

Annual report and financial statements

2025

Nuffield
Foundation

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Chairman's foreword

The Nuffield Foundation was established in 1943, at a time of profound upheaval and uncertainty. In the midst of war, and in the shadow of immense social need, our founder Lord Nuffield set out a clear purpose: to advance social well-being through knowledge, evidence, and opportunity. That sense of public purpose has guided the Foundation ever since.

This annual report marks the beginning of a new chapter. It is our first under the leadership of our Chief Executive Gavin Kelly, and the first shaped by our recent Strategic Review. That review reaffirmed our enduring mission while sharpening our focus on three interrelated themes: prosperity, inclusiveness, and fairness. These priorities reflect both our heritage and the realities of the present moment.

We are, of course, once again living through extremely uncertain and challenging times. Globally, we see conflict, instability, weakening alliances, and rising populism, each with significant ramifications for our own society and our economy. At home, the UK faces political fragmentation, economic stagnation, and sustained pressure on public services, alongside declining trust in institutions. There is deep concern about inequality, demographic change, and the strength of our social fabric. In such a context, the need for independent, trusted evidence and organisations such as our own that are committed to the public good has rarely been greater.

Over the past year, our work has sought to meet that need, generating new insights into how lives are shaped by systems, structures, and technological change, and where progress is both needed and possible.

Looking ahead, we have also identified key areas that will guide our efforts: demographic change, artificial intelligence and technological disruption, communities and place, climate, housing, and social care. These are complex, long-term challenges, but they are also areas where better evidence and deeper understanding can make a meaningful difference to people's lives. I am deeply proud of all those in the Nuffield Foundation and our expert centres – as well as our partners in academia, and public bodies and organisations – who embrace this purpose in their own areas of expertise.

How we work together matters. Our independence remains one of our greatest strengths. It allows us to take the long view, while retaining the agility needed to navigate a more fragmented and fast-changing landscape. Above all, it enables us to stay true to the Foundation's founding purpose: to apply rigorous understanding in the service of those who face the greatest barriers, and to contribute to a fairer and more inclusive society.

I would like to thank our Trustees, staff, partners, and the many researchers and practitioners whose work we support. Their commitment, care, and shared belief in the Foundation's purpose are what give this work its strength and its meaning.

More than 80 years on, the challenges we face may have changed, but the need for patient, purposeful work in the public interest has not. That purpose endures – and so does our commitment to it.



Professor Sir Keith Burnett
Chair of Trustees

Chief Executive's foreword

Looking back over my first year at the Nuffield Foundation – set out within the pages of this report – I'm very proud of what we've achieved so far. Having published an ambitious new strategy in 2025, we're now firmly engaged in putting it into practice. We are doing this through collaboration – it has been thought-provoking and inspiring to work with, and learn from, such a diverse range of organisations, experts, and practitioners.

If ever a reminder was needed of the importance of our work, 2025 provided it. Political and economic disruption, at home and globally, has created further instability for policymakers and the public. The need for authoritative evidence, and for bringing that evidence to decision makers in a timely way, has never been more crucial. Equally vital is taking the longer view – building insight and expertise where it is needed while scanning the horizon for emerging issues. And the value of investing in newer priority areas from our Strategic Review – including trusted and effective institutions, demographic change, and the societal impacts of climate change and the transition to net zero – has only become clearer.

Among many competing needs, we placed particular importance on our concerns for young people's futures – a perennial Nuffield theme – especially post-16 transitions, SEND provision, and the risk of disengagement from education, employment, or training and how this can be addressed.

Landmark work supported by our Strategic Fund – such as *The skills imperative 2035* and *The Pissarides review*, both completed in 2025 – demonstrates how ambitious long-term research investment can contribute to national debate. Our new strategy makes this an ideal moment to reopen the Strategic Fund and support transformative, multidisciplinary research capable of shaping policy and practice.

The first grants from the Racial Diversity UK Fund were awarded, seeding the development of a much-needed portfolio of work providing timely insight on how to move towards a racially just and inclusive future. Alongside this, our in-house programmes *Grown up? Journeys to adulthood*, *Public right to justice*, and *AI and education*, produced a flow of insights on issues that have featured highly on news and policy agendas.

Nuffield's expert centres have all played key roles over the last year in advancing our purpose. Whether addressing new issues in bioethics, family justice, or AI and emerging technologies, their work is a vital part of the Foundation's commitment to tackle inequalities, promote inclusiveness and fairness, and ensure science and technology work for people and society.

In 2025, we began implementing our first annual action plan for equity, diversity, and inclusion, aiming to ensure that our work, partnerships, and organisational culture reflect the values underpinning our mission. This is an ongoing priority, with a year-two plan now underway.

As we look ahead, and our exploration of newer thematic areas gathers pace, I'd like to thank everyone who has contributed to our work this year – all our grant-holders, stakeholders, Trustees, and colleagues. Together, we will continue to champion evidence that shapes a more prosperous, fairer, and inclusive society and helps people lead better, more secure lives.



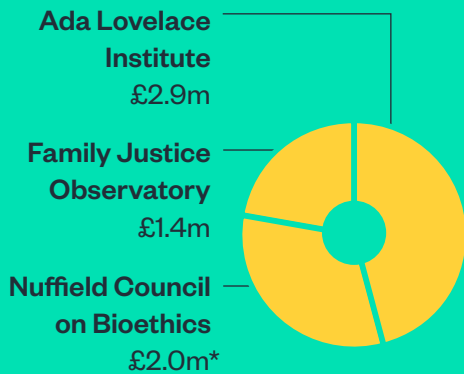
Gavin Kelly
Chief Executive

2025 in numbers

Charitable expenditure

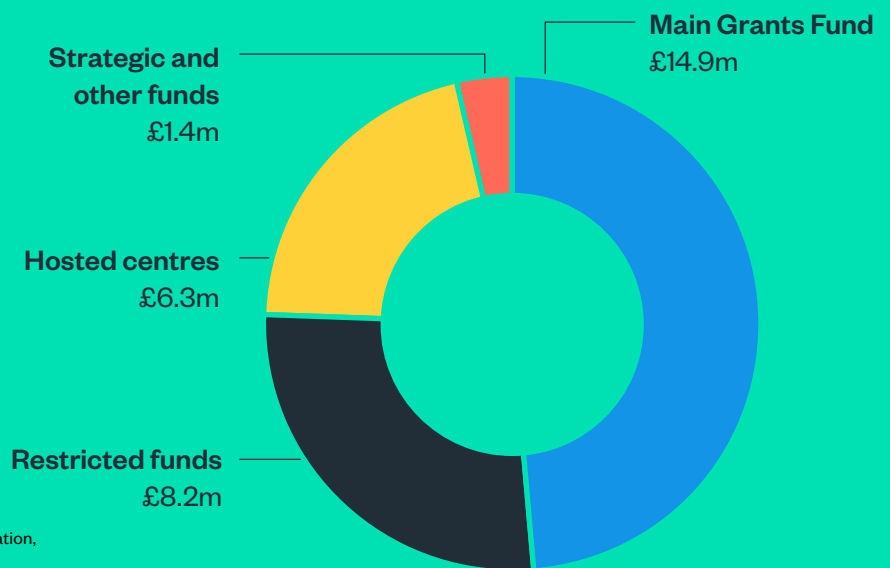
£30.8m (up from £28.4m in 2024 – see [p94](#) for full breakdown)

Total hosted centres
£6.3m



* The NCOB is jointly and equally funded by the Nuffield Foundation, the Wellcome Trust, and the Medical Research Council.

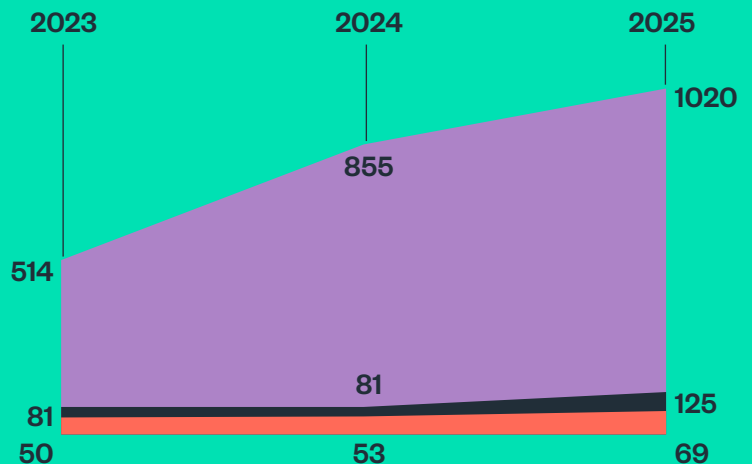
Total charitable expenditure
£30.8m



Applications

Applicants submit a short outline application and those that meet our criteria are invited to submit a full application, which is subject to peer review and considered by a Grants Committee or by Trustees.

