



SUFFOLK
Community
Foundation



Women & Girl's Fund Impact Report

Grants Awarded: May 2022 – May 2025



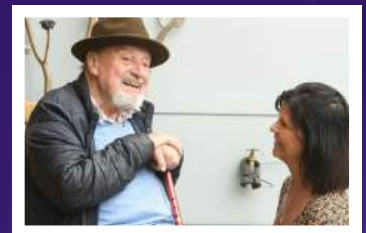
Making a Difference, One Story at a Time

Established in 2005, Suffolk Community Foundation has become, with the generous philanthropy of so many, the largest independent grantmaker in the county.

We encourage and work with those who can give back to Suffolk, whether they are businesses, the public sector, families or individuals. With the funds under our care and together with other donors, we encourage charitable organisations and community groups to apply for grants.

As a large rural county, Suffolk has pockets of inequality and significant deprivation. Our aim is to improve the quality of life in Suffolk, to support those in difficulty and to tackle a wide range of issues. These could include homelessness, mental wellbeing, domestic abuse, digital exclusion or loneliness and isolation.

suffolkecf.org.uk



TOGETHER WE SUPPORT

Abbeycroft Leisure,
The Hygiene Bank
& The Pear Tree Fund

In 2023/24 our partnerships with private donors, local businesses, public sector and independent trusts and foundations have delivered

£3.4m

in grant funding to address need in Suffolk. THANK YOU!

Fund Overview

Since May 2022, the Women & Girl's Fund has awarded 36 different organisations a total of 54 grants. In this period the grants totalled £58,718. The impact of the some of the work of the varied organisations working with women and girls you have funded in Suffolk over the last 3 years is illustrated below.

On behalf of all these organisations and those they support, thank you for your generosity.



Funded Projects

Suffolk Organisation	Date	Amount	Primary Beneficiary	Project Summary
29th Ipswich (All Hallows) Guide Unit	May 2022	£1,000	Children and Young People	Supporting the 29th Ipswich Guide Unit with new camping and activity equipment. <i>Gainsborough, Ipswich</i>
Future Female Society	May 2022	£1,000	Women	Supporting the 9-5 Mentoring Project. <i>Ipswich</i>
Future Inclusions Organisation	May 2022	£880	Black, Asian and minority ethnic	Supporting the Newmarket Women's Project. <i>Newmarket</i>
Home-Start Mid & West Suffolk	May 2022	£994	Families/Parents /Lone parents	Supporting the Young Women's Project. <i>West Suffolk</i>
Lowestoft and Waveney Breastfeeding Support	May 2022	£1,000	Families/Parents /Lone parents	Supporting the expansion of the Suffolk Breastfeeding Cafes. <i>Lowestoft & Waveney</i>

Funded Projects

Suffolk Organisation	Date	Amount	Primary Beneficiary	Project Summary
Suffolk Libraries	May 2022	£1,000	Women	Supporting the Pride & Periods Project in Suffolk libraries. <i>Ipswich</i>
Suffolk Rape Crisis	May 2022	£1,000	Women	Supporting the Suffolk Rape Crisis Counselling Service. <i>Suffolk</i>
The Befriending Scheme	May 2022	£1,000	People with mental health issues	Supporting a Women's Mindful Mondays Project. <i>Sudbury and surrounding areas</i>
The Mix Stowmarket	May 2022	£975	Children and Young People	Supporting the Diadem Project for young women. <i>Mid Suffolk (Stowmarket and Needham Market)</i>
Victorious Living	May 2022	£1,000	Children and Young People	Supporting the #foryou group. <i>Lowestoft</i>

Funded Projects

Suffolk Organisation	Date	Amount	Primary Beneficiary	Project Summary
Volunteering Matters	May 2022	£1,000	Women	WASSUP (Women Against Sexual exploitation and violence Speak UP). <i>Ipswich</i>
TOTAL		£10,849		
Bury Drop In	Feb 2023	£2,000	Homeless people	Supporting 'Coffee and Chat' group drop in sessions. <i>Bury St Edmunds</i>
Girl Guiding North West Suffolk Division	Feb 2023	£900	Children and Young People	Guide Summer Camp. <i>Mildenhall, Bury St Edmunds and Ixworth</i>
Kernos Centre	Feb 2023	£1,500	Women	Safeguarding and empowering females counselling sessions. <i>Sudbury, Cornard and surrounding villages</i>

