



**Foundation**

# **ALWAYS UNITED**

**MANCHESTER UNITED & MANCHESTER UNITED FOUNDATION'S  
RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS IN 2020**

# AGENDA

---

Foreword / Ed Woodward & John Shiels

Introduction

Methodology

Impact in numbers

2020 timeline

Action plan

- Helping the National Health Service
- Supporting our schools
- Tackling food poverty
- Our communities united
- Our staff and our fans
- Football focus

Looking forward / Richard Arnold

Thank you





# FOREWORD

---



## Ed Woodward, Executive Vice-Chairman, Manchester United

Manchester United is famous for being a global club, with millions of fans worldwide — but we are equally proud of our strong local roots around Old Trafford and across Greater Manchester.

The COVID-19 pandemic provided a huge test of both these aspects of our identity and I am proud of the way we responded.

When the UK and many other parts of the world entered lockdown early in 2020, we looked at what we could do as a club to help meet this historic challenge on our doorstep and further afield. This report documents those efforts and assesses the impact we made.

Of course, our contribution was modest compared with the true heroes of this crisis: the healthcare workers tending to the sick, the key workers keeping society going, and the scientists racing to develop a vaccine. Our unstinting thanks and admiration go out to all those people.

Much of our efforts were focused on supporting those on the frontline, for example by using our kitchens and staff at Old Trafford to produce 60,000 meals for NHS staff working gruelling shifts in local hospitals, or through the work of our Foundation in aiding local schools and food banks.

Another priority was looking after our employees by keeping staff in work and continuing to pay our casual workers. Where there was no regular work to do because of the pandemic, we encouraged staff to volunteer for our community initiatives and many rallied to the cause, helping distribute food and activity packs to local families and making thousands of welfare calls to elderly fans.

Beyond Greater Manchester, the Foundation worked with our Supporters' Clubs to raise money for children's charities dealing with the impact of the pandemic on young people around the world. And, throughout the crisis, our club media channels have used their global reach to promote public health messages and rally our fans in solidarity with the frontline heroes of the pandemic.

These are just some of the highlights from the club and Foundation-wide effort documented in this report and I would like to personally thank everyone associated with Manchester United who has contributed. What hopefully comes across clearly are the values and resilience which underpin our football club — and our commitment to being a positive force in the communities we engage with.

# FOREWORD

---



## John Shiels, Chief Executive, Manchester United Foundation

As the club's associated charity, Manchester United Foundation found itself at the forefront of the COVID-19 response.

It was clear from day one that the pandemic would affect Manchester United fans worldwide and, due to our 2019 Treble Reunion match, we were able to commit £1 million of funding to help young people both locally and around the globe.

We were well placed with our staff on the ground and through a far-reaching network of partners. We adapted, were present in the heart of the community, and responded to the challenges with compassion and pride.

As we emerged from the first lockdown during the spring, our Play Safe campaign ensured young people could return to football and sport in a COVID-safe way, and our partnership with food charity FareShare GM, which began in June, enabled us to deliver 5,000 school meals across Greater Manchester during the October half-term holiday.

This collaboration continued throughout the winter, a time of year when our families are often most in need, and the United Family responded with love and kindness to our Santa's Red Helpers Christmas appeal. 80,000 prepared meals and 6,000 food hampers — all cooked by club chefs — along with 7,000 gift bags and 1,050 footballs were distributed throughout December following an incredible effort by players, staff, partners and fans.

In what was an unprecedentedly tough year, I am so very proud of how the United Family came together to support all of our 2020 activations, positively impacting the lives of thousands.

Yet the work doesn't end here; this pandemic is still a threat to us all. We will continue standing side-by-side and keep fighting the good fight for those who need us most. Where we serve, we stay. And when you need us, we'll be there.



# INTRODUCTION



## A year like no other but it's clear that the crisis is far from over

2020 was a year unlike any other. COVID-19 impacted each and every one of us. It was a time when our communities needed us most. Whilst many of the projects and programmes that both the club and Manchester United Foundation normally run could not operate, we felt a strong obligation to ensure that the positive impacts of our community work continued to be delivered wherever possible. At the same time, we forged new partnerships and programmes to address some of the new needs and challenges created by the crisis. Using the power of football, the club and the Foundation have been able to assist the most vulnerable young people, families and communities.

