



VERSION 1

Community First Report

Annual Report 2020

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*Improving employment opportunities
in our communities by leveraging
technology and our skills.*

Version 1 Community First

Version 1's Community First initiative is the main way in which we try to give back to the communities that we work in.

With ten offices spread across two continents and three countries, the Company is acutely aware of inequalities within our communities and of its obligations to help reduce these. Version 1 is also aware that many of our staff are committed to improving our communities, and aims to facilitate staff involvement where possible.

Our mission is:

"To improve employment opportunities in our communities by leveraging technology and our skills."

What this means in practice is that:

- We focus our activities in the communities which are geographically close to where we work.

- We work with partners in the community who are trying to improve the employment opportunities available to people locally.
- We work with partners who are targeting those groups who face the highest barriers to employment.
- As an IT company, we focus our efforts in the area that we are most knowledgeable about, namely Information Technology.
- We encourage staff to contribute both financially and with their time.
- If we can, we will magnify the value of any financial contributions that we can make by supplementing it with our expertise.

Above all, we look for ways in which we can make a practical and tangible difference to the lives of those with whom we share our communities.

2020 in Review

2020 started with renewed enthusiasm and momentum, as several of the projects that we had provided funding to at the end of 2019 were kicking off. Volunteers from across many offices had been recruited and had started delivering practical hands-on sessions with schools, coding clubs, and local youth groups.

These plans were quickly put on hold as Covid-19 arrived, bringing with it lockdowns across all the countries in which we operate. Version 1 staff switched to remote working, schools were closed, and most of our partner organisations had to suspend or significantly change their operations in response to the health crisis.

Very quickly it became clear that the priorities in many communities had changed

dramatically, and were more immediate and more basic. Charities across Ireland, the UK, and India found that their normal sources of income declined significantly just as the demands on their services grew.

In response to these changing circumstances, the Community First team made the decision to shift our focus, broadening the remit from employment and technology-centred initiatives to helping to meet some of the more immediate needs in communities, including more basic necessities such as food.

We also decided to switch from a very local focus, to supporting a small number of larger charities, and pledged a financial contribution to those organisations.

Barnardos in the UK & Ireland, the SNEH Foundation and the PMCares fund in India



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I feel very proud to be a part of this team, to help and encourage them and ensuring a positive impact on society.

- Namrata Jadhav, Pune, Version 1

were selected as organisations primarily targeting children and families to meet basic needs.

We initiated a fund-raising appeal within Version 1, setting a target of €30,000. Thanks to the generosity of our employees, this target was exceeded and we were in a position to donate €31,564 to the organisations. These contributions made a small, but practical difference to the lives of many children and families.

As the immediate concerns and impacts of Covid-19 became clearer, so did the fact that for many of these children and families, the employment barriers that they faced prior to Covid-19 had been magnified by the pandemic. The Digital Divide which we aim to reduce became wider:

- Children who did not have access to laptops and other digital devices face even greater barriers than normal in accessing education.
- As many services were forced to go online, those who are marginalised, including homeless people, and people with disabilities found an additional barrier as applying for jobs, or even accessing basic entitlements and services.
- Some of the mechanisms that we use to help young people explore employment opportunities available to them, such as work placements, and school visits were impossible.

Community First teams across the company again rose to the challenge of this “new

normal”. They identified ways in which we could achieve our mission against that background of remote working and social distancing, in order to continue to make a real difference in our communities. The rest of this report provides a flavour of some of the initiatives which we were involved with during the year, most of which will continue in 2021. I also commend the contributions of a significant number of our staff who made voluntary efforts to fighting the effects of the pandemic, both under the Version 1 Community First banner, and in an individual capacity. Their Personal Commitment has made a difference to those most in need.

2021 will also herald several initiatives under the “No one left behind” banner, again focussing on those on whom the pandemic has had the greatest impact, and whose future prospects have been most impacted. We will extend and expand many of the initiatives such as remote work experience opportunities so that we can reach a greater number of people who will benefit from these opportunities.

As we come to the end of a challenging year I am proud that Version 1 and our staff have been able to make positive differences, even in small ways, to the lives and chances of those in our communities, and look forward to building on this work in 2021.

Catherine Hughes

Community First Chair

Version 1 Covid-19 Appeal - Barnardos



Barnardo's is one of the oldest charities in the UK & Ireland. The first school providing free education to children from socially deprived backgrounds was established in the East End of London in 1867 by Thomas Barnardo, an Irish Doctor. Over the decades that followed and in response to changing social demands, Barnardo's has remained committed to changing the lives of vulnerable children and young people, helping them to overcome obstacles to reach their full potential.