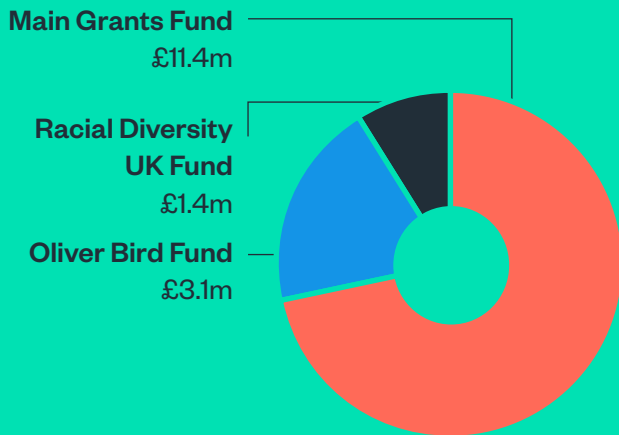
- Outline applications
- Number of full applications
- Number of awards



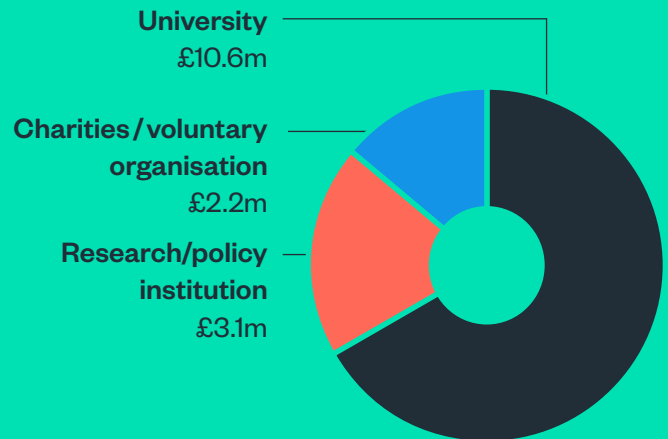
Total value of new research grants awarded

£15.9m (up from £14.7m in 2024)

Split by fund type



Split by organisation type



Average grant awarded £231k
 Range of grants awarded £7k – £701k

Comms and engagement

Across the Nuffield Foundation, the Ada Lovelace Institute, the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory, and the Nuffield Council on Bioethics:

64
 face-to-face, hybrid, and online events were convened

2,534
 people attended

2,012
 references in broadcast, print, and online media

4
 select committee appearances

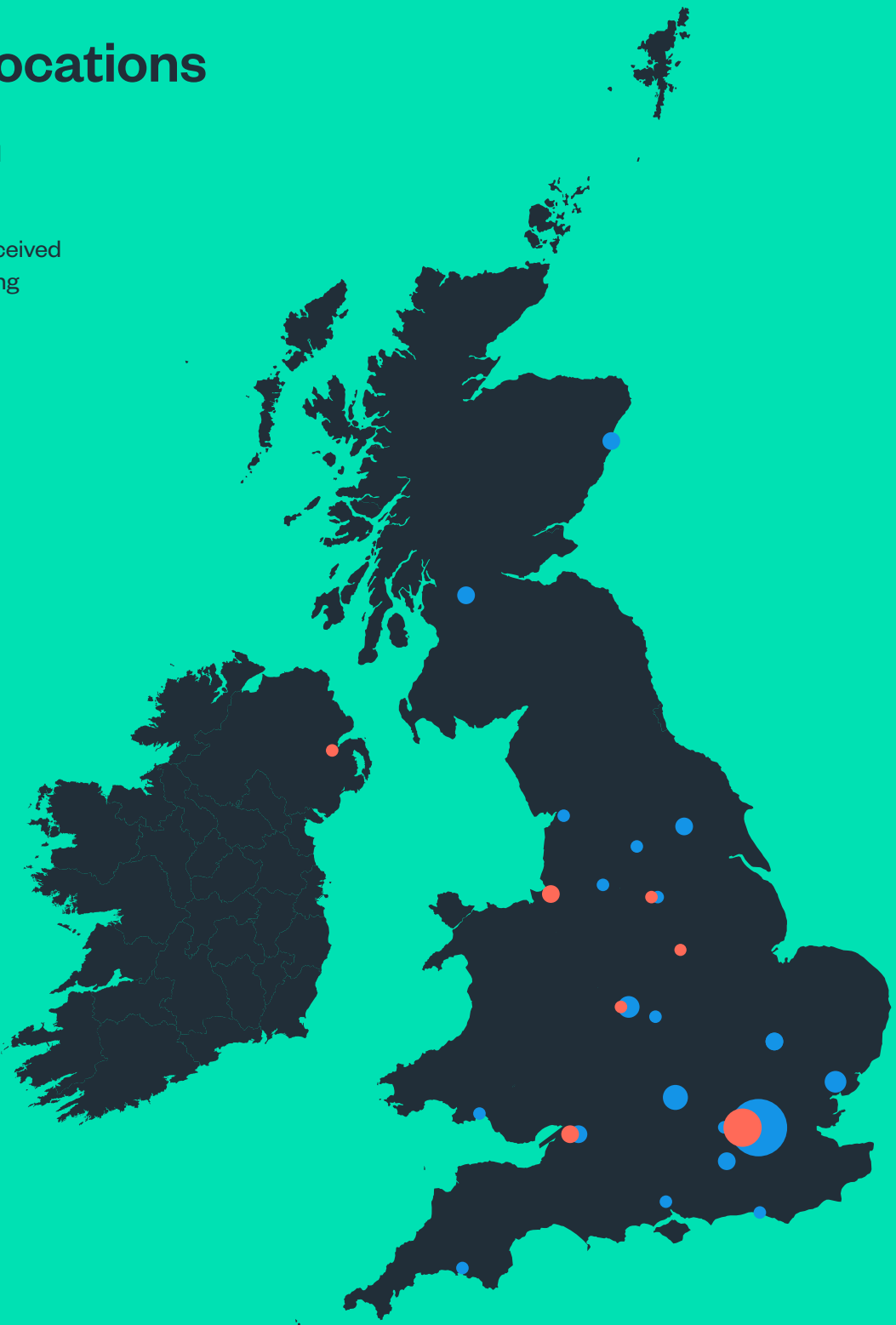
7
 government consultation responses submitted

23
 inquiries responded to

55
 mentions in Parliament

Grants locations

- Grants awarded by locations
- Projects that received additional funding



69

new projects funded

10

projects that received additional funding

In 2025 the Nuffield Foundation awarded 69 new grants and provided additional funding to 10 existing projects. In total, £16.2m was awarded to universities, think tanks, and third sector organisations across the UK.

2025 highlights



Two Nuffield Foundation Strategic Fund grants concluded, offering significant insights on the future of skills, jobs, and well-being. The NFER's *The skills imperative 2035: Essential skills for tomorrow's workforce* project showed how technological, demographic, and economic shifts will reshape the labour market, identifying essential employment skills and warning of declining opportunities in high-risk occupations. Its findings influenced key policy reviews and local skills planning. *The future of work and well-being: The Pissarides review* examined automation and AI's impacts on work and well-being, proposing human-centred approaches to technological change and skills policy ([p18](#)).



The Ada Lovelace Institute (Ada) released two policy briefings based on six years of research into public-sector AI. *Learn fast and build things* distilled insights from more than 30 reports on government uses of AI and data technologies, while *Licence to build* helped policymakers understand public attitudes towards AI. Together, they strengthened Ada's policy positions on transparency, evaluation, participatory design, and oversight of private-sector involvement. Ada was subsequently invited to present its findings to key government stakeholders and committees ([p33](#)).



The Foundation responded to the government's focus on post-16 education and rising rates of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) by holding a workshop to convene key policymakers and sector leaders around Nuffield-funded evidence on these issues. The discussion informed the creation of the independent Milburn Review. We also produced an influential policy briefing, contributed written and oral evidence to parliamentary inquiries, and led discussions that informed national debate on NEETs through media and policy engagement ([p16](#)).



The Department for Education committed to four more years of funding for the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI). The programme will now run until summer 2029, supporting the 11,000 schools already registered and offering access to any primary school in England that wishes to take part ([p13](#)).



The work of the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory (Nuffield FJO) to improve children’s legal rights and well-being

in the family justice system underpinned the *Back to Their Futures summit* in April. This major conference brought together more than 180 senior professionals from children’s social care, health, youth justice, and the judiciary, with policymakers from Ofsted, the Department for Education, the Ministry of Justice, and the NHS, to improve care for children subject to Deprivation of Liberty (DoL) orders. Nuffield FJO and the Nuffield Foundation also submitted key evidence to the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill on new measures relating to DoL orders. In a House of Lords debate on the amendments, Baroness Barron cited the work of both, expressing her “gratitude for their expertise and meticulous work in this area” (p21).

The Racial Diversity UK Fund marked an important step in its mission to understand pathways to a racially just society, awarding its first four research grants.



The Foundation’s in house research programmes *Grown up? Journeys to adulthood* and *Public right*

to justice (PRTJ) are well underway, each generating significant evidence, insight, and engagement. Drawing on youth voice, expert insights, and analysis, *Grown up?* is building a rich picture of Gen Z’s experiences, to inform policy and practice. PRTJ is progressing a major evidence building phase to examine how well the justice system in England and Wales delivers accessible, fair, and effective justice, complemented by expert essays, commissioned reviews, and strong media coverage (p46 and p48).



The Nuffield Council on Bioethics (NCOB) shared evidence from England’s first Citizens’ Jury on

assisted dying with parliamentarians shaping legal reform across England, Wales, and Scotland. Publishing the jury’s findings in full, a media briefing resulted in widespread coverage across broadcast media and the national press, while briefings for the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill emphasised the importance of ongoing public deliberation. The jury’s recommendations, cited throughout debates, have influenced legislative discussions with parliamentarians, highlighting its value in understanding informed public views (p12).