Our response to the pandemic was focused on six key objectives:



Whilst these six strands of delivery were relatively independent of one another, they were all underpinned by a common belief that the most important thing the Foundation and club could do in the early stages of the pandemic was to support the most vulnerable and least fortunate people in society. Many of the groups struggled to find other sources of assistance as traditional statutory and non-statutory sector services were either overwhelmed or redirected to assist with the pandemic. In particular, the Foundation and the club committed to doing whatever they could to protect the physical and mental health of the most vulnerable in society, including frontline NHS workers who were under unprecedented levels of emotional and physical stress.

This report will: document the range of activities and results across these six areas; detail the scale of these activities; and highlight the value of the work carried out and donations made which total £5.04 million. It will focus on the actions taken between March and December 2020, from when the nation took its first steps into lockdown until the end of the year.

While we look back at 2020, it is clear that the crisis and its devastating after-effects are far from over. Manchester United and its Foundation remain committed to making an ongoing and meaningful impact within the communities in which they serve.

# METHODOLOGY



## Gavin Mellor, Director and Head of Data and Consultancy, Substance

Over the past 15 years, Substance has worked with hundreds of community sport organisations to help them improve the measurement and impact of their work. Early in 2020, we were delighted to become a partner of Manchester United Foundation and begin a journey to help it become a sector leader in impact measurement and practice. Just as this long-term work was getting underway, the first national pandemic lockdown began and our discussions quickly focused on how Substance could support Manchester United and the Foundation as they planned and rolled out their COVID-19 response.

As new programmes of support and outreach work were being developing – often at speed and at scale – Substance helped the club and Foundation by designing and implementing new processes to capture and report on key management and monitoring information. We are proud to say that these processes have helped Manchester United and the Foundation to present a full account of their incredible work throughout this report.

Substance has also supported this report through data analysis. We have helped to calculate both the scale of their activities, and their financial value (both actual and in-kind). The report is not designed, though, to be a ‘traditional’ impact evaluation. The work it relates to was, initially at least, a time-bound emergency response to a public health crisis and, therefore, a full social and/or health impact evaluation was not prioritised. However, the case studies and testimonies contained in this report demonstrate clearly how the work has made many important differences to people’s lives, including to their:

**Physical health:** Through supporting the NHS; helping efforts to tackle food poverty; and providing resources to help keep young people physically active.

**Mental health:** Through telephone calls to elderly and vulnerable supporters; maintaining contact with hundreds of young people; and alleviating at least some financial concerns through Family Support Grants.

**Educational engagement & attainment:** Through delivering online sessions; supporting schools and pupils with grants; and delivering IT equipment to vulnerable children.

In the absence of a large-scale impact study, it is not possible to know how many people improved or even maintained their physical or mental health through the COVID-19 response work, or what would have happened to young people’s educational outcomes if they had not been supported by the Foundation. This means, of course, that it is also not possible to put a social value on the work. However, in the context of mental health we do know that between March and May 2020, it was estimated that nearly 1 in 5 people nationally were struggling with anxiety or depression because of the pandemic.<sup>1</sup> We also know that the annual per head cost of treating mental health in the UK is over £12,000.<sup>2</sup> This means that if Manchester United and the Foundation’s COVID-19 response helped even just a fraction of the 92,933 people it worked with to feel cared for and supported during this most challenging of times, then the value of that work for the direct beneficiaries — and society as a whole — will be hugely significant.



