

Supporting people in a time of change

Our strategy
2018-2023



Contents

Valuing our past	03
Who we are	06
Who we help	07
Our vision and our mission	08
Our values	09
Responding to change	10
Looking to the future	12
What we want to achieve	14
Our strategic aims	15
How we will do this	16
Thank you	19

Valuing our past

Change is a constant feature of our world – driving us to continually take stock and think about how best to support people. But what has never changed is why we exist, as set out in the words of our founder, Richard Glasspool.



“ When considering applications the chief idea of the Trust was always borne in mind, i.e. that help should be given to people who, for various reasons, could not be adequately helped by other societies and who having met hard times could, with our help and by means of their own endeavours, come through their temporary difficulties and then continue independently.”

Richard Glasspool, 1939

79

years later Richard Glasspool's words still guide our work as we plan for the **next five years.**

“ Our strategic intent is to increase the impact of our activities by increasing the size of our grants budget and finding new ways of enhancing the value of our grants. We will seek opportunities to multiply the impact of individual grants so that beneficiaries (people in temporary need or severe hardship or passing through difficult times) receive a more holistic package of support. ”

August 2013, launch of our 2013-18 Development Strategy

Since 2013 we have:



Increased our annual grants budget
from £1m each year to £1.7m in 2017/18



Grew our total assets
from £32m to £43m



Introduced an online grants application system



Extended our network
of support agencies who submit applications for their clients



Developed a pilot project
working with prisoners to find ways of improving grant outcomes



Developed a pilot with a peer funder
to align our grants for household items with their crisis grants



Published our first Impact Report
and modernised our Annual Report, to build a greater external presence

We now wish to build on the success of this strategy by focusing on more effective ways to help our beneficiaries. This will lead to profound change in how we conduct ourselves and play our role in the service of helping individuals in need.

Who we are

The R L Glasspool Charity Trust was established in 1939 with an endowment of properties and investments from Mr Richard Louveteau Glasspool, a Hertfordshire businessman and philanthropist.

Although Richard was wealthy when he died in 1949 at the age of 65, he never forgot the financial hardship he had experienced as a young man of 19, following the death of his father.

When his income became more than enough to meet his own personal needs, he started donating to charitable causes through existing charities. However, he realised that more of his donated funds could be used for charitable purposes if he established his own charity. So he set up this Trust, whose stated purpose was and still is:

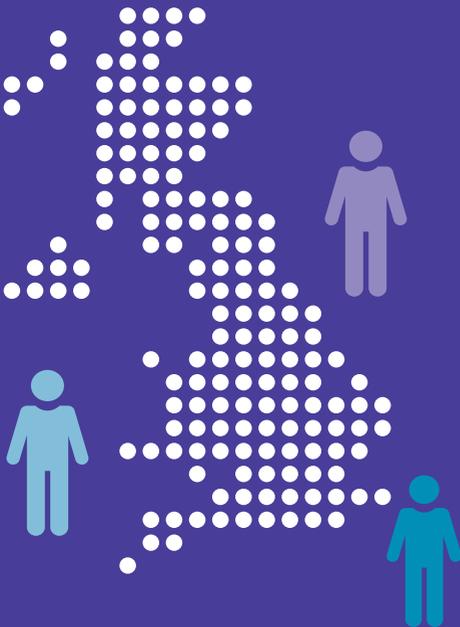
“...the relief of persons who are in need, hardship or distress, or who are sick, convalescent, disabled or infirm.”

Following his example, we are one of the few national charities making grants to individuals with no restriction on beneficiary type. We invite applications from eligible agencies on behalf of individuals. Improving the wellbeing of individuals and families experiencing severe deprivation is our core focus.

Our Founder's original principle was to tailor support to an individual's needs. In future, we intend to strengthen our focus on this principle.

Who we help

Over the next five years we will continue to support UK residents who are in hardship.