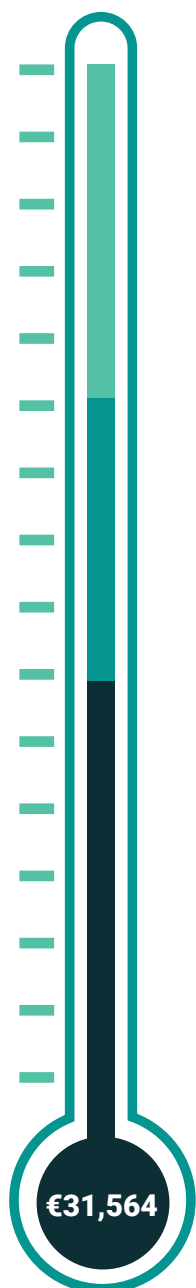
When the impacts of Covid-19 started to be felt, Barnardo's, like many other charities, felt the impacts immediately. Faced with a significant increase in demand for its services, it also saw its income plummet, as normal sources of income such as shops were closed and millions of people faced uncertainty about their income.

While the Barnardo's mission does not refer specifically to technology, the overall aim of helping young people to reach their full potential is perfectly aligned to our Community First aims. With the impacts of lockdowns, school closures and loss of income the obstacles facing young people were more immediate. Access to food became an issue for many and food parcels were provided to hundreds of families. For families with young children

who could not attend school and for whom the digital divide is an ongoing barrier, Barnardo's provided a range of support, including activity packs. For service users who had previously availed of in person support, additional devices were also required and supplied.

Our Community First team decided that a focussed fund-raising appeal could make a tangible difference to the lives of many families, and a significant portion of our annual funding was put to this purpose. We also put out a call to our employees and a large number made significant contributions. Our initial target was set at €30,000, which thanks to the generosity of our staff, we exceeded with a total of €31,564 being split between Barnardo's in the UK and Ireland, and the SNEH and PM Cares funds in India.

Feedback from Barnardo's in both countries was that the money did make a big difference to its service users, with the funds being spent on a variety of different interventions, including Food Packages for those in most immediate need, Activity Packs for young families, and additional digital devices for older service users who needed them to keep in touch with key workers and other services.



- Community First Fund**
- Employee Donations**
- Version 1 Contributions**

Key Performance Indicators

One of the objectives of Community First is to be able to discern and measure the impact of our contributions. While many of the initiatives are long-term in nature and the results may only bear fruit in years to come, there are various statistics that we do measure.

Over the course of the year, we had a 33% increase in the number of staff making a financial contribution each month. We also had a massive 485% increase in contributors providing a one-off contribution, in response to our Covid-19 appeal.

The Covid-19 appeal saw an increase in the funding that we provided to other organisations of 272%, but “core” donations to partner organisations were also nearly double the level of 2019, with more organisations benefitting this year and into the future.

While we would like to be able to quantify the number of people impacted, this figure can only be measured over time.

Key Performance Indicators (EUR)	2019	2020	Change
Version 1 core contribution (EUR)	35,000	35,000	
Employees contributing financially - total	82	258	215%
Number of Employees contributing financially - monthly	49	65	33%
Number of Employees making additional contributions	33	193	485%
Projected value of Employee salary contributions at year end	5,600	13,000	132%
Value of Version 1 matching funding	5,600	13,000	132%
Additional fundraising (Direct to Barnardos)		5,350	
Total funding available	46,200	66,350	44%
Number of initiatives receiving financial support	10	17	70%
Total money distributed (non-Covid)	17,700	34,250	94%
Total money distributed (Covid-19 appeal)	-	31,564	
People impacted positively in our communities.	Numerous	Numerous	

These figures demonstrate both the generosity of our staff across all our locations, as well as Version 1's commitment to ensuring that we make a positive contribution to our communities.

Office Updates

Belfast

The team in Belfast got the year off to a strong start, with volunteers from the office attending Bradbury Hub to start to deliver coding classes. Bradbury Hub is a local organisation, with a centre close to the Belfast offices, which helps children between the ages of 7-14 with assignments in Maths and English, and also equips children and teens (ages 8-18) with music and IT skills. Version 1 provided laptops to Bradbury Hub to enable children who have no access to a laptop avail of the IT coding classes and improve their understanding of computing, giving themselves better employment opportunities through growing an interest and experience in IT.

Along with the laptops, volunteers from the Belfast Office have given their time on Saturday mornings to assist with the classes and help the children learn and improve their skills for the future which otherwise might not have been open to them. As with most of our partner organisations, Bradbury Hub



experienced interruptions to its services following lockdowns and these classes were suspended.