# IMPACT IN NUMBERS

## KEY OUTPUT STATISTICS



**92,933**  
Unique people supported directly



**15,296**  
Hours of support provided. The equivalent of 1,912 working days.



**361**  
Unique staff/volunteers involved



**12,473**  
Miles driven



**142,950**  
Items donated



**145,000**  
Meals prepared



**54**  
Unique schools supported



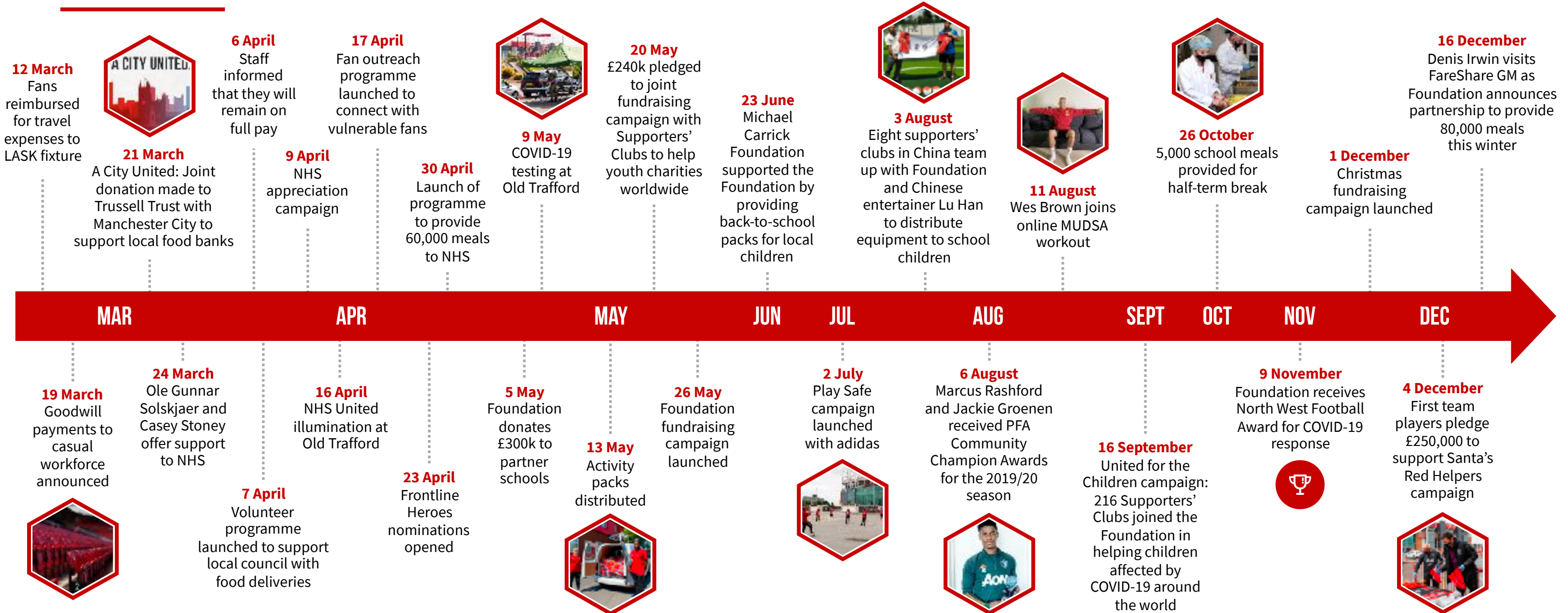
**23,350,000**  
Estimated online views of COVID-19 related content

## FINANCIAL HEADLINES

TOTAL CONTRIBUTION:	<b>£5.04 MILLION</b>
Direct donations:	£1,196,759
New funds raised:	£55,479
Protected payments to casual staff:	£2,950,000
Refunds to fans:	£245,000
In-kind support:	£587,330



# 2020 TIMELINE





# HELPING THE NHS

## Fuelling the frontline

One of the first steps we took was to recognise the sacrifices being made by NHS staff working on the frontline of the pandemic, and the strain on the NHS itself. We responded by producing 60,000 meals for NHS staff in local hospitals. This initiative involved over 80 club and Foundation colleagues preparing £150,000 worth of food before it was delivered to four NHS Manchester sites. We thank our supplier, Bidfood, for their support in this project.

Foundation staff distributed a sizeable donation of food and over 3,500 gifts to NHS Manchester Foundation Trust Charity and Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust, as a thank you to frontline staff. In partnership with Trafford Council, thousands of items of PPE were delivered across 28 days to 264 healthcare providers. Stadium car parks were used for drive-through testing while hospitality facilities were also used for a blood donation drive, helping address a reduction in donations during the pandemic.





# HELPING THE NHS

## United for the Heroes

In another initiative, fans were encouraged to nominate their frontline heroes for recognition while ‘United for the Heroes’ t-shirts were sold with proceeds going to the Foundation. Also, in a sign of support, the NHS logo was painted onto the Old Trafford pitch, while the famous Manchester United sign on the front of the stadium was adapted to only illuminate the letters ‘N’, ‘H’, ‘S’ and ‘UNITED’, to declare ‘NHS United’ — a gesture which generated 120 pieces of news coverage worldwide.