We know grants play a vital role in improving the quality of life of people facing difficult times, helping them maintain or increase their independence. We help people change their lives for the better.

Our grant making takes place against a backdrop of change. We cannot predict with any certainty the breadth, pace or impact of this change over the next five years. We can however, confidently expect that many people will experience hardship and a range of challenging circumstances, including poor mental health, domestic abuse physical illness and homelessness. The best solutions to their needs may vary, from one-off material support to longer-term wider, practical, social and emotional help for themselves, their partners and dependants.

Our vision

A society where everyone has the basics they need for a good life.

Our mission

To provide timely, life-enhancing support to people in need; providing short-term support for long-term impact.



Our values



Putting people first

- We are caring and compassionate and treat people fairly.
- We are respectful of the priorities and choices of others.



Leading in our sector

- We are ambitious for ourselves and our sector.



A focus on impact and performance

- We are motivated by providing effective high impact support.
- We are determined to maximise efficiency and timely delivery.



Relationship-centred

- We are collaborative, working with others to achieve more.



Transparent

- We are open, freely sharing our knowledge, skills and experience.
- We are accountable, providing regular updates on our work.



Learning

- We are innovative, seeking new ways to achieve our goals.
- We embrace challenge, so we can adapt and improve our efficiency and effectiveness.

Responding to change



“Poverty in all its guises is not static; it is evolving and therefore organisations need to adapt accordingly. What may have worked fifty or one hundred years ago may not be as effective or indeed the most optimal use of a charity’s resources today.”

Jacinta Belai (Glasspool Strategy Research Project, May 2017)

Demand for our support is constantly evolving, in response to a number of dynamic forces.

The political context in the UK is in a state of flux, particularly during the upheavals created by Brexit.

Global economic forces and trends continue to create social challenges in the UK, often leading to deprivation and hardship for people who are not in a position to manage the consequences of change.

The social environment is also constantly changing. Technological developments often lead to disruptive changes in society.

Indeed, while developments in technology bring great benefits they can also lead to stresses on individuals who cannot take advantage of them, leading to digital deprivation¹.

For example, according to Ofcom figures for 2016, around 20 per cent of UK adults don’t have broadband access at home. However, a significant proportion of services are moving to online access only, including Universal Credit.

Environmental changes often have a direct impact on the health of individuals and families exposed to pollutants. Health problems are often a direct reason why individuals seek support from charities like Glasspool. These environmental changes have a very direct bearing on the evolution of society and are occurring at an increasingly fast pace.

While we can stay alert to these trends, no one is able to predict the shape of future challenges that people will face, or the consequences on individuals who may not be in a position to cope.

This makes it imperative that we develop more flexible and responsive approaches to providing support to people in need. When the context of peoples’ lives is evolving rapidly, it requires in return an ability to respond quickly and flexibly.

1. *The New Poverty*, Armstrong, S. (2017)

Looking to the future



An up-to-date and comprehensive understanding of the needs of people in hardship has been central to developing this strategy. But we faced a challenge: how could we identify the needs of people in hardship when we do not directly engage with them, but instead through third party support organisations?

We tackled this dilemma by:

- Researching existing literature on poverty, welfare reforms and wider social policy.
- Analysing the vast application and beneficiary data we hold.
- Scoping the range of grant and associated support provided by public and third sector organisations.

We found that:

- Society's view of what constitutes deprivation has changed to encompass *social* as well as financial needs.
- Rapid technological developments are redefining basic living requirements; what were once considered 'wants' are now considered 'needs'.
- Local welfare support schemes are closing at a rapid rate; of those that remain, their criteria are either narrowing or moving away from grants to loans.
- Support workers are having to spend more of their time applying to different funders.

We also met groups of frontline support workers who submit applications to us; and invited a number of support organisations to participate in one of our strategic development days.

We aimed to explore the needs facing their clients and ask an essential but basic question: "How could a relatively small amount of support from us maximise the difference for your clients?"