Funded Projects

Suffolk Organisation	Date	Amount	Primary Beneficiary	Project Summary
Let's Talk Reading	Feb 2023	£1,000	Children and Young People	PEEP parents and babies groups. <i>Whitehouse and Chantry, Ipswich</i>
Lighthouse Women's Aid	Feb 2023	£1,200	Victims of crime/violence/abuse	Funding for courses. <i>Suffolk</i>
Ormiston Families	Feb 2023	£1,000	Women	YouCanBe Suffolk. <i>Ipswich and Lowestoft</i>
Rock Paper Scissors Arts CIC	Feb 2023	£1,000	Women	Therapeutic Arts Workshops for users of Lighthouse Women's Aid Refuge and Suffolk Rape Crisis. <i>Ipswich</i>
Suffolk Mind	Feb 2023	£1,000	Women	Young Women's Anxiety Management Support Project. <i>Suffolk</i>

Funded Projects

Suffolk Organisation	Date	Amount	Primary Beneficiary	Project Summary
TOPCATS	Feb 2023	£960	People with multiple disabilities	Pamper Project. Lowestoft
The Hal Company	Feb 2023	£3,500	Women	To support the Writing for Performance workshops for women. <i>Suffolk</i>
TOTAL		£14,060		
29th Ipswich Guides	March 2024	£1,000	People living in poverty	29th Ipswich Guides Hautbois Fest Division camp. <i>Gainsborough Estate, Ipswich</i>
Alumah CIO	March 2024	£1,000	Victims of crime/violence/abuse	Towards the 'Creative Group' project. <i>Brandon</i>

Funded Projects

Suffolk Organisation	Date	Amount	Primary Beneficiary	Project Summary
Asperger East Anglia	March 2024	£1,000	Women	Supporting the Women's Group. <i>Beccles, and c. 20 mile radius</i>
Cavendish District Guiding	March 2024	£1,000	People living in poverty	Hautbois Fest. <i>Ipswich IP3 - Gainsborough and Nacton/Priory wards</i>
Eden's Project	March 2024	£975	Children and Young People	Girl Talk. <i>Sudbury and surrounding villages</i>
Families Together Suffolk	March 2024	£1,000	Families/Parents/ Lone parents	Supporting Young Parents. <i>Bury St Edmunds</i>
Home-Start in Suffolk	March 2024	£990	Families/Parents /Lone parents	Increasing attachment and bonding capacity. <i>Lowestoft</i>

Funded Projects

Suffolk Organisation	Date	Amount	Primary Beneficiary	Project Summary
LEAPS Suffolk	March 2024	£1,000	People with learning difficulties	Out, Not In! <i>Ipswich</i>
Lighthouse Women's Aid	March 2024	£1,000	Victims of crime/violence/abuse	Centre Triage staff role. <i>Suffolk</i>
Lofty Heights CIC	March 2024	£1,000	Children and Young People	Girls Academy. <i>Ipswich</i>
Lowestoft and Waveney Breastfeeding Support	March 2024	£1,000	Families/Parents /Lone parents	Suffolk Café Support. <i>Lowestoft</i>
Ormiston Families	March 2024	£1,000	<i>Ipswich</i>	Mpower. <i>Ipswich</i>
REACH Community Projects	March 2024	£1,000	People living in poverty	Cookery classes for women. <i>Haverhill</i>

Funded Projects

Suffolk Organisation	Date	Amount	Primary Beneficiary	Project Summary
Rock Paper Scissors Arts CIC	March 2024	£982	Women	Creative Practice for Wellbeing. <i>Ipswich</i>
Suffolk Rape Crisis	March 2024	£1,000	Women	Suffolk Rape Counselling Service. <i>Suffolk</i>
Voices for Gainsborough Community Library	March 2024	£1,000	Children and Young People	Gainsborough Girls Group trip to London. <i>Gainsborough, Ipswich</i>
TOTAL		£15,947		
29th Ipswich Guides	March 2025	£1,500	Children and Young People	Towards the Guides attending summer camp and an adventure day. <i>Gainsborough, Ipswich</i>
Breast Friends	March 2025	£1,000	People in care or suffering serious illness	To provide 50 surgery and menopause care kits for women diagnosed with breast cancer. <i>Suffolk</i>