As part of the overall re-prioritisation and re-focussing of our Community First effort, the team in Belfast subsequently decided to allocate funding, and to assist with the setup of tablets and devices to Team Haven, another local community organisation which aims to help the homeless, vulnerable and those experiencing food poverty. Team Haven identified ten families who had no IT facilities available to them – severely impacting their ability to stay connected, and avail of other services. Version 1 funding will assist these families directly.

Having seen the particular impact of the virus on the elderly, and those in Care Homes in particular, the team also decided to make a further contribution for IT equipment to a number of Care Homes to allow their residents to better connect with family and friends.

Bangalore

Bangalore is the bigger of our two offices in India and has an active Community First team. As with all our offices, the initiatives supported in the office are focussed on helping those who may have the greatest barriers to employment, particularly in the technology sector, to overcome these barriers.

In February the team hosted a visit from forty young adults from the Udhyam Learning Foundation. The Foundation aims to help young people achieve their full potential. The visit was by students from a sheltered home and helped them to understand how a business like Version 1 operates. It also provided insight

and guidance into the range of career options available, in areas like Finance and Operations as well as technology roles. These kinds of visits help to broaden the horizons of people from less privileged backgrounds, and increases their awareness of the opportunities available, and the routes to get there.

As part of the Covid-19 fundraising appeal, staff in the office donated generously, and this and other money donated across the company was contributed to the PMCares relief fund.

Local fundraising also supported the education of a promising youngster whose family had been severely impacted by the pandemic so that they can stay in school for the next year.

Towards the end of 2020, the team decided to allocate funds to sponsor the education of eight orphan children for next year, and are hopeful that once it is safe to do so, that they will be able to restart more practical activities including Computer and English skills training.



I thought Bradbury Hub would benefit from this initiative as the hub provides education and employability to deprived areas of the community. It was a simple discussion to get the ball rolling.

- Honey-Bell Oke, Belfast, Version 1

Dublin

Junior Achievement is an international organisation which aims to inspire and motivate young people to succeed in the changing world of work by equipping them with the skills, knowledge and confidence they need. They do this primarily by linking schools and young people with companies.

A team of Version 1 volunteers were trained to deliver these programmes, focussed in schools near our Dublin offices, and some sites where our client teams are located, to classes ranging in age from ten to eighteen at the start of 2020. Unfortunately, only 6 of these volunteers had delivered classes by the time of lockdown and school closures. Since the initial lockdown, Junior Achievement Ireland has adapted all its

courses and materials to be delivered remotely, and 15 members of staff have already volunteered to deliver these classroom programmes – bringing their real-life experience to bear on the very practical courses on offer.

The Dublin Community First team also approved a grant for a DEIS school located less than 2km from our Dublin offices. DEIS schools have been designated by the Department of Education as in specific need of additional supports to target educational disadvantage. The grant funded the procurement and installation of interactive whiteboards for the school in line with the school's technology strategy. The school expects the initiative to benefit pupils by

Dublin (Cont'd)

increasing student engagement with learning objectives and lesson content across all subjects, improving student ICT proficiency and engagement and the development of a digital learning framework within the school, as well as improving the ICT infrastructure for staff.

The most ambitious project being undertaken by the Dublin team is a grant and additional supports and expertise for Killinarden Community School to develop and support a Digital Education Programme. The school is another DEIS school, with low rates of progression to third level education, even for those with high potential and aptitude. The grant and additional support in the form of time and expertise are to develop and support a digital education programme. The objectives of this programme are:

- To impact upon and improve the school's retention and progression both at secondary and third level education.
- Input into the educational programmes which enable students to develop software skills.
- Provision of technology support and IT equipment for use in these programmes.
- Support for the provision of laptops for students progressing to 3rd level education.

Additional support for workplace pre-preparation and skills are also being provided in the form of CV and interview preparation, online aptitude testing and we expect to be able to provide work placements for some of these students in 2021.

Cork

Members of Version 1 in Cork rose to the challenge late in the summer when contacted via a customer seeking some help and guidance for the Nursing Home Quality Initiative. This independent voluntary group was established in 2010 with the aim of being a voice for Nursing Home residents and their families. Sadly, this was needed more than ever during the pandemic, as the disease had a greater impact on those in nursing homes than any other group. We were asked if there was anybody who would be able to provide advice and guidance on the creation of a new website.

One of the team in Cork took this a step further, demonstrating significant Personal Commitment to develop this new site on a voluntary basis.

A number of staff from the office in Cork will be involved in the Junior Achievement Ireland programme, targeting schools in Cork.

The team in Cork is also in discussions with some local educational organisations about providing both funding and longer-term supports.

