

Impact Report

2023–2024



STEPUP
MCR

stepupmcr.org



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Foreword

2023–2024 was an exciting year for local giving and organisational growth for Step Up MCR. Thanks to The National Lottery Community Fund, we were able to double our staff team and welcome our fantastic Neighbourhood Connector to the fold in September 2023.

This year, with funding secured until 2026, we dedicated greater resource to our **Community Offer** and engaged new audiences in our work. We delved further into participatory grant making, awarding **£8,000** in grants voted for by the community at our **Step Forward Fund** and held **Dream Big Beswick**, our first community parade. At these events, we brought together over 1,000 local people to celebrate community pride and power (and met some incredible folk along the way!).

Additional resource enabled us to grow our bank of Step Up MCR supported initiatives from 30 to over 80 community-led projects, and establish a monthly **Peer Support Network** that saw 90+ local volunteers flourish in development workshops.

Our trusted and on-going relationship with local partners Manchester Local Care Organisation and MCRactive supported us to award **£17,780 in Community Grants** boosting health and wellbeing in our neighbourhoods. We're proud to have funded brilliant projects like urban mushroom farming with FungALL in Beswick, singing for wellbeing with Hallé Connect in Ancoats, The Yard boxing and fitness sessions in Clayton, and chair-based yoga with The Salvation Army in Openshaw.

We also grew our **Business Giving Profile** and brokered local giving from over 20+ Manchester businesses, leveraging approx. **£19,043** into communities through in-kind donations and Crowdfunder Rewards. We developed our **Giving Back Days** model that looks to work with corporates like Microsoft in 2024–25.

Finally, we're incredibly grateful for the support of Anton Schultz, who stepped down from the Board of Trustees this year. Anton was a pioneer and paved the way for Step Up MCR across five years of service.

Nicole Hope

Step Up MCR Programme Manager



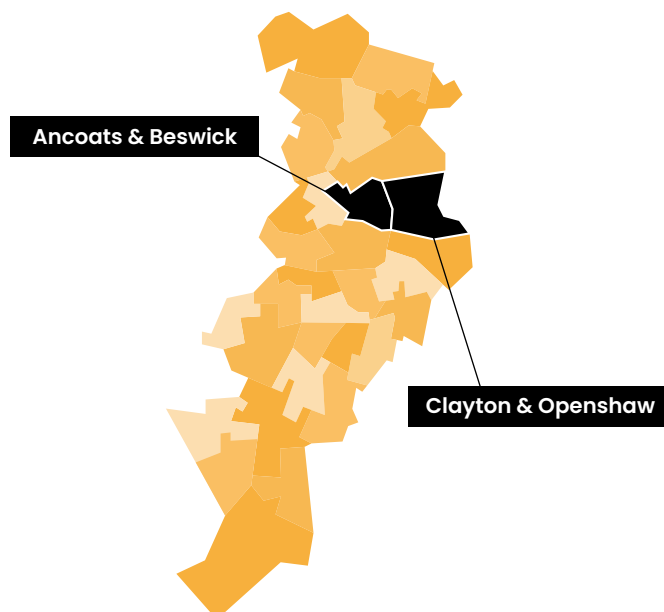
About Step Up MCR

Step Up MCR is a place based giving charity operating in the North Manchester wards Ancoats & Beswick and Clayton & Openshaw.

Through the power of local giving, we grow community-led health and wellbeing projects making a real difference to people's lives, giving everyone the chance to feel happy, healthy and at home in our city.

Our work supports more resilient communities and addresses local inequalities by boosting community activity, raising aspirations and increasing health and wellbeing. We do this by brokering support between community projects and those wanting to give back, and creating spaces for people to discuss and gain support for community-led projects.

In promoting local giving, we recognise that anybody can give back to the community—whether its time, money, resources, skills, knowledge or space.





Our Place Based Giving Story

Step Up MCR was launched in 2019 by social housing provider One Manchester, with seed funding from DCMS' Growing Place Based Giving programme.

The programme aimed to 'foster local philanthropy, increase investment in local communities, and support the development of local places' by 'bringing together residents, philanthropists, corporate donors, public sector organisations, and civil society organisations to raise money and address local priorities'.

Step Up MCR was developed as a collaborative place partnership designed to address the root cause of inequalities at a hyper-local level across our two Manchester neighbourhoods. Ancoats & Beswick and Clayton & Openshaw were identified as having a significant number of health and employment inequalities and an underdeveloped Voluntary and Community Sector, set against vast redevelopment that would bring investment for communities into the area.

Our place based giving partnership was created to act as a broker for local investment, while growing community-led health and wellbeing initiatives that could reach into the heart of neighbourhoods.

Our partnership includes ongoing relationships with One Manchester, Manchester Local Care Organisation, MCRactive, Manchester City Council, Mosscafe St. Vincent's and Great Places.

These trusted ties have supported the charity to work with an extraordinary number of residents to boost health and wellbeing in communities since 2019, creating greater opportunities for people to give back where they live and work.