Funded Projects

Suffolk Organisation	Date	Amount	Primary Beneficiary	Project Summary
Compassion	March 2025	£1,000	Children and Young People	Towards an Escape the Trap programme delivered at local schools. <i>Sudbury</i>
Families Together Suffolk	March 2025	£1,000	Families/Parents & Lone parents	Towards continuing to support vulnerable, young mums aged 16-25 and their children. <i>Bury St Edmunds</i>
Future Female Society CIC	March 2025	£1,000	Women	To run Woman 2 Woman Radio for refugee women. <i>Westgate and Gipping Ward</i>
Great Barton Free Church (Ltd)	March 2025	£1,000	Families/Parents & Lone parents	Breastfeeding Support. <i>Bury St Edmunds</i>
Home-Start in Suffolk	March 2025	£1,000	Families/Parents & Lone parents	To deliver the Mums In Mind programme. <i>Waveney</i>

Funded Projects

Suffolk Organisation	Date	Amount	Primary Beneficiary	Project Summary
Kernos Centre	March 2025	£1,000	Victims of crime/violence/abuse	To provide 40 counselling sessions to women and girls in need. <i>Sudbury and surrounding villages</i>
Let's Talk Reading	March 2025	£1,000	Children and Young People	Towards continuing their parent and baby sessions. <i>Whitton, Whitehouse, Chantry, Gainsborough</i>
Level Two Youth Project	March 2025	£1,362	Children and Young People	To deliver music, dance and creative arts sessions to girls aged 11 - 16 years. <i>Felixstowe</i>
Lighthouse Women's Aid	March 2025	£1,000	Children and Young People	To deliver health relationship sessions at Crucial Crew in Ipswich. <i>Ipswich</i>

Funded Projects

Suffolk Organisation	Date	Amount	Primary Beneficiary	Project Summary
Little Lifts	March 2025	£1,000	Women	To provide 22 Little Lifts radiotherapy boxes for women at Ipswich Hospital. <i>Ipswich</i>
REACH Community Projects	March 2025	£1,000	Women	Towards continuing their cookery courses. <i>Haverhill</i>
Suffolk Mind	March 2025	£1,000	Refugees/ asylum seekers & immigrant	Counselling for female Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Suffolk. <i>Ipswich</i>
Suffolk Refugee Support	March 2025	£1,000	Refugees/ asylum seekers & immigrants	Supporting the Refugee Sewing Group. <i>Ipswich</i>
The Befriending Scheme	March 2025	£1,000	People with mental health issues	Towards their Mindful Mondays group. <i>Sudbury and Great Cornard</i>

Funded Projects

Suffolk Organisation	Date	Amount	Primary Beneficiary	Project Summary
Voices for Gainsborough Community Library	March 2025	£1,000	Children and Young People	Towards their weekly Girls Group. <i>Gainsborough estate, Ipswich</i>
TOTAL		£17,862		
GRAND TOTAL (since May 2022)		£58,718		

Case Studies

Your funding has enabled many new and existing activities to flourish in Suffolk to the benefit of women and girls. You have supported some hard hitting organisations working to support very vulnerable people at extremely difficult times in their lives – victims of sexual and domestic abuse, women who were facing life changing physical or mental illness, refugees and young people finding their way in new and unfamiliar lives. You have also supported organisations working with other vulnerable female groups – homeless, young families and unconfident new mothers, those from different cultures and people who have their lives reshaped by trauma. These organisations have helped people take significant strides forward by finding positive coping mechanisms, social interactions and new ways to get involved in their community.

You have also enabled organisations to give girls opportunities to find new interests, make new friends, learn from strong role models and gain a sense of belonging and their place in the world. Many of these felt they could not be included or could not afford to join in, have had fun, learned new skills, or just enjoyed the many benefits of being included as part of a group.