Edinburgh



At the start of the year, the team in Edinburgh was involved in a careers evening at James Young High School, at which they helped to explain the range of STEM careers available to school leavers.

More recently they have also engaged with Y People, a Scottish charity which provides a range of services to homeless people in Edinburgh and throughout Scotland. A Version 1 Community First grant was provided to Y people which will allow them to purchase laptops for three accommodation centres in Edinburgh which enable their Service Users to communicate with health professionals, access employability services, apply for jobs and seek permanent housing. These are services which due to Covid-19 can best be accessed online, and which their Service Users have no other means of accessing.



This is something I wish I had at school
- **Catie Corrigan, Version 1**

Kings Hill

At the start of 2020, the team in Kings Hill made the decision to fund a new laptop, to be used by patients and carers at the Heart of Kent Hospice. Carers are a group that often put their careers on hold while caring for family members receiving end of life care, so helping them to develop and enhance their IT skills makes a difference to their future opportunities.

Plans to deliver additional training had to be put on hold as a result of Covid-19, however two members of the team provided additional voluntary remote support to the hospice, its patients and family members.

The team has also established links with schools in the locality. In February the office hosted a visit from students at Maidstone Grammar School for girls, aimed at fostering and encouraging interest in IT Careers.

The team has decided to provide additional funding to the school for the provision of additional IT equipment. This will ensure that less privileged students at the school have better access to remote learning during the pandemic.



Knutsford



The Community First team in Knutsford is very active with the local Business in the Community Group, which collaborates to ensure that the respective strengths of each of those businesses is leveraged within the community. The team contributed to a number of initiatives including “Numbers at School” which demystifies maths and demonstrates the importance of maths throughout life. Members of the team were also involved in the delivery of coding classes to a group of teenage girls – encouraging women and girls to pursue careers in IT is a key focus across Version 1.

The team adapted to remote working, when previously planned Work Experience placements couldn’t take place in the form originally envisaged and adapted the programme so that students could avail of some of the benefits on a remote basis. This programme will be expanded across the company in 2021.

The Knutsford team also provided significant grant funding to two organisations in 2020.

The Welcome Centre runs a community centre for the Longridge and Shaw Heath estates in Knutsford which is recorded by the UK Office of National Statistics as being

amongst the most deprived areas in the country. The centre is open to all members of the local community including young children, teenagers, busy parents, and the elderly.

One of the priorities at The Welcome is to help the community to become more digitally included with access to training and equipment. Never has this been more needed than during the current pandemic, with children and young people struggling to access online education due to a lack of access to IT equipment, and older people who have become increasingly isolated from friends and family during lockdowns. Version 1 funding has enabled the Welcome Centre to buy a number of tablets and laptops for use in its centre, and our contribution also unlocked matching funding from the Great Places Housing Association.

The team also approached the Knutsford Multi-Academy Trust, with which we have an ongoing relationship to identify their needs. Like most schools across the UK, Ireland and India, remote learning is an ongoing challenge that they are adapting to, and we were able to providing funding for additional laptops and graphics tablets which will be used by teachers and students





beam

London

The team in London decided to target another group who face significant barriers to employment – young Londoners who are homeless. They decided to provide a grant to Beam, a London-based charity that aims to help young homeless people to get a career and to regain their independence.

We were also very pleased to be able to make a commitment to our new customer in Harrow Council to making improvements

to the digital lives of its residents. This multi-year programme includes a wide range of initiatives, including mentoring, work placements, and financial support for youth and other organisations in the Borough.

Other members of our London team were involved in mentoring people seeking careers in IT.

“

I volunteered for an event with a local school which gave an insight on working life. This was special to me as the pupils who learned about Version 1 were from the same primary school I went to many years ago.

- James Aston - Knutsford, Version 1

Pune

The team in Pune further developed its connections to the SNEH foundation in 2020, building on funding provided in 2019 with IT and English training to Community Workers at the start of the year.

As with most partner organisations, SNEH refocussed its efforts in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The ongoing issue of early childhood malnutrition for many in the areas in which SNEH works became more severe as a result of lockdowns, with many losing all income without the safety net of any income support.

About the SNEH Foundation



SNEH is a charity which has been active in marginalised communities around Pune since 2011. Their aim is to ensure excellent early childhood education, nutrition, and health for every child in India.

Numerous studies have shown that early years nutrition and education can have a direct bearing on options and opportunities in later life, and our support for their pre-school programme, which in 2019 included sponsoring 15 children from marginalised communities to attend school for a year.