Club channels were used to promote public health messages in support of the guidance issued by the UK government and the World Health Organisation. 56 pieces of related content were posted between March and June generating over 110 million impressions.





# HELPING THE NHS

## Recognition and boosting morale

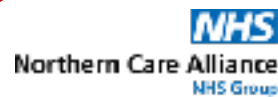
As one of the Premier League's shareholders, the club also gave its backing to the decision to donate the huge sum of £20 million to support the NHS, communities, families and vulnerable groups during the COVID-19 pandemic. Part of this donation will go to NHS Charities Together, to directly aid the mental health of NHS frontline workers and their families.

The Frontline Heroes campaign was launched with the backing of the United players who expressed their appreciation for the NHS and for healthcare workers fighting COVID-19 around the world. Fans were able to take part by sending their own messages of thanks and nominate a frontline worker for recognition.

As Christmas approached and with visits to hospitals restricted, the players' traditional appearances at the local children's wards had to be adapted. Surprise video calls and messages were lined up with players sending their best wishes online to children who were being cared for over Christmas.



# HELPING THE NHS



“A huge thanks from me, the whole of the Northern Care Alliance, and in particular those at our Salford Royal site who were all really pleased to receive your generous donation. This donation was a huge morale boost for them at this difficult time.”

**RAJ JAIN**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,  
NORTHERN CARE ALLIANCE NHS GROUP



“The NHS staff and the volunteers fighting the virus are putting themselves at risk to keep everybody safe and doing a truly amazing job. They deserve thanks and praise from everybody for their work and their efforts every single day.”

**OLE GUNNAR SOLSKJAER**  
MANAGER  
MANCHESTER UNITED



"This donation is incredibly important and will be vital in helping to support the amazing NHS staff, volunteers and patients as they deal with the COVID crisis."

**ELLIE ORTON**  
CEO,  
NHS CHARITIES TOGETHER

## KEY STATISTICS:



**60,000**  
Meals prepared  
for NHS staff



**1,036**  
Miles driven



**822**  
COVID-19 tests  
conducted



**5,284**  
Staff hours



**£292,605\***  
Value of support





# SUPPORTING OUR SCHOOLS

## Financial backing to those in need

Manchester United Foundation has partnerships with a network of 56 schools, colleges and SEN facilities in nine out of ten boroughs of Greater Manchester, at which full-time staff are based to work with pupils, provide extra-curricular support and build lasting relationships. With many schools closing, the Foundation needed to adapt and find new ways to provide their invaluable help.

A donation of £300,000 was made to the Foundation's partner schools and colleges to be spent on food, toiletries, IT equipment, and support for special needs pupils. The Foundation worked with the schools to ensure these much-needed resources reached the children and families who most needed them. By September, £201,646 of the total donation had been spent by 30 schools, benefiting 11,299 individual pupils.





# SUPPORTING OUR SCHOOLS

## Keeping the pupils active

Primary school children throughout the Greater Manchester area were provided with fun and educational activity packs costing £50,000. Survival expert Bear Grylls donated copies of his books while the Michael Carrick Foundation provided funding support for this initiative. A number of young Reds were in for a surprise when Michael himself turned up to drop off the activity packs.

In total, 359 days of activity were delivered in our partner schools during the lockdown period, ensuring the Foundation remained a constant presence to the 791 most vulnerable children and young people who rely on our provision.





# SUPPORTING OUR SCHOOLS

## Well-being and welfare

Throughout the pandemic many Foundation coaches continued to work in Foundation partner schools providing much-needed support to staff, and key worker and vulnerable children. The disability and inclusion team also played a vital role in supporting the special educational needs partner schools by putting on sessions for children, many of whom have disabilities and/or complex learning difficulties. In total 349 sessions were delivered in our partner schools during the lockdown period, ensuring the Foundation remained a constant presence for those who rely on our provision.

2,525 welfare calls were made via telephone and video by Foundation staff to young people and their families. First team players including Juan Mata, Dan James and Jesse Lingard contributed to this, much to the delight of those involved.