The impact of your funding is clear; women and girls, many of whom were struggling with aspects of their lives have flourished and grown in confidence and resilience, learning to find positive ways forward, sometimes in the most challenging of situations. The organisations you have supported have done critical work in support of women and girls, and here are a few stories highlighting the impact of their activities, along with quotes from the users of their services.

On behalf of all these organisations and those they support, thank you for your generosity.

Case Studies continued

Light House Women's Aid

A lady called in, very distressed about the abuse she was experiencing. Her partner was out and she only had a short window to speak to us. Our worker Zena* checked how safe she was to speak to us – she said that he had gone out for a work meeting and would be gone two hours, but before he left he said that she shouldn't leave the home. After we discussed safety advice with her, she told Zena how frightened she was in the relationship, he was very controlling and made threats to kill as "A joke". She was worried about what he would do next. As the lady was distressed, Zena spoke to her about getting her help and that we would look at doing this immediately. Rather than put the phone down whilst an appointment was being organised Zena kept the lady talking as she was concerned that she would not answer a call back as she was extremely frightened.

The lady attended her advice appointment and was assessed as high risk from abuse and referred to a specialist team for support. At a later time she expressed thanks at how calm her first call had been with us and without this approach she wouldn't have felt able to continue with the call and get the support that she needed.

The Hal Company

Katie* had suffered at the age of 11 a sexual attack from her older brother. At the time, the family didn't want it spoken about and she had little support from school. As the years have gone by it has completely dominated her life so she chose to write about it in a 'Looking Backwards Moving Forwards' session. She also chose to invite her parents to the reading as a way of sharing how she felt. (The young woman was ably supported by safe guarding) The result has been that she feels she can draw a line under it and also her parents felt that she was brave and now fully understand what she went through. It has united not broken the family.

Case Studies continued

The Mix

Leonie* was in an abusive relationship which left her struggling with overwhelming negative feelings, poor mental health, reduced self-esteem and a history of self-harm and significant mood swings. She was only able to attend half days at school.

Talking to her, it became clear that Leonie was at acute risk – she had run away from home in the middle of the night without a phone or money in a bid to get as far away from her partner as possible. During the school holidays, things escalated and the decision was made by the family to take Leonie out of school and out of county as they were fearful for her life due to the abusive relationship leading to an absolute break down in her mental health. We worked to support Leonie and her family, referring her to a social worker and meeting her regularly.

With this support around her, Leonie felt brave enough and strong enough to successfully and safely leave the relationship for a final time. Leonie's Mum said that the work we did was the 'best thing' that could have happened for Leonie and that she felt for the first time like people were on her side and fighting their corner – "it is amazing to know how much other people care about Leonie".

Leonie has now returned back to school full time "I feel like a weight has been lifted" and is much more confident, courageous and happy now that she has escaped his abuse. She is much happier and describes herself as back to the person she used to be, with her life back. Further to this, Leonie has now applied for a place at college despite only a month ago feeling like there was no hope for her future.

Case Studies continued

Suffolk Rape Crisis

"I have my confidence back which is so important. I can look in the mirror and feel proud of the person I see."

Ormiston Families

32-year-old Anne* reached out to Mpower four years ago after escaping an abusive relationship that had led to the adoption of her two young children. After returning to live with her father, their relationship broke down, leaving her homeless and sofa surfing. She had struggled with drugs and alcohol but was beginning to make positive changes when she self-referred to Mpower.

One of our first steps was helping Anne secure stable housing. She moved into supported accommodation through the Ipswich Housing Action Group (Ihag). During the COVID-19 lockdown, her mental health suffered, and she was diagnosed with psychosis. Despite the challenges of remote support, we worked closely with mental health services to ensure she received the help she needed. Anne completed the Freedom Programme, learning about healthy relationships, although she faced difficulties when she rekindled her relationship with her children's father. We explored how her childhood experiences of domestic violence affected her choices and helped her approach relationships with more honesty and awareness. Throughout her time with Mpower, Anne also focused on her health. She regularly attended appointments to manage her contraception, even during lockdown when she faced health challenges, including a blood clot. She also enrolled in a care course, which she successfully completed despite undiagnosed learning difficulties.