SNEH went out into communities, providing much-needed nutritionally rich food packages to those in the community, as well as educating families regarding protection measures from Covid-19. Version 1's Community First support ensured that 82 children at risk of severe malnutrition received highly nutritional value food for 2 months.

The Version 1 team in Pune has recently decided to support the re-establishment of an early childhood education centre in Kalakhadak, a

slum area in Pune. Kalakhadak has been a target community for SNEH Foundation projects in recent years but due to the Covid-19 pandemic SNEH had to vacate the space used to conduct preschool classes as well as support classes for the older children in the area. While SNEH secured a basic premises locally, additional funds are being provided by Version 1 for paint, fencing as well as improved sanitation and hygiene related infrastructure, so that education programmes can restart safely.

“

I would thoroughly recommend volunteering for Junior Achievement Ireland. It's relatively little effort and the level of satisfaction is massive

- Eoin McKiernan, Version 1

Redditch

Plans at the start of the year were to build on partnerships and projects kicked off in 2019. Funding had been provided to acquire ten “Raspberry Pis” by RYCE, the Redditch Youth and Community Enterprise group, which could be used as part of after-school coding classes, with a team of Version 1 volunteers who would assist with delivery of these classes. Due to the pandemic, these

plans had to be postponed as the centre was closed due to health restrictions and lockdowns.

As well as contributions to our Barnardo's fundraising campaign, the team in Redditch has recently decided to provide funding to RYCE and a second local organisation, the Disability Resource Center.

RYCE's funding will help it to establish an after-school study hub, which will provide young people who may be facing difficulties with internet access and digital resources at home with the facilities to help prevent them being left behind or regressing due to a lack of access. These sessions will run twice a week for 12 weeks.

The Disability Resource Centre (DRC) is a charity run by disabled people, for disabled people, which provides a holistic approach, empowering disabled people across the West Midlands to live independent and fulfilling lives. Each year DRC supports nearly 5,000 people through the following services: information, advice, and advocacy; debt and welfare benefits advice; employment training and volunteering support; health and wellbeing activities; personal skills development; and social, leisure and sporting activities.

Many of the DRC's services in communities and in its centre had to be put on hold in March, to protect the health and safety of its clients, staff and volunteers. At the same time, the needs of

clients are greater than ever, and the impact of the digital divide has been magnified as services have moved online. Our grant will enable DRC to purchase 14 tablets which will be loaned out - free of charge - to clients to support and enrich their digital journey and allow clients to access services, including employment services.

Whilst the plan is for the tablets to initially be a short-term loan, DRC intends to empower participants to see and value the benefits of being digitally included, plus - as part of the overall holistic support - encourage income maximisation through online methods (price comparisons, online discounts etc.). The aim is that beneficiaries will be in a position to purchase their own equipment in time, and that the devices can benefit another recipient.

The plan is that over the next 12 months, a minimum of 40 people with a disability or long-term condition will benefit from the following as a result of increased digital access.

The team is also investigating other ways in which we can facilitate the work of the DRC through our expertise.





Plans for 2021

None of us could have predicted the global upheaval in 2020 and it is likely that uncertainty will persist in 2021.

While we know that we may need to adapt in response to these uncertainties, 2020 has underlined the importance of digital access and digital literacy. Remote access to services, education, and the use of IT for basic social interactions have been hugely important. 2020 also showed that the digital divide is more significant than those of us working in technology might have imagined, both in terms of access to technologies as well as having the skills to leverage online services.

Those that were on the wrong side of the digital divide found barriers to basic services increased during the pandemic and access to

education was more difficult for those groups already facing the greatest challenges.

In this context, our focus next year will continue to be helping to reduce and remove barriers that exist in our communities. Many of the initiatives described in this document will continue, with links strengthening with our partners in all our locations.

Without additional support there is the potential for those who are approaching the age at which they enter the workforce to be most significantly impacted in the longer term due to the impacts of Covid-19 at this critical point in their lives. Education, exams and early workforce opportunities have all been impacted because of the pandemic.

In 2021, Version 1 and our Community First teams will help to reduce this negative impact, through our “No One Left Behind” initiative, again aimed at enhancing employability in our communities.

Under this initiative we will:

- Provide Insight Programmes for 18-24 year olds.
- Run an online Work Experience Programme for under-18's, expanding the initiative piloted in 2020 and providing opportunities for up to 40 young people.

- Further connect with the national Covid-19 response networks to connect with our communities and ensure that are giving back in ways that are most needed in our communities.

One of the things that 2020 has demonstrated is that barriers to employment are real and significant for many. The opportunities which many of us may take for granted can be fragile for those who may be disadvantaged, and that Version 1 has both an obligation and an opportunity to make a significant difference in the lives of some of the people in our communities.





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