Our key conclusion was that we need to develop a more relationship-focused approach in all that we do; and over time devolve more decision-making authority to our partner agencies. That way, we can cope better with uncertainty caused by the future impact of rapid change.

We will do this by:

- Using our knowledge and experience to replicate the flexibility and person-focused support demonstrated by our Founder, by enabling those we help to have a greater say in how we support them.
- Developing our relationships with frontline agencies, other grant-makers and funders, so we can pool our collective knowledge and resources to increase impact and avoid duplication.

People are affected by deprivation in a wide variety of ways. Therefore our response must be closely aligned with individuals' specific needs.

What we want to achieve

Ambition

TO BE RECOGNISED AS ONE OF THE LEADING UK-WIDE GRANT-MAKING CHARITIES PROVIDING SUPPORT TO INDIVIDUALS IN FINANCIAL NEED WITHOUT RESTRICTION ON BENEFICIARY TYPE.

TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED AS AN EFFECTIVE PARTNER ACROSS THE UK, SUPPORTING THOSE PEOPLE MOST IN NEED AND HELPING THEM CHANGE THEIR LIVES FOR THE BETTER.

We want to put more power into the hands of those actually experiencing the results of disadvantage, whilst still honouring our founding principles and terms.

Our challenge over the next five years is how we best deliver such personalised support, given the large number of people we help (this was around 11,750 in 2017/18). Meeting this challenge is at the centre of our new strategy.

By 2023 we will have:



GOAL 1

Expanded our grant delivery approaches, to greatly improve outcomes for the people we help.



GOAL 2

Grown our grants budget to £2m a year, to enable us to increase our grants support.



GOAL 3

Communicated effectively, to deliver better outcomes for individuals in need.

Our strategic aims



To improve the impact of Glasspool's grants by:

- Developing a new approach to grant-making that shares decision-making with strategic partners.
- Improving delivery of core grants by making these more responsive and flexible.



To sustain and grow Glasspool by:

- Growing the grants budget by managing our endowment and increasing income from other organisations.
- Maintaining the real value of the endowment to ensure we can continue making a difference for future generations.



To develop a communications strategy to:

- Improve communications with all major stakeholders.
- Establish Glasspool as a leading provider of grants to individuals.
- Develop a reputation for compassionate, responsive and highly effective support.
- Build a brand identity that demonstrates our values and effectiveness.

How we will do this

Grants

We conducted an extensive research project to help define the needs of “people in temporary need or severe hardship or passing through difficult times” and described the characteristics of other grant-making charities.

This research resulted in the definition of an updated set of strategic grant-making principles which will inform our future grant-making.

Our strategic grant-making principles

- We support individuals experiencing social and material deprivation.
- We give choice and control to the individuals we support in order to help them be more independent.
- We are agile, creative, flexible and timely.
- We are collaborative in approach and delivery.
- We contribute to achieving positive outcomes for individuals and organisations.
- We are visible and open.

Our grant-making framework

Our future grant-making will be defined and measured by our outcomes framework, and enabled by a more collaborative approach.



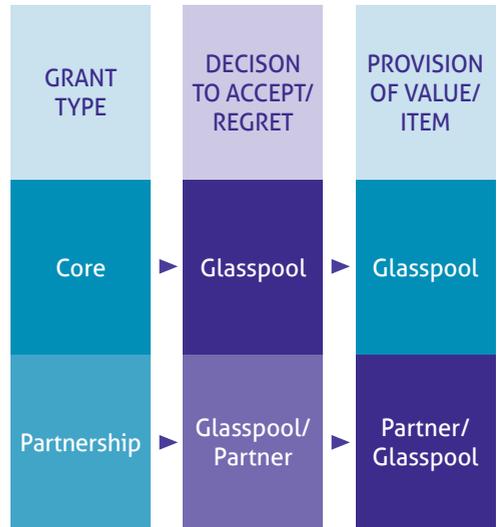
The three sub-outcomes break down our main aim into practical impacts on people’s lives. These reflect the different ways our support makes a difference: preventing people’s life circumstances becoming more difficult; helping them

maintain or improve their situation in the short term; and helping them move forward in their lives.