After two years, Anne moved into her own flat. Her mental health has improved, and she now manages her psychosis with medication. While her relationship remains complicated, she has gained insight and is making healthier decisions. Anne reflects on her past, saying, "I can understand why my children were taken from me" and it has motivated me to create a better future, stating, "I want to improve things so that one day my children can be proud of me." Anne's journey has been challenging, but with Mpower's support, she has rebuilt her life, becoming more resilient and optimistic about the future.

Case Studies continued

Victorious Living

"One of the young woman that attended the sessions had been regularly self-harming, running away and attempting suicide. This was a weekly occurrence however during the time she attended the sessions, she has not self-harmed or attempted suicide once. She explained to me that she felt valued and heard and that the topics we discussed helped her to be more grounded and deal with situations." Victorious Living staff

Lofty Heights

Kai*, an 18-year-old diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder, struggles with anxiety, depression, and has significant learning needs. She is also undergoing assessments for ADHD and Autism. She hadn't engaged in anything for some time when she attended a group session with her half-sister, who provided essential initial support. Although Kai sometimes felt frustrated and bored with more challenging activities, she remained in the group. When she was informed in advance about plans and expectations, she demonstrated her ability to handle situations, which allowed her to gain a lot from her volunteering experience at St. Peter's Church top-up shop. Despite her anxiety about the session, she enjoyed the task of refilling baskets and remained focused throughout. In her feedback, she mentioned that this was her favourite Girls Squad session and expressed an interest in returning to volunteer with support.

After completing the Girls Squad Academy, Kai participated in an Animal Care Academy, where she formed a friendship with another group member and continued to meet with the tutor to discuss her future steps. She has gained confidence and recognized that her previous drinking habits and peer group negatively affected her life. As a result, she now spends minimal time with those people and has largely stopped drinking.

Case Studies continued

Asperger EA

"I enjoyed the meeting today thank you for letting Beth* come along with me, I know I don't look like I am struggling but meeting new people is a very daunting prospect and I wouldn't have got over my front doorstep if I had to attend on my own. Now I have met some of the other girls I am pleased I pushed myself to come along they were all friendly and supportive." Jill*

Raye* is a 27-year-old woman, diagnosed with autism approximately three years ago. She lives at home with her mum and dad, unable to leave her house unless she is with them. She is currently unemployed but looking for work, although because of her social anxiety this would need to be a job she can do from home. Raye has no friends and because of her inability to read facial expressions, body language and vocal intonation, she feels she will find it very difficult to make friends. This means that until she joined the Women's Group online, her social world was limited to her parents, younger brother and her brother's girlfriend.

We initially saw Raye for one-to-one support as she didn't feel able to join the group straight away, sometimes attending with her father as her anxiety meant she didn't feel confident to attend alone. Gradually she has built up the confidence to join the group – initially her camera and microphone were off, just listening, but after the third session she contributed to the discussions if encouraged to do so. Raye continues to have one-to-one and group support and during these sessions she has expressed a desire to make friends but says she needs help to work out if people like her. Two members of the Women's Group have offered to give her their email addresses as they would like to be friends with her. She knows this and is thinking about contacting them. This would enable Raye to start to widen her social circle; something she would not have been able to do before.

Case Studies continued

29th Ipswich Guides

Lucy* was relatively new to Guides and had attended our local camp in June, where she became very homesick. She signed up to attend Hautbois Fest but was very anxious about leaving home for three nights. She was quite distressed when we boarded the coach ready to leave, but was determined to attend. However, she took part in all activities on offer and really made the most of the weekend. When she became upset in the evenings she called mum for a little reassurance and was able to calm herself down enough to enjoy the activities.

Lucy shared a tent with 5 other Guides and they really supported each other and built new friendships which have continued throughout weekly Guide meetings. Lucy has said that although she gets homesick, Guides makes her feel safe and gives her a sense of belonging and that she will continue to fight her fears to make the most of all the opportunities Girlguiding has to offer her. She said that Hautbois Fest was the first time she'd stayed that far from home without her family and the first time she'd stayed away for three nights. "It was the most amazing experience I've ever had and I'd love to go again."



Case Studies continued

Home Start in Suffolk

Sally* was referred to Home-Start when she was 17 weeks pregnant. She had recently been made redundant, was living with her partner's parents due to ongoing renovations in their own home, and was struggling financially. These challenges, combined with wider family health issues, significantly impacted her mental health and left her feeling isolated.