# SUPPORTING OUR SCHOOLS

## Learning from home

In addition, we have worked closely with Trafford Council, to facilitate the delivery of 318 laptops to 36 schools so that young people can access educational resources from home during the pandemic.

Our 'Stay at Home' worksheets and video challenges were downloaded and viewed 7,454 and 193,557 times respectively. These initiatives helped to ensure that thousands of young people kept their minds and bodies active whilst staying safe at home.





# SUPPORTING OUR SCHOOLS



“At a time when some families struggled more than most, the Foundation helped us to reach them, when help was not at hand from elsewhere. Those families and the children will never forget that help.”

**JAMES HASELDINE**  
EXECUTIVE HEADTEACHER,  
THE DEAN TRUST WIGAN



Foundation

“The agony of seeing first-hand the impact of this pandemic across some of the most deprived areas of this region has been balanced by the sheer pride of experiencing our truly United response.”

**JOHN SHIELS**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,  
MANCHESTER UNITED FOUNDATION



“Manchester United Foundation has been amazing in adapting and providing different services, whether it’s food, money or pens and paper for kids to do their homework.”

**MICHAEL CARRICK**  
FIRST TEAM COACH  
MANCHESTER UNITED

## KEY STATISTICS:



**8,250**

Activity packs



**2,525**

Wellbeing calls  
to students



**11,299**

Pupils benefitting  
from school grants



**359**

Days of activity delivered  
during lockdown



**£700,938**

Value of support



# TACKLING FOOD POVERTY

## Donations and distributions to food banks

Since the outbreak, many have been forced to turn to food banks with food poverty a growing problem. £100,000 was donated to purchase supplies, which were delivered to a number of food bank organisations including Mustard Tree and Audacious Foundation. Inspired by the work of the Manchester United Supporters' Trust in support of local food banks, an additional £50,000 was given to the Trussell Trust to support their 19 food banks in Greater Manchester. This amount was matched by Manchester City – both clubs united in the campaign to fight hunger.

Over 30,000 items of food and drink were transported to Stretford Foodbank, Salford Royal Hospital, Salford Foodbank and a number of other charities, with 21 vehicles and over 35 staff involved across the club and Foundation.





# TACKLING FOOD POVERTY

## Holiday hunger

Marcus Rashford's campaign to end child food poverty and secure support for the provision of meals during the school holidays captured national attention throughout 2020. Many across the country rallied, including Manchester United and Manchester United Foundation. Through a partnership with FareShare GM, club staff produced 5,000 meals in our Old Trafford kitchens and distributed them to local school children across Greater Manchester during the October half-term break.

Following this successful venture, the project was extended for the festive holiday period. Operations were scaled up to produce, package and deliver 80,000 meals across the Foundation's network of partner schools. This partnership combined the resources of each party to ensure that thousands of families did not go hungry this Christmas.





# TACKLING FOOD POVERTY



“We know we won’t be able to do this alone, so we are truly grateful for the support Manchester United and Manchester City are showing local food banks. On behalf of food banks in our network in Manchester we thank you so much.”

**RACHEL MACKLIN**  
TRUSSELL TRUST,  
SENIOR OPERATIONS MANAGER



“We are incredibly proud of the individual effort of Marcus Rashford, who served as an exemplary Red both on and off of the pitch this year, by using his platform to bring incredible awareness to a cause that is very dear to his heart, child hunger. Marcus was successful at not only championing this very important cause but he also campaigned for, and successfully achieved, change that affected children across the whole country.”

**RICHARD ARNOLD**  
GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
MANCHESTER UNITED



Foundation

“We’re going to families who, prior to this, were coping, but, through no fault of their own, have lost employment and they’ve fallen on hard times. People may think you just drop the food parcel off at the door. It is not like that. There are kids we work with who are over the moon they’ve seen a familiar face.”

**DAVE CHAPMAN**  
SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER,  
MANCHESTER UNITED FOUNDATION

## KEY STATISTICS:



**85,000**  
Meals produced during  
school holidays



**20,281**  
Estimated number  
of beneficiaries



**8,047**  
Hours supporting  
the projects



**9,965**  
Miles driven



**£606,799**  
Value of donations  
and in-kind support





# OUR COMMUNITIES UNITED

## A global club embedded in the local community

As a club, we draw strength from our passionate global body of fans whilst remaining proudly rooted to our home in Manchester where we do much of our existing work in the community.