We have developed this framework to help us allocate funds in a reasonably optimal fashion, given that we are experiencing increasing applications in the context of limited resources.

We want to involve individuals more in the grant allocation process. Currently, we reserve all powers to award or reject a grant application, and the final decision on how any award is used. This forms our “core grant programme”.

In future we will gradually empower strategic partners (and through them, our beneficiaries) to take local decisions about the use of a Glasspool grant. We will develop ways of sharing responsibilities when it comes to making grants from a portion of our annual grants budget. To this end we commit to developing partnership approaches so that by 2023 this kind of shared grant-making will consume a significant part of our annual grant budget. How do these two approaches compare? Under the core programme, we make the decision as to whether to accept an application and also on how to provide what’s being funded – including delivering an item via one of our suppliers.



Under our partnership programmes, decisions on whether to accept an application will be shared between us and the partner, and we’ll also work together on how best to provide what we agree to fund.

We will continue to improve distribution of our “core grants” to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness.

We will ensure we learn from these two approaches (core and partnership grant-making) and share this learning with our partners, so we can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of both types of grant-making.

We expect successful partnerships to be based on shared values and principles, including our Founder’s principle that grants should always be used for the *direct* benefit of people in need.

Income

We aim to grow Glasspool's annual income so that we increase the grant budget from £1.76 million per annum in 2018-19 to £2 million per annum by 2023.

The strategy for funding this growth in grants involves:

- Increasing income from the endowment.
- Accessing additional funds from partner organisations such as livery companies.
- Identifying potential new sources of additional funds.

We have a long track record of growing income organically from the endowment. We now propose to make a strategic shift to accessing additional grant funds from partners who share our values and objectives.

Glasspool has a very efficient grant distribution system with capacity to manage larger fund flows at limited additional cost. We believe this can offer an attractive route for some funders to distribute individual grants at little or no cost, in line with their own grant-making criteria.

Communications

We work with and through third parties and also rely on the generosity of a number of grant-making institutions. They need to trust and feel confident in Glasspool and our approach. A powerful and comprehensive communications strategy will help us engender trust in our ability to help individuals most in need.

We need to demonstrate in everything we say and do that our commitment to delivering focused, personalised and timely help to the least advantaged in society is genuine, credible and effective.

We exist to help individuals through a difficult period in their lives. Growing a relationship founded on trust will lead to better service for those most in need, as there will be reduced reliance on rigid criteria for grant awards.

Third party partners form the front line of our grant distribution system and so they need to be made fully aware of who we are, what we believe in and what we can do. Building such awareness will pay dividends in terms of closer, more open relationships, and enable a higher level of mutual trust. Such relationships will also help reduce the stress involved in managing what are often very complex individual cases.

Our communications strategy will be based on taking a personal one-to-one approach wherever possible. In addition, we will continue to update our communication tools. This will include our key publications: our Annual Report and Accounts and Impact Report. We will also embark on a major review of our website and other means of communicating digitally, with a view to improving these.

Lastly, if we wish to fulfil our ambition to be one of the leading grant-making trusts supporting individuals, we have to establish a reputation for effective delivery. If our work is recognised by a wider community of stakeholders, it will enable us to channel our support in a meaningful and direct way.

Thank you

We would like to thank the trustees and staff from the following organisations:

Citizens Advice Waltham Forest

Family Action

Framework Housing

Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service

Hestia Housing Association

Leicester Charity Link

Riverside Housing Association

St Giles Trust

Turn2Us Helpline

Young Women's Trust

“ We would also like to give special thanks to Jacinta Belai for her work on our research project, providing us with a firm foundation on which to base this strategy. ”



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