The Racial Diversity UK (RDUK) Fund marked an important step in its mission to illuminate pathways to a racially just society, awarding its first four research grants. These projects examine racial equality since devolution, the impacts of rapid demographic change in Scotland, national priorities for racial justice, and how deindustrialisation affects communities of colour. RDUK marked this milestone through a major event with grant-holders, policymakers, and practitioners, which also launched a community of interest in the fund's work ([p50](#)).



The Nuffield Foundation and Ada joined forces to explore how AI and data-driven technologies are reshaping education. The result was a major landscape review, *A learning curve?*, which showed that although AI use in schools is growing, it remains poorly governed and largely unevaluated. The report was launched at a major event with key stakeholders and widely disseminated. The programme has since expanded into work on AI in assessment, careers guidance, and multi-academy trust adoption, with reports due for publication in 2026 ([p45](#)).



Advancing our mission, sharing our progress

We are working – and living – in a world undergoing profound and destabilising change. Established geo-political norms are being challenged, while increasing trends of protectionism and populism in some quarters are impacting social cohesion and calling into question previously settled assumptions. In the UK, these global trends and pressures are intersecting with deep-rooted domestic challenges. In this context, developing policies for the public good has become increasingly complex.

Social and economic pressures facing the UK

Nearly two decades of economic stagnation, combined with high and persistent levels of inequality, have placed many households and public services under severe strain.

Demographic shifts, including changing migration patterns, have enriched society but are also surfacing new tensions, while trust in key governing institutions remains low. These conditions fuel concerns about fairness, opportunity, social cohesion, and overstretched public services.

Alongside these pressures, rapid scientific and technological advances – particularly in AI – are transforming the economy and services faster than governance frameworks can adapt, creating both opportunities and risks, amid limited public understanding.

Our new strategic direction seeks to respond to this changing world, guided by five priority questions that cover prosperity, inclusion, technology, climate, and institutional effectiveness. Our goal is to generate rigorous, timely evidence and support innovation –

to help policymakers, practitioners, and others address these urgent social and economic challenges.

This framework enables us to focus on areas where independent evidence is most needed – for example, around demographic change, technological advance, local and community resilience, climate-related impacts, and the mounting pressures on housing and social care.

Issues shaping people's lives

A number of pressing policy areas continue to shape the environment in which we operate and the lives of people and communities.

The future of SEND provision remains a significant concern, with rising demand, escalating costs, and persistent gaps in support placing strain on children and families, schools, and the wider system.

The youth inactivity crisis is deepening anxieties about long-term opportunity and social mobility – with one million young people not in education, employment, or training, many of whom are living with underlying health conditions and are some distance from the world of work.

Housing affordability and supply constraints are affecting individuals, communities, and local economies. Separately, social care systems across the country are under acute strain.

Underlying all of these issues and trends is the problem that weak productivity growth continues to constrain living standards, limit the resources available for public services, and impede progress on many systemic challenges.



These pressures all illustrate the scale and urgency of the issues that will continue to guide our focus in the years ahead.

Delivering against our strategic priorities

Over the past year, we have moved decisively into implementing the ambitions set out in our Strategic Review. This has brought a new sense of momentum across our organisation, aligning our grant making, research, programmes, partnerships, and convening work behind an intentional, cross-Foundation focus on a shared set of priorities.

A central focus has been strengthening our role in bringing together researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to interrogate some of the most urgent issues shaping the UK’s social landscape. Through a series of targeted events – on governance of AI and emerging technologies, post-16 education and

NEETs, racial justice through the Racial Diversity UK Fund (RDUK), the challenges facing young people highlighted in *Grown up?*, and the implications of rapid technological change for education and society – we created spaces for debates that share new

Nearly two decades of economic stagnation, combined with high and persistent levels of inequality, have placed many households and public services under severe strain.

insights and deepen understanding. We have also convened smaller, expert round tables on issues such as institutions and demography, to help refine our focus and determine where we can best add value.

Our in-house programmes have continued to generate outputs, with *Grown up?* and *Public right to justice* shedding light on the pressures facing Generation Z and the persistent questions of fairness and access within the justice system in England and Wales. Each programme will report in 2026, presenting fresh evidence to impact policy and practice, while shaping our future funding priorities.

These have been large and sometimes complex cross-Foundation pieces of work and have provided important learning for how we might approach future in-house projects.

We have engaged in wider debate about many of the issues we cover. For example, Nuffield voices featured regularly regularly on The We Society podcast with Will Hutton, discussing themes spanning early childhood, child poverty, children in the care system, and the UK's inactivity crisis – conversations that will continue in 2026.

Alongside this, our expert centres, working within the overall framework of the Strategic Review, have maintained their reputations as authoritative voices: the Ada Lovelace Institute on technology governance, the Nuffield Council on Bioethics (NCOB) on ethical debates, and the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory (Nuffield FJO) on family justice.

The NCOB took the findings from its Citizens' Jury on assisted dying to parliamentarians involved in shaping proposals for reform in England, Wales, and Scotland,

making an important contribution to supporting a well-informed, evidence-based conversation on this emotive issue, while Nuffield FJO continued to shine a light on the experiences of children in complex situations, particularly those subject to Deprivation of Liberty orders. Meanwhile, Ada made a strong showing at the AI Action Summit in Paris as an evidence-based voice calling for international collaboration on AI governance against a backdrop of moves towards accelerationism and deregulation.

We have taken forward the first year of our EDI Action Plan, embedding the values that underpin our mission. Practical steps – establishing an inclusive events policy, and supporting the Society of Black Academics' annual conference – demonstrate our commitment to equity both within our organisation and across the wider sector.

Our RDUK programme grants – alongside others in our portfolio – are developing a strong pipeline of evidence on issues of race and inclusion. At the same time, we are exploring how best to broaden the remit of our Oliver Bird Fund to address physical and mental health issues that affect people's well-being and productivity.

The reopening of our Strategic Fund in 2025 marked another significant development as we seek to support high-quality, multidisciplinary research that can shift the dial on policy and practice as well as shaping debate. The culmination of major projects supported by the fund in the past, such as *The skills imperative 2035* and *The Pissarides review*, underscored the value of bold, long-term investment in research. The ongoing *Social security in a devolved UK* project has extended earlier work on child poverty, which contributed to the government's decision

... our expert centres, working within the overall framework of the Strategic Review, have maintained their reputations as authoritative voices ...

to remove the two-child limit in Universal Credit – a major policy shift.

The Department for Education announced funding for the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) for four more years, and in 2026 we look forward to the Education Endowment Foundation’s evaluation of the NELI Preschool programme, which has potential to support even younger children struggling with speech and language development.

Together, these developments demonstrate the sustained, tangible impact of our work – strengthening evidence, shaping debate, and informing change across systems and sectors.

Alongside our core activities, we have also undertaken a major governance review to strengthen our internal ways of working.

Looking ahead

As we progress through 2026, our work will continue to be anchored in the five priority questions that shape our strategic direction. These will remain the organising principles for how we prioritise issues; design programmes; engage with partners across research, policy, and practice; and ensure that research findings feed into public debate and policy development at the right time.

In the coming year, we will lean more deeply into several thematic areas of growing importance. Alongside furthering our focus on institutions, climate change, and demographics, housing and social care stand out as two policy issues facing acute pressure and long-term structural challenges, where the need for rigorous evidence and thoughtful policymaking is urgent.

In addition to funding and producing evidence which highlights recommendations for change, we will also focus on where innovation in practice can bring about direct change in specific sectors or areas. Building on the success of intervention programmes such as NELI and the work of Nuffield FJO in family justice, we will develop further potential areas for practice innovation and test these out.

2026 is a landmark year for the NCOB, as it reaches its 35th anniversary. This will be celebrated by a special edition impact report that highlights how the NCOB has brought ethical foresight and analysis into key policy decisions in health and biomedicine, including genome editing, organ donation, public health, and more – work that helps to ensure that governance of new technologies and science keeps pace with research progress, safeguards are in place, and innovation is directed towards beneficial and equitable outcomes.

Nuffield FJO is embarking on a new five-year strategy which aims to reimagine the family justice system. Its goals include tackling inequalities in the family justice system, promoting fair and equitable treatment of those who use it, and ensuring people can participate meaningfully in decisions about their lives – all with the aim of improving outcomes for children and families.

In 2026, Ada will continue to push for AI to be held to the same standards as other consequential sectors like food, medicine, and aviation. It will build even more evidence on what we are seeing on the ground and what effective independent regulation could look like. And it will convene diverse groups of stakeholders – from civil servants and regulators to industry leaders and technical practitioners – to discuss the complexities of new regulatory frameworks, public benefit, evaluation, and infrastructural dependence.

Across all our work we will continue to take long, medium, and short-term views of the impact of the research we fund, recognising that change can often be incremental and that policy is shaped by long cycles, shifting political priorities, and sustained engagement.

Alongside our forward-facing agenda, we are also strengthening our organisation to ensure we are well equipped to implement the Strategic Review effectively, including reviewing and updating some of our governance and operational practices and continuing to build our stakeholder networks, as well as improving our support for grant-holders and applicants.

Our five priority questions

Over the next five years, a set of five key questions and the relationships between them will shape our funding choices and the work of the Foundation and its expert centres. Some draw on areas where we already have deep expertise, while others will see us increase our emphasis in certain areas or expand into newer thematic territory.

We'll approach both with openness and curiosity: bringing people together, engaging with new and diverse audiences, and adapting as we learn. Within the framework provided by our strategic questions, the Foundation's grant calls will offer clear guidance on the themes we want to explore.