Throughout the pandemic, we have sought to continue supporting the people and groups we engage with in normal times, while also forging new relationships in our local communities and further afield to address the unique challenges created by the pandemic.





# OUR COMMUNITIES UNITED

## A summer of football

Throughout the summer holidays, Manchester United worked with several partners to deliver a much-needed 'summer of football' in some of Greater Manchester's most deprived areas. Holiday camps and activity programmes were delivered in 14 partner schools, whilst partnership projects were also delivered in Partington with Trafford Council and four neighbourhoods with Stockport Council and Life Leisure. The Foundation launched and delivered its first holiday camp for local primary school children, and the girls' development and community teams also delivered a girls-only holiday programme.

For 10 consecutive weeks, free weekly activity challenges and worksheets were made available for download on the Foundation website, covering both fun and educational tasks for all ages and abilities. Each week we released two video challenges, hosted by Foundation staff, all with the objective of finding fun ways for children to keep mentally and physically active whilst staying safe at home. These initiatives had a total of 93,165 social engagements.





# OUR COMMUNITIES UNITED

## Activity and care packs

Further activity and care packs have been donated to participants who usually attend Foundation community outreach sessions. 650 footballs and activity bags were handed out to our Street Reds participants who had attended over 10 sessions in the last year. The inclusion team also developed 500 sensory packs which were distributed to every disabled participant in our inclusion programmes and pupils of our SEN partner schools. Finally, in partnership with Trafford Council 450 Manchester United activity bags were given out to every young person who attended a summer sport session in Trafford.





# OUR COMMUNITIES UNITED

## United for the Children

The relationship between the Foundation and Manchester United Supporters' Clubs around the world has been strengthened by the pandemic, providing a platform for us to support communities and vulnerable young people beyond Greater Manchester.

In May, official Manchester United Supporters' Clubs around the globe were offered up to £1,000 each to help youth-focused charities in their area respond to the COVID-19 crisis. To date, 216 Supporters' Clubs have signed up to the 'United for the Children' campaign and fans from across the world have taken part in organised runs, bike rides and virtual quizzes to raise additional funds.





# OUR COMMUNITIES UNITED

## Player power

In order to sustain our response throughout this period and into the future, we also launched a fundraising campaign, which included the creation of a charity t-shirt by the club's design and merchandising teams, with all proceeds being donated to the Foundation's COVID-19 response. We also launched a 'United for a High Five' raffle which encouraged people to take five minutes, to donate £5, to be in with a chance of winning one of five prizes over five days. It was supported by players, legends and club partners to include prizes such as a virtual hangout with Harry Maguire, and David de Gea's Tag Heuer watch.

In December, fans, staff and players signed up to become 'Santa's Red Helpers' as part of a festive fundraising effort. First team players led the way by generously donating £245,000 while club staff contributed over £60,000. This was followed by an online auction, featuring Marcus Rashford's TAG Heuer watch. Other partners including Concha y Toro, Mlily, Konami and Remington supported the fundraising efforts, contributing donations and a range of auction items.





# OUR COMMUNITIES UNITED

---

## Christmas gifts

This combined effort helped to fuel the next wave of support across the local community, with a particular focus on children who have been impacted most by the challenges of 2020. Monies raised help to fund 6,000 food hampers and 6,000 gift bags to local children.

Local fan group, The Red Army, also took it upon themselves to dig deep and raise enough money to fund 1,050 footballs to be delivered as part of the outreach programme to the Foundation's partner schools.

A further 1,000 gift bags were distributed to vulnerable children in 13 countries across five continents in the run up to Christmas, supported by Manchester United's global logistics partner, DHL. This was done in partnership with Manchester United Supporters' Clubs which nominated children's charities in their local area to receive the gifts.



# OUR COMMUNITIES UNITED



“It’s been a good experience for everyone. People often talk about the money involved in football nowadays but this campaign proves there’s a lot more to it.”

**GEOFFROY FISHER**  
FAN



“I know from speaking to a lot of match going fans that there is a real sense of pride in the club again as a result of how they reacted to the pandemic. This is something that has been absent for a while and the club’s actions, along with the extraordinary efforts of Marcus Rashford, mean fans can feel more connected to the club and players which is great to see.”

