VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROJECT

The VIP, established in 2017, works with young people aged 12-25 in West London who are involved in or at risk of serious youth violence. They use a therapeutic approach to encourage young people out of violence and into living healthy and safe lives.

With our support, The VIP
 Strengthened their core staff team with a new senior management-level post.
 Designed a future organisational structure.
 Developed a new initiative to be rolled out nationally.

Total QF funding in 2025:

£132,281.53

£50,000 unrestricted grants

£82,281.53 restricted grants

In 2025 The VIP

Reported that

87%

of children on their DRIFT Project remained in school.

Worked with

64

young people, taking their total to more than 250 since inception.

x2

Doubled their school work sessions.





20/20 LEVELS

20/20 Levels support Black and ethnic minority young people into employment and entrepreneurship, through a combination of mentoring and workshops.

They also provide budding entrepreneurs with professional and financial support, helping them establish their own businesses.

Total QF funding in 2025:

£50,000

£50,000 unrestricted grant

In addition to funding, we supported 20/20 Levels to

Undertake recruitment for a crucial senior-level post to support their operational needs.

Focus on consolidation and strategic focus, ensuring their long-term approach continues to differentiate them from others in the space.

Strengthen their alumni offer, providing ongoing in-work support, mentoring and progression coaching beyond the end of their programme.

In 2025, 20/20 Levels

Saw

100

young people graduate across their programmes.

Awarded over

£25k

to young entrepreneurs.

Had an impressive

95%

of their young graduates say they would recommend the programme to a friend.

DOORSTEP LIBRARY

Doorstep Library was founded in 2010 to instil a love of reading in London’s children through weekly reading sessions with volunteers in their homes.

Total QF funding in 2025:

£25,000

£25,000 unrestricted grant

In addition to funding, we supported Doorstep Library to

Continue to engage more families (67 new) and children (119 new) in reading sessions.

Share nearly 9,000 books with children and their families, including gifting over 500 books.

Strengthen the project support team to create capacity and ensure projects can continue unabated.

In 2025, Doorstep Library

Had

95%

of families say their child’s reading had improved as a result of the programme.

Recruited over

100

new volunteers thanks to an increased Volunteer Engagement team.

Reached children and their families across

5

London boroughs.





LITTLE VILLAGE

Little Village operate a collection of baby banks that provide crucial resources to young children and their families, including clothes, toys and equipment. Families are referred to Little Village via a range of professionals, including midwives, social workers and children’s centres.

In addition to funding, we supported Little Village to

Provide London families with over 70,000 much-needed essentials.

Deliver emergency newborn packs for babies across all London maternity wards.

Continue expanding their reach through new community and Charity of the Year partnerships.

Total QF funding in 2025:

£25,000

£25,000 unrestricted grant

In 2025, Little Village

Supported over **11,000** children and families.

Grew one-off volunteering by over **6000%**

Had **25%** of volunteers with lived experience of poverty, adding insight and empathy

TEAM UP

Team Up was founded to address the gap in education attainment and achievement between disadvantaged children and their peers. Their volunteers tutor underachieving children in primary and secondary schools in London.

We have supported Team Up to Increase their programme management team to ensure they can continue to expand their reach.
Develop new programmes outside London, including for children in care.

Total QF funding in 2025:

£25,000

£25,000 unrestricted grant

In 2025 Team Up

Reported that their pupils made

8

months' progress over the three months of their programme.

Had attendance rates of

85%

with 90% of pupils reporting they enjoyed the programme.

Delivered

40

programmes to schools and partners.



OUR SUPPORTERS

Our work is only made possible by our incredible network of supporters, Patrons, donors, and corporate partners, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their contributions and commitment to our cause.

We are always looking to welcome new people into our network – please check out [our website](#) for more information, and to get in touch, please [contact us](#)

QUINTESENTIALLY