As Sally approached her due date, I reached out to her midwife to share information about our Mums in Mind group. Sally joined the group with her 4-week-old baby. Initially, she was very reserved, only speaking when directly addressed. However, as the sessions progressed her confidence grew. By the end of the programme, Sally was actively participating in discussions, sharing tools she had developed to manage her anxiety, and offering support to other mothers in the group. The change in Sally's demeanour was striking. She initially entered the sessions with her head down and an air of quiet despondency, but began leaving with her head held high and a smile on her face. The group provided her with a safe, supportive space to connect with others and break the cycle of isolation she had experienced. Sally formed close bonds with three other mothers in the group. They regularly messaged each other and arranged to meet at other local groups, creating a supportive network that extended beyond the programme.

At the end of the sessions, Sally expressed how valuable the group had been for her well-being, highlighting how getting out of the house and meeting others made her feel less isolated and more positive about her journey into motherhood. The feedback revealed that meaningful relationships had developed, with participants staying in touch outside the sessions. Sally's story demonstrates the impact of Mums in Mind in providing a lifeline of support to mothers in the Lowestoft area, helping them navigate early parenthood, build confidence, and foster lasting relationships.

Case Studies continued

Lowestoft and Waveney Breastfeeding Support (LWBS)

"I started going to the breastfeeding cafe while I was 8 months pregnant to get some understanding on how to collect colostrum and to meet some people that I could relate to. When my boy was born I was very blessed that he latched well but I needed some help with how to get myself comfortable while he was feeding, and feeling confident that I was good enough! I emailed and someone from the team came out to visit us on a Sunday morning, she was absolutely amazing and filled me with confidence in myself as a mama! Then I attended the cafe where one of the Volunteers showed me how to wrap my boy to my chest... this changed my Motherhood experience (as a single mum) to be hands free was completely out of this world and I felt so connected to my boy! We attended a cafe when the baby wearing session was on, and we got supported on how to wear and feed baby at the same time... my life changed completely (I cried). That was the moment I realised I would like to support other mums in their Journey of Motherhood! I have now signed up to be trained to support mums, dads and family in baby wearing! As I believe it does have such a big Impact on connections with our babies and little ones. I attend the cafe every week to get support from volunteers and mums, just to be in a room with like-minded women it's a game changer!" Diane*

Case Studies continued

Reach

Sue* lives alone and feels very anxious when meeting different people. She hasn't done any cooking since school. Instead, she eats fast food or microwave meals. She has long-term health problems and has not worked for some time.

Sue attended for the social interaction and reported that she felt safe and able to be herself and said that cooking was a revelation to her! She enjoyed it so much and continues to use the skills she learnt at home. Also her mental health has improved since attending. "It was amazing to understand with the instructions. Step by step. Everyone is so welcoming and kind. I have come to these sessions to come out of my comfort zone and learn cheaper meals. I applied because I wanted to learn cooking on a budget because I've been struggling budgeting on food shopping. How to buy cheap ingredients but still have lovely meals. I spend too much money. Thank you so much. It's been amazing. I have learnt so much."



*all names have been changed to protect identities.

Thankyous

*We really appreciate your support which enables us to offer such important opportunities. **Voices for Gainsborough Community Library***

*We very much appreciated you supporting us with this grant and being able to see the potential of running such a group - helping a group of vulnerable young women to see their potential. **Lofty Heights***

*A massive thankyou for your continued support - **LEAPS***

*Thank you - we were delighted to receive £1,000 from the Women and Girls' Fund during 2024 -25 and we are always grateful for the support to enable us to offer our support to vulnerable young families across Suffolk. **Families Together***

*Thank you for this much needed funding to target specifically the needs of females. **Eden's project***

*Thank you so much for this funding. We really appreciate your support. It makes such a huge difference to our young leaders, who might not have these opportunities without your help. **Cavendish District Guiding***

*We are very grateful for the support of the Women & Girl's Fund and the Suffolk Community Foundation. You are an incredibly trusted funder. Thank you. **Volunteering Matters***



Photo: Volunteering Matters



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