**RICK MCGAGH**  
FAN



“I want to thank everyone involved in this endeavour. No other football club has done anything like this before in Pakistan so it has made us all even prouder to be Manchester United fans.”

**ISMAEEL TAYYAB**  
FAN

**KEY STATISTICS:**



**216**  
Supporters’ Clubs involved in global fundraising



**£308,075**  
Contributed by players and staff to Santa’s Red Helpers initiative



**1,050**  
Balls donated to local children by The Red Army



**137**  
Health and social care charities supported





# OUR STAFF AND OUR FANS

---

## Protecting our people

Protecting our people was another priority. Manchester United continued to pay staff in full, without recourse to the Government's current furlough scheme, and made goodwill payments of around £3 million to 3,000 casual workers to protect their incomes while our operations were disrupted.

We took a similar approach with our fans by making a contribution of £350 per fan towards the travel costs of almost 700 United fans with tickets for our European away game against LASK, following the late decision to play behind closed doors. These were some of our most loyal supporters and we felt it was right to give something back.

We also looked out for our elderly and vulnerable supporters. Club staff and club legends, such as Bryan Robson, made welfare calls to over 3,000 season ticket holders.





# OUR STAFF AND OUR FANS

## To move forward, you need to give back

Given the significant disruption which the pandemic caused to the club's usual activities, many employees found a sense of purpose by volunteering either to make outreach calls to fans or to help provide courier services. Encouraged by club leadership, other staff with reduced workload volunteered their time to local projects, making a huge difference to both their communities and their own wellbeing.

As a token of thanks for their ongoing hard work, 1,100 colleagues also received a surprise care package at their homes in June. It included face masks, partner gifts, recipe ideas and a personal message of appreciation from Ed Woodward.





# OUR STAFF AND OUR FANS



“We’re not just doing these calls as a goodwill gesture. We’re wanting people to feel we care for them. They are important to us. And if little things come up in the conversation, it’s not to go, ‘Oh it will be better tomorrow’. It’s support at the right time.”

**JO MADYARCHYK**  
HEAD OF SAFEGUARDING,  
MANCHESTER UNITED



“I would like to add my statement [of support for] the club’s and the Foundation’s response to the crisis; it is to be applauded and is beyond reproach. From ticketing support, to making calls to vulnerable supporters, donating to food banks and supporting the NHS – it has created a sense of pride among the fans. As supporters we can’t wait to get back to repay our support for the team and club for the work they have done.”

**IAN STIRLING**  
FAN



“We are suffering a stark reminder of how interdependent we all are. To overcome Coronavirus, and the other challenges facing humanity, we need to coordinate individual efforts and work together as a team.”

**JUAN MATA**  
FIRST TEAM PLAYER

## KEY STATISTICS:



**3,612**  
Total number of  
welfare calls to fans



**£245,000**  
Total value of goodwill  
payment to fans



**3,000**  
Casual staff supported



**£2,950,000**  
Total value of goodwill  
payments to staff





# FOOTBALL FOCUS

---

## A time to grow

With all sections of society wrestling with the challenges of lockdown, those tasked with developing our young Academy players, girls and boys, were no different.

The mental health of young players was a major focus for the club's activities. As football was put on hold during lockdown, Academy coaching staff stayed in close contact with the players and their families, both one-on-one and in online group sessions. The time was used to encourage the players to be creative, to use their imagination and to learn new skills. A series of online Q&A sessions were scheduled with Jesse Lingard, Paul Scholes, Michael Carrick and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer.





# FOOTBALL FOCUS

---

## Online training and a return to the pitch

The Manchester United Regional Talent Club (RTC) led the way in girls' football provision during the pandemic, delivering 87 online sessions for 79 girls. The RTC was the first to pass the FA's COVID-secure guidelines, enabling players to return to conditioned training in July and to play the first RTC matches in the country since lockdown when all six age groups played Aston Villa at the end of August.

The Manchester United Women's team have also been hugely supportive of our female football division during this time. Every week a different member of the women's team took part in an online Q&A session with the young players, kicked off by manager Casey Stoney. Young keepers have also been taking part in online sessions with the women's team goalkeepers and coaches.