What We Do

LOCAL GIVING

Through the power of local giving, we grow community health and wellbeing projects making a real difference to people's lives so that everybody feels happy, healthy and at home in our city.

SHIFT POWER

We create opportunities for people living and working in our neighbourhoods to get involved in local decision-making, helping to decide how funding is spent.

GROW IDEAS

Our aim is to build more sustainable and resilient community organisations by making the most of the people and resources in our places.



In The Last Year

LOCAL GIVING

We leveraged £19,043 into the community through two local giving campaigns. We Crowdfunded over £5k and grew our business giving profile to work with 20+ businesses.

GROW IDEAS

We held two large scale community engagement events, and recruited our Neighbourhood Connector to more than double the number of community-led projects we support.

SHIFT POWER

We established our Step Forward Fund, giving residents the opportunity to step forward to pitch, vote and make a difference. We made 10 grants to community-led initiatives.

Our Year in Numbers

100%

Would recommend
Step Up MCR to a friend

90+

Attendees for Peer Support Network
and development workshops in 2024

95%

Rate our support
as Excellent

300

300 People attended our Step
Forward Fund event

500+

People attended our Dream
Big Beswick community parade

11,300

Newspapers delivered to homes,
businesses and community venues

10

Grants made to community-led health
and wellbeing initiatives

Our Impact to Date

BETWEEN 2020–2024:

£145k+

Leveraged into community projects through four Crowdfunder campaigns

80+

Community groups or residents supported to grow health and wellbeing projects

31

Grants awarded to community projects

£102k+

Invested in hyper-local community grants



Our Community Offer



CONNECTIONS

We connect people to local businesses and partners to get their ideas off the ground. Our supporters may be able to give their time, money, resources, space, or expertise to develop the idea.

ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES

We support with capacity building, mentoring, coaching, and training.

FUNDRAISING SUPPORT

Through our Crowdfunder hosting page, we support community fundraising drives and match to corporate sponsors. We also provide grants from our Communities Fund, signpost to other funders, and link into bid writers.

TAILORED CASE WORK

We meet groups at their starting point- whether it's a brand new resident idea, or an organisation looking for the next step up. Our Peer Support Network connects over 40 local residents, community groups and their volunteers.

PROMOTION

We shout out about community-led projects through our quarterly community newspaper, website, e-bulletins and events. Our printed tabloid newspaper reaches 11,300 households, businesses and community venues.

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Place Based Giving in Practice



In October 2023, Step Up MCR salvaged hundreds of items of office furniture from a business refurbishment project. Working alongside Go Green Managed Services (GGMS), we supported 18 North Manchester community organisations with free donations that otherwise would have ended up in landfill. The 40ft lorry full of furniture contained approx. £6,280 worth of furniture that gained a second lease of life at new homes in the community.

GGMS is a team of sustainable workplace solution specialists which supports the shift from a linear to a circular economy. It helps businesses to manage workplace projects with clarity and efficiency with economic, social and ecological benefits. GGMS has corporate social responsibility at its core. It supports its clients to become more socially accountable – to themselves, their stakeholders and to the public by proving that it is possible to benefit society whilst also boosting their brands. Maintaining a zero to landfill position since 2010, GGMS is highly vested in reducing, tracking and reporting on carbon emissions. We're grateful to work with partners that put people and the planet at the heart of their mission.

Groups we supported:

Across Ummah CIC

Positive Media Company

Family Unit Trust

Rainbow Surprise

Manchester Deaf Centre

Manchester Settlement

Manchester Jewish Museum

The Beacon Centre

The Resonance Centre

Max Trax

Family Healing Days

Sickle Cell Care

North Manchester
Community Partnership

Macmillan

Equal Education Chances

Malawi Heritage UK

North Manchester
Community Kindness

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Community Pride at Dream Big Beswick



Our first community parade, Dream Big Beswick in July 2023 was a colourful and jam packed event showcasing the very best that Beswick has to offer.

Teaming up with the brilliant Handmade Productions, The East Manchester Academy and 20 local partners, we hosted a magical day of arts, creativity and fun- all in celebration of Beswick!

In the build up to the event, we commissioned Handmade Productions to host community-making workshops to design and create the parade materials, including costumes, props and headpieces. We facilitated both community and school workshops to include anyone who wanted to take part. The theme of the event was dreaming big, so the parade included giant clouds, birds, flowers, unicorns on stilts, and a giant papier-mâché sun!

The day brought together 16 Step Up MCR community projects to hold stalls and showcase a wide variety of activities. The day included live DJs, spray painting with artist Oskar with K, free food from Manchester Urban Growers, puppetry and laughter yoga from Serious Laughter, growing, planting and making, dance, drumming and fitness.

We're incredibly proud to have pulled off the event, seeing over 500 people there on the day.