The priority questions are woven together by a common thread: our interest in prosperity, inclusiveness, and fairness for individuals, families, and communities. They also reflect our sustained focus on inequalities, disadvantage, and vulnerability – and the actions needed to address them.

We will keep scanning the horizon for emerging issues connected to these questions, ensuring we remain ready to support proposals that address new topics, respond to a fast-changing landscape, and help us understand how society is changing.

A prosperous and fair society

How can we build a prosperous and fair society, where people are secure and can fulfil their potential?

An inclusive society

How can we build an inclusive society, where people thrive and feel they belong, in the context of changing demography and ways of life?

Science, technology, and society

How can we ensure that developments in science and technology work for people and society?

Climate change

How can policies to address climate change be developed in a way that promotes a prosperous, fair, and inclusive society?

Trustworthy and effective institutions

How can we build and maintain the effective, accountable, and trustworthy institutions that our society and democracy need?

A prosperous and fair society

Evidence for a fairer UK

The UK's economic stagnation has entrenched inequalities and weakened living standards, with many social challenges shaped or accentuated by sustained underperformance and fiscal pressures. In this context, the Nuffield Foundation is continuing its focus on fairness, opportunity, and human potential, building on major initiatives such as the *IFS Deaton review of inequalities* and *The Economy 2030 Inquiry* to grow the evidence base that helps answer how we create a prosperous and fair society for all. Reflecting this commitment, we hosted an event, *What are the social foundations of a strong economy?*, which explored one of the central themes of the Strategic Review – the role of effective social policy in underpinning a strong and inclusive economy.

Independent economic insight

The *IFS Green Budget* is an annual, independent assessment of the UK's public finances, published ahead of the Budget. It analyses the public finances, tax, and spending decisions, and the risks and opportunities facing government.

By providing clear, evidence-based analysis of fiscal policy choices and trade-offs, it enhances understanding of the different options and their implications for growth and living standards.

Each year, chapters exploring specific relevant topics in more depth are published ahead of the main report. In 2025, these focused on support for children with special educational needs and disabilities, public sector productivity, defence spending, and unemployment insurance.

Tracking public sector performance

We also support the Institute for Government's *Performance tracker*, which examines how well public services are performing across areas such as health, education, justice, and local government.

Using a consistent set of indicators, it tracks trends over time and highlights where performance is improving, stagnating, or deteriorating. Nuffield funding has also allowed more in-depth work exploring variations in performance across different local areas for specific services, and what is driving them. In 2025, topics included General Practice, educational outcomes, and prisons.

Evidence that drives debate

Taken together, the Green Budget explains the fiscal context guiding government choices, while the *Performance tracker* shows how those choices play out across public services. Their analysis attracts substantial policymaker and media attention,



enhances parliamentary and public debate, and strengthens accountability for government decisions.

The Foundation also sponsored a special session on the *IFS Deaton review of inequalities* at the Royal Economic Society Annual Conference in Birmingham. It brought together four key contributors to discuss some of the central issues in the debate on inequalities, which inequalities are of the greatest concern, and how we might address them.

Renewed focus on post-16 education and skills

The rising number of young people not in education, employment, or training (NEETs) has become an urgent challenge for society and the economy. The implications for productivity, regional inequalities, and young people's life chances are significant, underscoring the need for a system that better supports those at greatest risk of disengagement. In response, the UK government is increasing its focus on strengthening post-16 education and skills, recognising its role in addressing these pressures and improving outcomes for young people.

Against this backdrop, the Foundation has intensified its work in these areas, marked by new evidence, responding to policy consultations, and convening education and business leaders.

We hosted a [policy workshop](#) in March to discuss strategies to improve meaningful engagement in post-16 education and training, informed by new evidence from [Comparing inequality and outcomes across post-16 education in the UK](#), and other grants. All four UK nations were represented, and the event included contributions from the UK government Skills Minister. The workshop surfaced common challenges and provided a forum to share solutions.

After the event we produced a policy briefing highlighting key insights from Nuffield-funded research to guide government thinking, which received positive feedback from officials working on the Skills Strategy. We also responded to an inquiry on Further Education and Skills from the Education Committee. Education Programme Head Emily Tanner gave evidence in this inquiry, and her contributions were reflected in the select committee report.

The NEET challenge

In July, the Foundation convened a roundtable on NEETs bringing together policymakers and experts, including Nuffield-funded researchers, to understand how best to address the problem. We submitted evidence to a Skills Commission inquiry on this subject, and shared findings from Nuffield-funded research in a follow-up roundtable.

Our Chief Executive, Gavin Kelly, was invited to join the expert panel of the independent ‘Young People and Work’ review led by Alan Milburn.

A grant informing this work is *Revisiting the raising of the participation age (RPA) to 18 in England*, which examined how the RPA affected post-16 participation and retention, and labour market outcomes. The RPA was found to have limited impact, with young people’s participation continuing to be hindered by a range of structural, institutional, social, and personal barriers. While it led to a slight improvement in initial engagement, dropout rates in Years 12 and 13 increased, meaning the policy resulted in only modest gains in employment and earnings by age 20.

The study recommended reassessing the duties and responsibilities attached to the RPA to ensure that all groups of young people are supported, improving post-16 destination data collection and sharing to support earlier intervention, and maintaining Child Benefit to age 18 for all young people, regardless of status, to tackle youth poverty and ensure that financial incentives do not drive choices at 16.

The project has achieved significant impact across the post-16 education and training landscape. The research team held consultations with a range of government departments, outlining the findings and setting out recommendations for future post-16 education and training policy and related welfare policy, with insights also informing the Milburn Review.

Another important piece of research is *The long-term impact of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)*, which considered the impact of a weekly cash transfer paid to 16–19-year-olds from poorer households in full-time education. It was introduced

in 2004 and still operates in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, but ended in England in 2011.

The project assessed the impact of the 2004 national roll-out of the EMA on short- and longer-run outcomes. Using administrative data, it examined effects on education, earnings, employment, and criminal behaviour. Among students eligible for Free School Meals, the EMA increased Year 12 full-time participation by around 2.5 percentage points, with the biggest gains among those with very low GCSE performance. However, it did not lead to a measurable increase in attainment, and evidence suggested it slightly reduced longer-run earnings and employment.

The *Post-16 education and skills white paper* was published by the UK government in October 2025, outlining reforms that were shaped by a wide body of evidence, including Nuffield-funded research.

Insights in the media

The Foundation has further highlighted these issues through contributions to national and sector media. Gavin Kelly authored an article in the *Financial Times*, *Let’s not forget the young people without GCSEs*, and spoke about the issue on *The We Society* podcast, while Education Programme Head Emily Tanner wrote about the challenges young people face transitioning from education to employment in *FE News*.

Our Chief Executive, Gavin Kelly, was invited to join the expert panel of the independent ‘Young People and Work’ review led by Alan Milburn.

Research findings for a changing economy

In 2025, two major Strategic Fund projects concluded with important insights on the future of skills, jobs, and well-being. *The skills imperative 2035* and *The Pissarides review* together highlight the profound shifts underway in the labour market and the urgent need for policies that support skills, security, and well-being in a new economic landscape.

Skills for tomorrow's workforce

Against the backdrop of rising numbers of NEETs, the impact of AI and global trends on the labour market, and policy interest in tackling longstanding mismatches between education and employment, the final report from *The skills imperative 2035* could not have been better timed.

The project – a five-year Strategic Fund grant led by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), and the Foundation's most significant investment in education research – investigated how job and skill needs are likely to evolve in response to major technological, demographic, environmental, and economic shifts. Together these forces are impacting both the jobs that exist and the capabilities required to do them.

The research identifies a set of essential employment skills which will become increasingly vital across the economy over the next decade – collaboration; communication; creative thinking; information literacy; organising, planning and prioritising; and problem-solving and decision-making.

Ongoing labour market change means there could be between one and three million fewer jobs in 'high-risk' occupations (for example, administrative, secretarial, customer service, and machine operators) by 2035. While previous periods of change have displaced workers without creating large-scale unemployment, it may be different in future. Opportunities for displaced lower-skilled workers are becoming increasingly scarce, making it more important than ever to support existing workers to retrain and change careers, and to ensure young people leave education with the

qualifications and skills needed for entry level roles in high growth areas.

During 2025 *The skills imperative 2035* research informed several key policy moments, including the FE and Skills Select Committee Inquiry, the Curriculum and Assessment Review, the Department for Education's Level 3 Pathways consultation, and the work of Skills England. The new UK Standard Skills Classification includes 'core skills' which align with essential employment skills, further reflecting the project's influence.

Alongside central government departments, the research also shaped the work of employer representative bodies within mayoral combined authorities, with its labour market projections being used to inform Local Skills Improvement Plans.

The Foundation's Director of Education, Josh Hillman, authored a think piece for *FE News* outlining what the further education sector needs to know about the NFER report. The report also gained national media coverage about the impact of AI on the job market in the *Guardian*, the *Independent* and others. NFER's Carole Willis also featured on *The Rest is Money* podcast, with Robert Peston and Steph McGovern, to discuss the research findings.

In 2025, two major Strategic Fund projects concluded with important insights on the future of skills, jobs, and well-being.

Impacts of technological change

The Pissarides review – led by Professor Sir Christopher Pissarides, and hosted by the Institute for the Future of Work (IFOW) and the London School of Economics, with partners at Imperial College London and Warwick Business School – examined the impact of automation and AI on jobs, skills, places, and people’s health and well-being across the UK.