# FOOTBALL FOCUS

---

## Safety first

The Foundation's 'Play Safe' campaign, supported by adidas, provided coaches and young people the tools to play football again at a safe distance. Launched with a detailed coaching document of over 300 combinations, followed by various videos and worksheets, the campaign received nearly 2,000 downloads and close to 300,000 video views. It was shared with and used by 64 schools and 24 FA grassroots coaches attended a Play Safe workshop. The campaign even reached 11 cities across the USA. Play Safe was deemed 'best practice' by the Activity Alliance due to its use of the STEP model.





# FOOTBALL FOCUS

## Keeping minds and bodies active

Over the summer months the Foundation delivered a number of activity sessions for children in small bubbles to support their mental and physical wellbeing during the school holidays. The disability and inclusion team provided live online weekly football workouts including adaptations for all ages and abilities, featuring a whole host of footballing movements for both disabled and non-disabled fans. 675 fans watched the sessions live when they premiered each week, with the videos making 273,400 online engagements in total. Weekly exercise classes were also hosted for MUDSA members, and club legend Wes Brown made a surprise appearance on more than one occasion. Welfare calls, family challenges and online quiz nights complimented the exercise classes keeping minds and bodies active.

As the saying goes, ‘the secret to happiness is helping others’ and despite the Academy players dealing with their own lockdown challenges, the U18 squad decided to reach out to help others. They created videos on their phones containing motivational messages, fitness exercises and skills practices. These were distributed to the pupils across the partner school network.





# FOOTBALL FOCUS



“The consensus was that we had to do something. Football brings together people from all walks of life. Some boys will be enjoying time with their families, for other boys it will be very difficult; some will be struggling financially or health-wise, living in cramped conditions at the top of a block of flats. Some of these kids will normally be with us four or five times a week – it leaves a big hole in their lives.”

**NICK COX**  
HEAD OF ACADEMY  
MANCHESTER UNITED

**The Telegraph**

“United have conducted themselves with class and compassion during this pandemic.”

**JAMES DUCKER**  
THE TELEGRAPH

**The Guardian**

“A few days into the lockdown, an email arrived from the Academy. It was thoughtful, kind. It reminded us that parents are the biggest influence on a child and encouraged reading and a regular bedtime. It went on: “During the coming weeks we still want the boys to enjoy their childhood, explore learning for themselves, use their imagination and be creative. Some of the best learning to take place during this prolonged period of time at home will be created by the boys themselves... Let them practise because they are in love with football””

**TANYA ALDRED**  
GUARDIAN

## KEY STATISTICS:



**1<sup>ST</sup>**  
The RTC was the first to pass the FA's COVID-secure guidelines



**1,899**  
Downloads of the Play Safe coaching manual



**87**  
Online coaching sessions delivered to the girls' academy



**273,400**  
Online engagements with weekly workout programme





# LOOKING AHEAD

---



## Richard Arnold, Managing Director, Manchester United

For everyone associated with Manchester United and Manchester United Foundation, there is much in the preceding pages for us to feel proud about. But the purpose of this report is not to congratulate ourselves on a job well done — because our response to the pandemic is far from over.

Although we are all optimistic that 2021 will be a better year as vaccines begin to roll out, the virus and its economic consequences will be with us for some time to come. That's why we have continued, and in some areas stepped up, our support efforts going into this winter.

After producing 5,000 meals for local school children during the October half-term holiday, we increased the number to 80,000 over Christmas in response to the growing challenge of child food poverty in Greater Manchester. We did this in partnership with the charity FareShare GM, allowing the three organisations to increase our collective impact.

We have also deepened our collaboration with the club's official Supporters' Clubs to distribute activity packs to vulnerable children around the world at a time when education and entertainment are being disrupted for so many. Closer to home, our fantastic Foundation continues to support its partner schools and projects across Greater Manchester, and those relationships will emerge from the pandemic stronger than ever as we restore our full range of educational and sporting programmes.

Manchester United's response to the pandemic reflects values forged over decades of engagement with our local community and our global fan base. We are committed to continuing this long-term approach as we work together with our Foundation, our fans and other key partners to build on the positive impact we have made in the past year.





**Foundation**

**WITH THANKS TO ALL OF OUR PARTNERS & STAFF WHO CONTRIBUTED**