2023–2024 Community Grants

Hallé

£2,500

FungALL

£2,000

The Yard
Boxing & Fitness

£2,000

Beswick
CFC

£2,000

The Salvation Army
Openshaw

£1,000

Directions
for Men

£2,000

Ceebee Gold
Foundation

£1,960

Ancoats
Run Club

£2,000

Many Hands
Craft Collective

£120

Newleaf
Foundation

£3,280

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Community Power & The Step Forward Fund



At Step Up MCR, we believe that communities should have a voice in local decision-making and leading activities in their neighbourhoods.

That is why we created the Step Forward Fund, giving neighbours a chance to Step Forward to pitch, Step Forward to vote, and Step Forward to take action in the community.

On 20th December 2023, we teamed up with Halle St. Peter's to hold a magical celebration of community power with the launch of our Step Forward Fund.

In partnership with Manchester Local Care Organisation and MCRactive, we created a funding pot of £8,000 for community health and wellbeing projects in Ancoats & Beswick and Clayton & Openshaw.

We shortlisted eight community groups to pitch for £2,000 and shifted power to our local communities to decide on how funding would be spent.

The event took place at Christmas time at the Hallé St. Peter's in Ancoats. We were delighted to be joined by around 300 people, with performances from the Halle's Community Choir and Youth Choir, as well as from local British Sign Language duo, Ella & Keira. We were also joined by Santa Claus himself!

Our eight groups pitched for support for a huge range of exciting local activities, including a community mushrooming initiative, arts, yoga, boxing, football, men's talking groups, and more!

After the community votes, the groups funded were:

- Beswick Community Football Club
- Ancoats Run Club
- Directions for Men
- The Yard Boxing & Fitness & The Beacon Centre

We also saw pitches from Ancoats Visual Arts, Ceebee Gold Foundation, Chatty Craft and FungALL CIC. We will continue supporting these groups through our Community Offer.

We are also looking at new opportunities to shift power to local communities this year and beyond!

Words From Our Community



Step Up MCR is a fantastic organisation that provides help and support to small local grassroots community groups in many different forms. The nature of the support is tailored to the needs of each individual project.

This is a much-needed service in our community and has made a huge difference to the neighbourhood offer. We have benefited from training and advice, including safeguarding training, bid writing workshops, first aid training and so much more, which have helped develop our organisation and increase the chance of being successful when applying for funding.

Nicole and Ciara have been extremely supportive, and have helped to bring together local partnership organisations, to advise our trustees on strategies to make the organisation more sustainable. We are grateful to receive ongoing funding, support and connections that enable The Beacon Centre to grow."

Kay- The Beacon Centre



We have received great support from an enthusiastic, passionate and knowledgeable team at Step Up MCR. Their understanding of the needs of a group like ours and their ability to help us make connections within the community has been brilliant."

Brian- Ancoats Visual Arts



"Step Up MCR gave me the tools and advice to start my dream and turn it into a very successful CIC. Without the team we most definitely would not be where we are today. They are a crucial piece of mine and so many other grassroot organisations' stories."

Kerrie- Max Trax CIC

What We've Learnt



CROWDFUNDER

Step Up MCR's latest Crowdfunder campaign in December 2023 presented significant challenges for the organisation, but was also instrumental to our learning.

We host Crowdfunder campaigns to provide support and a platform to smaller groups, but we've learnt to recognise that we too are a small organisation with a high output.

Running Crowdfunder campaigns can swallow up capacity, so we need to be clearer about what we need from the projects we support, or host smaller scale campaigns that have a higher success rate in achieving match funding from Crowdfunder Extra+ funding bodies.

Although we have hosted three successful Crowdfunders for fledgling organisations before this one, each campaign was backed by a much larger community of supporters. From this we've learnt to gather more information from prospective groups on the size of their crowd and

identify roles for volunteers throughout. With this there must also be contingencies and people able to step in and help out at each campaign milestone. Ultimately, we've learnt that so much of the work with Crowdfunding needs to happen well before a campaign is launched, and with that, having a plan with the project that sets out from the get-go what we need from them.

FUNDING & COMMUNITY OFFER

Being clearer on what we can offer groups also feeds into our funding and Community Offer. Being so short on capacity, our small team needs to prioritise support, which is what led to the creation of the Peer Support Network, to enable groups to help each other on their journey. We've also learnt our Community Offer needs to be more available to groups and have sought funding to produce a welcome pack and Step Up Hub.

What's Next?

Step Up MCR's work is led by what our community tell us they need, which is then backed by our strategy to support healthier, happier and more connected communities through power shifting and local giving.

To achieve our aims, we will focus on the following elements of work:

- Develop more organisational resilience by growing our business giving mechanisms
- Grow our model to reach more North Manchester communities
- Support more residents to have a say on how local decisions are made through participatory grant making models
- Create a local Endowment Fund.

Contact Us

To speak to the Step Up MCR team, contact hello@stepupmcr.org or call Nicole Hope on **07879 531649**