The programme combined employer- and worker-level evidence, to produce a UK “Disruption Index”, and offered detailed analysis of how different types of technological change affect workers and how employers can influence these impacts positively. A main report was published in January 2025.

The review found measurable impacts from technological change on job quality and worker well-being. It found that technical transformation in the workplace needs to be undertaken in a way which meaningfully incorporates employee perspectives and takes explicit account of the capabilities and well-being of the workforce. Recommendations include the need to implement growth and capability strategies at a local level, support for firms in responsible AI adoption, and refocusing skills policy towards capabilities, resilience, and choice.

Impact has been extensive. IFOW held roundtables with government and is representing the UK in a research network investigating how AI is shaping work



and employment. Notably, fair work outcomes are now recognised within the UK government’s Social Value Model, which will transform how government procurement promotes fair work practices. IFOW work also informed the Competition and Mergers Authority’s exploration of UK job market trends, contributing to amendments submitted to the Digital Markets Competition and Consumers Bill.

Fairer family justice

The Nuffield Family Justice Observatory (Nuffield FJO) and its partners have a vision for a fairer family justice system, where the children and families involved have access to the support they need, can participate in decisions about their lives, and are treated in a compassionate way that recognises the trauma they have undoubtedly faced.

To be effective and fair, the family justice system needs to understand how children and adults use and experience the system.

Parents’ experiences

In 2025, Nuffield FJO continued to highlight the experiences of parents involved in care proceedings with a newborn baby, focusing on:

- Parents involved in same-day and short-notice hearings (hearings that take place within seven days of the application being made), which remain a concern both in relation to Articles 6 and 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998, and in relation to common humanity.
- The significant number of parents with learning disabilities or difficulties – these challenges are often not identified early enough for appropriate support to be provided.
- Parents who repeatedly have children removed from their care (recurrent proceedings). There are relatively few support services available for these parents. At the Committee Stage of the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill, Lord Meston called Nuffield FJO’s research into recurrent care proceedings “compelling, if depressing”. A proposed amendment to the Bill seeks to ensure

that local authorities offer evidence-based support to reduce the risk of a child being removed from a mother who has already had a child or children removed from her care.

Nuffield FJO also explored the increasing use of residential family assessment centres, where professionals assess parents’ ability to safeguard and care for their children, often newborn babies. Nuffield FJO highlighted that a lack of information about the parents placed in centres raises serious questions around the well-being, equity, and rights of families – covered in a comment piece in [Children & Young People Now](#).

In addition, evidence and guidance to inform more humane practice when babies are separated from their parents continued to be shared, including through the *Newborn babies in care proceedings* bulletin, which has around 850 subscribers. Nuffield FJO provided further support to the development of a ‘baby court’ in Blackpool – a problem-solving approach to care cases involving newborn babies.

Many parents involved with children’s services report feeling marginalised and disempowered in their relationships with social workers. A [Nuffield FJO webinar](#) shared research on parental advocacy services – an approach that gives parents a stronger voice in decision-making and helps them foster better relationships with professionals.

Children’s experiences, including when their liberty is deprived

Nuffield FJO continued to explore how children’s participation in proceedings might be better supported in ways that uphold their legal rights and promote their welfare – for example, the Private Law Pathfinder pilot courts focus on increasing the voice of children and young people.

The year saw Nuffield FJO continue to spotlight the experiences of children in complex situations, including those subject to Deprivation of Liberty orders under the inherent jurisdiction of the High Court (through which they can be living in unsuitable

accommodation with severe restrictions placed on their day-to-day freedoms).

In April, Nuffield FJO held the *Back to Their Futures summit: Transforming care for children subject to Deprivation of Liberty orders*. The conference focused on improving care for children in complex situations and brought together over 180 senior professionals from children’s social care, health, youth justice, and the judiciary, with policymakers from Ofsted, the Department for Education, the Ministry of Justice, and the NHS. Children and Families Minister Janet Daby MP delivered a keynote address.

Related to this, a vision for a new ecosystem of care for children in complex situations was drawn up by Nuffield FJO along with representatives from Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and children’s social care – presenting an opportunity to reset services for children who experience the greatest vulnerabilities in society.

The importance of data

Relevant, up-to-date data and evidence about the experiences of children and families is essential for a fairer family justice system. In 2025, improvements in data collection made it possible for Nuffield FJO to report on the ethnicity of babies in care proceedings in England for the first time. The findings indicated that babies with mixed or multiple ethnicities are over-represented in care proceedings. Nuffield FJO also explored how data is used in the youth justice system to help inform a child-first family justice data strategy.

Shaping the policy landscape

Nuffield FJO submitted evidence to the Public Bill Committee for the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill on new measures relating to Deprivation of Liberty orders. In a House of Lords debate on the amendments, Baroness Barron cited the work of Nuffield FJO and the Nuffield Foundation, and her “gratitude for their expertise and meticulous work in this area”.

Speaking on *The We Society* podcast, Nuffield FJO Director Lisa Harker discussed how vulnerable children are being failed, and in an article on supported accommodation in the *Big Issue*, she argued that every child in care deserves better.

Nuffield FJO submitted evidence to the Public Bill Committee for the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill on new measures relating to Deprivation of Liberty orders.

An inclusive society

Building an inclusive society means ensuring people of all ages, backgrounds, and needs can thrive. The Foundation's Racial Diversity UK Fund ([p50](#)) and Oliver Bird Fund ([p51](#)) are helping us meet this challenge.

SEND evidence and insights

As demographic and social shifts impact communities and public services, the growing needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are a critical test of our ability and willingness to create a fairer, more cohesive society.

SEND spending is placing mounting pressure on school budgets and council finances, with higher demand stretching provision and creating challenges for national and local government as well as children and their families.

Several Nuffield-funded projects contributed evidence to the high-profile public debate on potential reforms to the system in the face of rising demand and a severe funding crisis. Work by the Institute for Fiscal Studies and Institute for Government laid bare the scale of the challenge facing the government, while other work pointed towards principles for reform.

Inconsistent identification practices

In February 2025, the Education Policy Institute published the final report of its *Identifying SEND* project, which revealed through analysis of England's National Pupil Database that the school a child attends is the strongest single predictor of whether they are recorded as having SEND, suggesting a need for much greater consistency in SEND identification practices.

An interim report from the National Foundation for Educational Research highlighted [the uneven spread of pupils with SEND across mainstream schools](#), and raised questions about whether the strong emphasis on academic attainment may be in tension with inclusive practice, including in school admissions. Both reports received extensive coverage in the sector and mainstream press.

Global trends in SEND

Two teams from University College London Institute of Education (UCL IOE) and the Centre for Education Systems (CES), worked together to [explore SEND policy and practice across 17 jurisdictions](#), including the four UK nations. The CES work found that levels of SEND identification have been rising around the world, with England not alone in facing demands on funding. The UK government's prioritisation of

early intervention and more inclusive mainstream provision is mirrored elsewhere – for example, Estonia, which has one of the most integrated early years and multi-agency systems, uses a needs-based rather than medicalised definition of SEND, and provides extensive needs-based support in early childhood – but evidence on whether this actually improves outcomes or mitigates funding pressures is still emerging.

Needs vs diagnosis

Two interim reports from the UCL IOE’s *ScopeSEND* research described how SEND systems sit on a spectrum in terms of whether support is allocated on the basis of diagnoses or needs; the trend towards the latter is supported by early findings from the University of York’s *Rethinking special educational needs* project, which shows that children often experience clusters of difficulties transcending diagnostic labels.

Accessing exams

Problems with literacy are a common form of SEND among secondary students, and research carried out by UCL IOE explored whether exam access arrangements – such as using a word processor and/or receiving 25% extra time – help level the playing field. They found that while these adjustments improved scores for around two thirds of pupils, peers without difficulties benefited even more from word processor use, which is a decision left to schools’ discretion for all pupils. The team also identified challenges, including Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) workload and training pressures; resource shortages; stigma among students; and misconceptions, including among parents, about the purpose of access arrangements. They produced a toolkit for schools to support effective use of access arrangements.

Building insight to shape change

There has been significant scrutiny of potential SEND reforms, given the widespread acceptance that the current system isn’t working. We have prioritised sharing Nuffield-funded research with decision makers to help ensure that change is informed by the best-available evidence.

At the start of 2025 we responded to an inquiry from the Education Committee about reforming the SEND system, and our research was highlighted in their final report. We took part in roundtables organised by the Department for Education about different aspects of SEND policy, and organised a meeting with analysts in the department to focus specifically on Nuffield-funded evidence. We also engaged with a number of organisations seeking to inform government policy in this area, such as IPPR and The Difference, as well as sharing knowledge with grant-holders.

As the white paper was being drafted, we shared five key messages for SEND reform with relevant officials, and will continue engaging on this in 2026.



Poverty: Evidence and impact

We have funded a number of grants exploring poverty, food affordability, early years interventions, and insecure housing, and possible actions to improve people's lives and reduce hardship.

Our [Strategic Review](#) reaffirmed the Foundation's commitment to improving lives within a just and inclusive society, and 2025 saw the impact of long-term investment in research on families living on low incomes.

Ending the two-child limit

A major shift came in the Budget, with the announcement of the removal of the two-child limit in Universal Credit. Current estimates suggest that ending this policy will reduce the numbers of children in poverty by around 450,000 than would otherwise have been the case, measured by relative low income after housing costs, by the end of the Parliament.

Seminal Nuffield-funded research that reported in 2022 and 2023 – including [How UK welfare reform affects larger families](#) and [Fertility impacts of the two-child limit](#) – shows that neither the two-child limit nor the benefit cap achieved their intended behavioural aims. Instead, they caused hardship



for many children and their families. While ultimately political, it seems less likely that the decision to remove the two-child limit would have been considered without this important, independent evidence.

In early 2025, a newly funded project *Improving policy-making processes and knowledge bases on child poverty* began, bringing the voices of more than 200 parents and carers living on low incomes directly into the development of the UK government's Child Poverty Strategy. Participants met ministers and officials, to share what life is like on a low income. They were invited to contribute a foreword to *Our Children, Our Future* – the Child Poverty Strategy policy paper – and were publicly acknowledged in the Prime Minister's first post on Substack.

Recognising that engaging so directly in policymaking is not without risk of capture or tokenism, reflections on how to embed lived experience meaningfully in policymaking will follow in 2026.

Insights from this and other Nuffield-funded work were shared directly with the Child Poverty Unit, and with wider audiences on a *The We Society* podcast episode featuring Alex Beer – Assistant Director, Strategy – and through a blog *Child Poverty in the UK: Removing the two-child limit is important, but insufficient*, which she authored. Our ongoing Strategic Fund grant *Social security in a devolved UK* continues to achieve high-level engagement with policymakers and third sector stakeholders, including at roundtables in London, Cardiff, and Edinburgh.

The impact of Sure Start

The Foundation funded the evaluation of England's Sure Start programme. This was an important piece of research because Sure Start was a major early years policy and the findings from this study provide rigorous evidence on its real impacts – including health, education, and social outcomes – which is helping to inform decisions about how to deliver effective early years services.

The research shows that Sure Start had positive impacts on children's educational attainment, and reduced hospitalisations. Its effects on socio-emotional and behavioural outcomes were more mixed. For example, it clearly reduced internalising behaviours, such as depression and anxiety, but evidence on externalising behaviours, such as aggression and conduct disorders, is less conclusive.

The evidence suggests that Sure Start was not a 'silver bullet' and cannot replace the need for later, more specialised interventions. However, its impacts are remarkably long lasting, with positive effects of the programme stretching at least into adolescence. A cost-benefit analysis indicates that these long-run benefits, for the government and individuals, are likely to outweigh the programme's costs.

Between 2021 and 2025, the research was mentioned in 19 government reports and reviews, and helped make the case for investment in integrated early years family support, including expanding investment in Family Hubs.

Our Strategic Review reaffirmed the Foundation's commitment to improving lives within a just and inclusive society, and 2025 saw the impact of long-term investment in research on families living on low incomes.

In recognition of the impact the research team received two awards: the Smart Thinking “Best Publication of the Year” prize and the ONS Research Excellence Award for “Impact of Analysis”.

Tackling dietary inequality

Nuffield’s support for The Food Foundation continued in 2025, as they combined evidence and lived experience to reshape the narrative on dietary inequality. Their work aims to raise public awareness and drive action from policymakers and business. As part of their *Changing the story of dietary inequality* research, the team found persistently high levels of food insecurity – with households with children, Universal Credit recipients, and disabled people at consistently higher risk. Weekly shop prices have increased by around 30% since spring 2022, while healthier foods are more than twice as expensive per calorie as less healthy options.

Using surveys, analysis of routine and innovative datasets, and insights from interviews and focus groups, they communicated findings to key audiences through reports, films, podcasts, data stories, dashboards, events, and direct engagement. In 2025, the Feed the Future coalition campaign, led by The Food Foundation, resulted in a government decision to extend Free School Meals to more families on Universal Credit in England, reaching an extra half a million children. There is also now a commitment to update the School Food Standards, which should improve access to nutritious food.

Supporting tenants to stay in their homes

At a time when household finances are under increasing strain, the *Holding on to home* project delivers vital evidence on the factors that impact the ability of social housing tenants to pay their rent, which groups are most likely to experience difficulties, and practical ways landlords can support tenants to retain their homes.

The research revealed that many more tenants were struggling to pay their rent than shown by arrears figures alone. A survey of over 1,000 tenants renting from four case study landlords found that 9% were in arrears but 70% were struggling to pay their rent.

These findings informed guidance – endorsed by the Chartered Institute of Housing – and training for social housing landlords on approaches to tenancy sustainment, including how best to support tenants to maximise their incomes. The team have delivered well-received sessions to staff at housing organisations across the country, presenting the findings and offering practical guidance on addressing tenants’ challenges.

Social mobility barriers

Two projects on inequalities in opportunity and social connection, completed in 2025, are reshaping employer recruitment practices and informing national policy.

Two projects on inequalities in opportunity and social connection, completed in 2025, are reshaping employer recruitment practices and informing national policy.

Research shows that access to elite professions continues to be shaped by family background, gender, and ethnicity – limiting social mobility, reducing people's ability to improve their life chances, and contributing to a less fair society.

Unequal access to top jobs

Inequalities in access to elite occupations examined unique recruitment data for entry level-roles across 17 large employers to understand why disadvantaged young people are less likely to work in professional occupations than their advantaged peers, even when their level of education is the same.

Applicants from lower socio-economic and ethnic minority groups were found to be well represented, but they were less likely to receive job offers compared to similar applicants, with inequalities arising at different points in the recruitment process for different groups.

There has been extensive engagement with employers, social mobility organisations, and policymakers, with some large employers changing their recruitment practices. The work is continuing under a new grant which focuses on racial disparities.

Understanding social connections

While this work highlights structural barriers in recruitment processes, *Revealing social capital* shows how social networks and everyday environments shape people's long-term opportunities.

This project has taken an innovative approach to considering how social connections affect a person's life outcomes, how different environments facilitate its creation, and how it can be developed to improve lives.

An international team led by the Behavioural Insights Team replicated and extended work by Harvard economist Raj Chetty, using unique access to Facebook data. Analysing six billion friendships from 20 million UK users, they found that children from low-income backgrounds who grow up in areas with the highest levels of cross-class connections

earn 28% (£2,924) more at age 28 than those in the least connected areas. They also found that 'long ties' – friendships beyond usual social circles – strongly predict social mobility, particularly in deprived neighbourhoods. Yet neighbourhoods and schools, where most friendships form, remain largely segregated by income.

Neighbourly Lab explored *how* social connections shape people's lives, and what helps communities build relationships across economic lines. Working in four areas with either unusually high or low economic connectedness, they found that neighbourhood design shapes social divides, and that small interventions can build lasting bridges.

Informing national policy

To help shape policy development, grant partner the Royal Society of Arts convened conversations with residents, local and national policymakers, academics, social capital experts, and practitioners to develop ideas for increasing mixing between people from different backgrounds.

Reflecting the ground-breaking methods, media coverage included The Economist, The Guardian, The Times, and BBC Radio 4. Public events attracted large audiences and speakers at the launch included Bob Putnam, Andy Haldane, and Nick Clegg. Findings were included in *Social capital 2025: The hidden wealth of nations*, which is now informing the government's Pride in Place strategy and the Plan for Neighbourhoods, a £1.5 billion programme to invest in 75 areas over the next decade.

School inequalities

Creating a more inclusive education system requires a better understanding of how admissions policies impact access to high-performing schools.

Demand for places at these schools is intense, driven largely by admissions systems that prioritise proximity and therefore reward families who can afford to live nearby. This excludes poorer families, entrenches inequalities in access, and raises concerns about fairness.

Modifying school choice for more equitable outcomes in England examined how distance-based admissions policies contribute to inequality in the education system and analysed the impact of feasible reforms on school access, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

The project also modelled alternative admissions options and found that a Free School Meal (FSM) quota delivered the largest improvement in access to effective schools for FSM pupils, while causing minimal disruption: 94% of students stayed in

the same schools, changes in school composition were marginal, and home school distances barely increased.

The researchers recommended adopting an FSM quota in the School Admissions Code to widen access for poorer pupils while maintaining the benefits of community for most students. Findings helped shape school admissions reforms in Brighton and Hove and will be part of the evidence base when the Code is revised.

Limitations of the FSM measure

Beyond admissions, how schools identify and help their most disadvantaged pupils is critical to ensure every child receives the support they are entitled to.

The FSM measure is widely used to identify disadvantaged pupils, target funding and school interventions, and assess education policies and systems. However, its binary design is limiting and there is evidence of discrepancies and biases in FSM-attribution.

What has 'Free School Meals' measured and what are the implications? mapped and critically examined which pupils have been represented by the FSM measure, how it is applied across policymaking and research, and if alternative or complementary tools could offer better ways to understand pupil disadvantage.

The work illustrated important changes in the composition of the FSM group over time and varying patterns of FSM registration practices across schools and local authorities.

Importantly, they found that fewer children are registered for FSM than are estimated to be in poverty due to the low-income threshold (£7,400 per year at the time of the research), under-registration, and eligibility rules that ignore factors like housing costs and family size.

The research recommended expanding FSM eligibility and introducing national auto-enrolment. It also called for testing alternative ways of measuring disadvantage. The findings informed the Department

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for Education's expansion of FSM to all families on Universal Credit, and contributed to its decision to move towards using income data to allocate disadvantage funding.

Inclusive employment for disabled people

The government's focus on supporting people to work reflects its aim to grow the economy and its recognition that meaningful employment can significantly improve well-being.

Designing inclusive remote and hybrid working to support disabled workers was the UK's largest mixed-method study of disabled remote or hybrid workers, and aligned with a growing policy interest in flexible working arrangements as a key lever for inclusive employment.

Researchers analysed job vacancy data, surveyed over 1,200 people, and interviewed disabled workers, employers, and managers from 27 organisations. 85% of disabled remote or hybrid worker survey respondents considered access to remote/hybrid working essential or very important when looking for a new job, and 60% felt their working pattern had a positive impact on their productivity. However, despite significant growth during the pandemic, availability of fully remote jobs has declined more recently, though they remain above pre-pandemic levels.

The team are calling for government to prioritise remote and hybrid working to boost disabled people's employment, recommending measures such as advertising flexibility. They have shared their findings at the Department for Business and Trade's Roundtable on Flexible Working, and with the Senedd's Equality and Social Justice Committee's call for evidence on the disability employment and payment gap.

Successful and inclusive communities

Understanding Communities, a joint research programme with the British Academy, concluded in October 2025 with a final report bringing together insights from six diverse projects, and a roundtable with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

The report aimed to deepen practical understanding of how communities function, what makes them successful and inclusive, and how they can improve people's lives, highlighting four key themes to strengthen community resilience.

- **Place** – the value of locally tailored policies, and the strong value that communities place on hyperlocal services and organisations.
- **Trust** – the importance of trust in building and maintaining social connections, delivering services, and the factors that help to develop and sustain it.
- **Connection** – what enables people to feel more connected with each other, and the contribution and limitations of digital technology.
- **Community capacity** – how a lack of infrastructure and public sector capacity adversely affects communities, and how – with the right government support – communities can enhance individual and local capacity.

Findings informed submissions to the Women and Equalities Select Committee Inquiry on community cohesion, the Welsh Government's Equality and Social Justice Committee consultation on social cohesion, and the Independent Commission on Community and Cohesion.

A separate insight report by the Institute for Community Studies captures learning on effective community-focused, place-based research.

Improving safeguarding for adopted and SGO children

Children who are adopted or placed under Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) often have histories of trauma, including abuse, neglect, and loss, which can lead to challenging behaviour and greater safeguarding needs.

Improving safeguarding outcomes after adoption or special guardianship aimed to improve long-term outcomes by exploring how safeguarding concerns arise, how families are supported, and how local authority responses differ from those for birth families.

The study identified five key issues – including the need for better training and support to help prospective adopters and special guardians understand how childhood trauma can present as challenging behaviour, and how to respond effectively – and set out recommendations.

The research team is working with Adoption England, the Department for Education, Ofsted, and the Association of Directors of Children's Services, to implement these recommendations locally and nationally.

Racial disparities in the youth justice system

Over the past decade, the number of children entering the youth justice system has declined significantly, but racially minoritised children remain over-represented.

Exploring racial disparity in diversion from the youth justice system set out to explore this imbalance by examining decision-making at the gateway to the youth justice system – initial contact with the police, and arrest.

The study found that ethnic disparities increased as children progress through youth justice interventions. Offences committed by minoritised children – particularly Black boys – were consistently treated more severely compared with White children involved in similar incidents. In addition, many minoritised children reported negative or discriminatory experiences at school and with the police, increasing their likelihood of entering the system.

The research has been widely shared and discussed among practitioners, policymakers, and researchers, including key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Justice, the Youth Justice Board, and the police. Some recommendations were included in amendments to the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, and the team are developing plans to pilot key recommendations in practice.



Inequalities in the family justice system

In 2025, the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory (Nuffield FJO) continued its work to address inequalities in children's and families' experiences of the family justice system, challenges which directly align with the Foundation's commitment to building a more inclusive society.

Late identification of learning disabilities/difficulties

Research shows that many parents involved in care proceedings with newborn babies have learning disabilities or difficulties, but these challenges are often identified too late for appropriate assessment, intervention, or support.

The pre-proceedings stage is a vital chance for parents to demonstrate their parenting ability, but services are not always adapted to meet their needs, which could be a serious injustice.

A 2025 Spotlight paper found that late identification is linked to limited social worker confidence and experience, time pressures, and delays in accessing specialist assessments. It also highlighted poor coordination between adult and children's social care, the vital role of advocates and intermediaries, and the need for better support for parents after proceedings end.

Ethnic inequalities

There is broad recognition that deep ethnic inequalities persist in children's social care, and much more must be done to understand and meet the needs of children and adults through an ethnicity lens.

Nuffield FJO continues to support the work of the Racial Justice Family Network (RJFN) in tackling systemic discrimination, racism, and inequities across the family justice system. The RJFN was originally incubated by Nuffield FJO and is now managed by CoramBAAF.

Addressing ethnic inequalities requires an understanding of the disparities that families face, and the factors that shape them. However, access to good quality data about the ethnicity of children and adults in the family justice system remains a barrier.

Despite progress being made in recent years by Cafcass, challenges in recording and linking ethnicity data remain. Qualitative research, and listening to those with lived experience, is also vital.

In 2025, Nuffield FJO continued to highlight data gaps, including the absence of ethnicity information on applications to deprive children of their liberty under the inherent jurisdiction of the High Court. This lack of data means it isn't possible to know if certain ethnic groups are over-represented.

Improved data collection did, however, make it possible for Nuffield FJO to report for the first time on the ethnicity of babies in care proceedings in England, finding that babies with mixed or multiple ethnicities are over-represented.

New data tracker and chart

Recognising the need for accessible, up-to-date data on children's and families' experiences of the family justice system, Nuffield FJO launched a new Data Tracker. It brings together national administrative data and research in an easy-to-use dashboard, which is regularly updated to track numbers of children and families, their demographics, outcomes, and other analysis from before, during, and after court proceedings, across public and private law in England and Wales.

Nuffield FJO also launched a new Chart of the Month series which presents data in a more visually accessible and engaging way.

Science, technology, and society

Addressing rapid technological and ethical challenges

The rapid development and deployment of new technologies is unfolding faster than our collective ability to understand their societal impacts, benefits, and harms. Two of the Foundation's expert centres, the Ada Lovelace Institute (Ada) and the Nuffield Council on Bioethics (NCOB), help ensure innovation is ethical, evidence-based, and benefits people and society. The NCOB is jointly and equally funded by the Nuffield Foundation, the Wellcome Trust, and the Medical Research Council.

2025 demonstrated how quickly policy, regulation, and industry priorities can change in light of new geo-political pressures. Longstanding problems – like regulatory capture, fragile institutions, dependency on big technology companies, and a lack of accountability for harms – came into sharper focus. And the disconnect between rapid technology change and the slower response of our civic and democratic institutions and governance processes became clearer.

Shaping AI policy

Ada worked to make sense of these shifting policy sands through the development of a new strategy;

made continued calls for stronger protection against AI risks and harms; examined how AI and data-driven systems are shaping our public services; and explored the public's hopes, fears and aspirations about AI.

Ada played a prominent role at the AI Action Summit in Paris, providing an evidence-based voice calling for international collaboration on AI governance amid moves towards accelerationism and deregulation. Ada was featured across the media, including LBC, Sky News, BBC News (broadcast and web), BBC Radio 4's Today, BBC Radio 5, and in the Guardian, the Independent and Politico.

Ada helped develop an amendment to the Data (Use and Access) Bill that refined its definition of 'scientific research' to help ensure that large technology companies could not push legal data privacy boundaries. This led to parliamentary clarification of the intended meaning and a commitment from the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) to issue early guidance to limit misuse of the exemption.

Ada's report on biometrics found that the UK's fragmented governance of facial recognition and other biometric technologies is failing to provide legal certainty or safeguard the public. Findings were covered widely in the media, and cited by a Department for Science, Innovation & Technology

(DSIT) report and in a Home Office consultation on the use of biometrics in policing.

Ada's [legal analysis](#) in partnership with the law firm and consultancy AWO found that harms arising from Advanced AI Assistants – which are increasingly embedded in our lives, from our finances to our mental health – are not covered by our current legal system. In addition, Ada's [research of the liability system in the UK](#) showed that current rules are not sufficient to provide a route to redress, create incentives for risk management, or help clarify legal risks for people and organisations who deploy or use AI.

AI and data-driven technologies in the public sector

In 2025 Ada shared its expertise on AI and public services, including publishing two policy briefings that drew on six years of research into public sector AI and data-driven technologies. [Learn fast and build things](#) distilled lessons from over 30 Ada reports on public sector applications of AI and data-driven technologies. [Licence to build](#) supported policymakers and practitioners to understand public views on AI to ensure it works for the sector and the public it serves.

Together these briefings solidified Ada's positions and policy recommendations on transparency, evaluation, participatory design, and scrutiny of private sector involvement. Ada was invited to present at the inaugural meeting of the Prime Minister's AI Exemplar's Programme, the Public Accounts Committee on public sector use of AI, and to give evidence to the Science, Innovation and Technology Select Committee on public sector adoption.

Research on procurement contributed to changes in relationships and ways of working between central and local government. Ada's publication of a [landscape review of AI and education](#) (in collaboration with the Nuffield Foundation) facilitated conversations about adoption with the Department for Education, Ofsted, the Education Endowment Foundation, and other sector expert bodies. Read more about this work on [page 45](#).

How people and society are affected by AI

The second [Ada/Turing public attitudes survey](#) demonstrated that people understand AI differently depending on how it's used – and that views differ in relation to demographics, including age and ethnicity. Follow-up [rapid polling](#) on public attitudes around the governance of AI revealed strong public consensus for independent AI regulation, with overwhelming support to prioritise AI safety and positive impacts over economic gains, speed of innovation, and competition.

Ada's qualitative participatory work continued to build important evidence about under-represented communities in the UK. [Deliberative workshops](#) in Brixton, Belfast, and Southampton brought forward evidence demonstrating the significance of place, power, and accountability – insights which were presented in Parliament.

The impacts of emerging technologies

With its publication of [Going pro?](#) – in partnership with the Center for Democracy & Technology in America – Ada explored options for professionalising the AI assurance industry, and was invited to present findings to techUK, DSIT, the Macarthur Foundation, and the ACM FAccT conference.

Ada also concluded work on [immersive technologies](#) with three reports providing UK regulators and policymakers with an overview of how these technologies work, an analysis of trends in their development and regulation, and their risks and benefits. They were supported by engagement with bodies including the ICO, Ofcom, and the Government Office for Science.

Research on [Advanced AI Assistants](#) garnered widespread policymaker and media interest, cementing Ada's credentials for forward-facing research. Findings were shared at high-profile fora including the EU Steering Group of the Partnership on AI, and received media coverage including in the Economist and on Sky News.

Ethical issues in science and technology

The NCOB anticipates future scientific and technological developments through its [horizon scanning and foresight programme](#), identifying emerging research likely to raise ethical concerns, and informing anticipatory governance approaches to help society prepare before issues arise.

Through multidisciplinary ethical analysis and wide engagement with experts and publics, the NCOB helps identify where the ‘red lines’ of ethically sensitive research lie, and produces guidance to support responsible innovation, safeguard ethical values, and promote equitable outcomes.

The NCOB’s report on [stem cell-based embryo models \(SCBEMs\)](#) illustrates this approach. As a research tool, SCBEMs have the potential to bring public benefit through new insights around early human development. However, there is debate about their status – for example, in relation to human embryos – and how they should be used.

The report sets out proposals for an agile governance framework which facilitates the advancement of research but provides reassurance that ethical ‘red lines’ – such as transferring a SCBEM into humans or animals, or developing SCBEMs that can feel pain – are not crossed.

Health Minister Baroness Merron and Lord Willetts, Chair of the Regulatory Innovation Office, joined the NCOB alongside representatives of leading health regulators at a roundtable to discuss the implementation of these proposals. The NCOB continues to work towards building parliamentary and ministerial support for targeted amendments to the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act (1990) which governs embryo research in the UK. A thought leadership piece in [The House](#) made the case for reform.

2025 also saw the launch of the [NCOB’s major review](#) of the 14-day rule for human embryo research. Currently, embryos can be developed in the lab and used in research up until 14 days, but there have

been calls – including from the UK fertility regulator – for the government to extend this limit. The NCOB’s review will provide decision makers with independent evidence and analysis to evaluate policy options for future embryo research.

The first outputs from this project – briefings on the [scientific knowledge](#) and [ethical issues](#) – were published in November 2025. Further insights were gathered through extensive [public dialogue](#), including [community conversations](#) across the UK, with a Citizens’ summit planned for spring 2026.

Promoting horizon scanning

The NCOB advanced its [commitment to developing ethically grounded horizon scanning and foresight methodologies](#) for policymakers through a presentation at the flagship Civil Service World conference. It ran a session to showcase its rapid ethical assessment (REA) approach – a tool designed to help policymakers quickly identify and navigate key ethical considerations and trade-offs. The session showed how the REA enables ethical implications to be identified and considered at pace, and its value to policy development.



Feedback showed:

- 88% felt ethics training would be useful in policy training.
- 94% said the NCOB session made them understand ethics better.
- 77% said ethics could help them navigate tensions better.

Achieving impact through partnerships

In 2025, the NCOB partnered with several organisations to further the aim of ensuring developments in science and technology work for society.

A joint project with the Nuffield Foundation explored uses of genomics in education, focusing on the rapidly evolving field of polygenic indices (PGIs) which aim to combine and sum up the cumulative effect of multiple genetic variants on an individual.

A [scoping report](#) set out the challenges of using PGIs to make predictions about educational attainment. A multidisciplinary workshop followed to discuss the most pressing ethical questions raised by their potential use in classrooms – [insights](#) from this will help to shape the next phase of debate.

In November the NCOB, Ada, and the Nuffield Foundation convened expert stakeholders to explore pressing challenges and opportunities in governing emerging technologies. Participants explored best practice in agile governance and worked to identify opportunities for collective action to develop approaches that keep pace with innovation and ensure technology achieves public good.

Representatives included the World Economic Forum; the Department for Science, Innovation & Technology; the UK Science, Innovation and Technology Select Committee; the ICO; the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency; the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority; Apple; and Nesta – reflecting interest from across sectors in collaborating on the ethical governance of emerging technologies.

Genomic science and technology are integral to the NHS 10-year plan, and the NCOB continues working to ensure an ethical provision of new treatments and improved patient care. Having identified a need for a collaborative, national approach to developing consistent ethical resources for genomics sector, the NCOB has established a [UK-wide genomics ethics network](#) with Genomics England, Our Future Health, UK Biobank, and the Wellcome Sanger Institute.

Further partnerships included:

- Collaborating with the International Society for Stem Cell Research on a time-framed [international horizon scan](#).
- Partnering with Sciencewise to boost public engagement for its embryo research time limit project.
- Working with international partners on global guidelines for ethics committees assessing research related to climate change and health.

Supporting digital inclusion research

Meanwhile the Foundation's grant funding supported work which led to the creation of the Minimum Digital Living Standard (MDLS), defining the essential digital goods, skills, and services that households need to be digitally included. The original focus was on households with children, but in 2025 the team expanded the project to create a single definition of MDLS that covers all households.

The MDLS project gained significant traction, influencing both policy and practice. For example, it was mentioned in the UK-wide Digital Inclusion Action Plan from the Department of Science, Innovation and Technology. Councils in the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the North East Combined Authority used MDLS to shape their strategies for digital inclusion, and the Welsh and Scottish Governments have commissioned the development of their own versions.

Climate change

Building a fairer climate future

Our 2025 Strategic Review sets out our growing interest in how policies and practice to address climate change can support a prosperous, fair, and inclusive society.

This is a new priority area centred on understanding the societal implications of climate change and climate policies, how these affect different groups, and our belief that action to alleviate or adjust to its impact should also deliver equitable outcomes and economic growth. We will particularly focus on:

- Whether current systems and approaches can effectively respond to climate change and climate shocks and deliver a fair and inclusive transition that improves outcomes for families and communities.
- The distributional consequences of climate strategies across people and places, recognising that the effects of climate policies are uneven, and managing change so that vulnerable groups benefit without bearing disproportionate costs.
- The role of the education system, including the knowledge, skills and capabilities needed to live and work in a society shaped by climate and

environmental change, and how to equip children and young people with this learning.

- The social and distributional implications of local environmental issues such as air and water quality, including lived experience, capabilities and vulnerabilities across communities, and the policy and societal responses needed.

Prior work in this area includes [The Economy 2030 Inquiry](#) which reported in 2023. It highlighted the opportunities and disruption involved in the transition to net zero, and concluded that “none of the difficult decisions to reach net zero have been taken”.

We also supported [Understanding family and community vulnerabilities in transition to net zero](#). The final report from that project – [Our journey to net zero](#) – was published in 2024, providing a framework to identify the socio-economic and well being opportunities and risks for different groups of people and communities. It examined how the costs and benefits of transition could be shared more fairly across the population. The research was influential in the creation of the Centre for Joined-up Sustainability Transformations in 2025, a new research initiative set up with £8 million of funding from UKRI and ESRC, which aims to produce socially just, joined-up solutions for low carbon living and a fair transition to net zero.

Expanding climate research

As the Foundation looks to establish a body of work on climate change, several new grants began in 2025.

Clear skies, clear minds is assessing the effects of air pollution on children’s health and educational outcomes, and *Distributional impacts of net zero on electricity customers* is analysing how households experience the costs of decarbonisation through their energy bills and how costs might fall disproportionately on lower income households. The project will test policies for a fairer distribution of impacts and will publish briefings and host workshops with policymakers to share findings and strengthen understanding of the trade-offs between inequality, decarbonisation, and the political feasibility of different policies.

As part of the *Inequalities and the future* project, the IFS are asking how to design a policy package – involving energy taxes, benefits, and retrofitting homes – that accounts for behaviour change and reduces carbon emissions without increasing inequalities.

In 2026 we will continue to refine and grow the climate change portfolio.

Ethical questions in geoengineering

As part of its priority focus on the environment and health, the NCOB announced a new project investigating the ethical issues and health-related impacts of solar radiation modification (SRM), a form of geoengineering.

SRM encompasses a range of emerging technologies designed to reflect sunlight away from the earth’s surface, to help slow rising global temperatures caused by climate change.

Examples include marine cloud brightening (spraying sea water from ships to enhance the reflectivity of low-lying clouds), and stratospheric aerosol injection (releasing aerosol particles into the stratosphere to mimic the cooling effects of volcanic eruptions).

Research funders in the UK have provided funding to explore these interventions. However, there is controversy over whether their use could be ethically justified, and whether they should play a role in addressing climate change.

This project is in its early stages, and follows a previous NCOB report, *Climate change and health: Embedding ethics into policy and decision-making*, which highlighted the value of embedding ethical considerations into climate and health decision-making. As well as demonstrating the intersections between climate change and health, the report emphasised the need to account for the interests of future generations, the environment, and non-human species in any interventions to tackle climate change.

The SRM project’s first output will be a rapid review outlining emerging SRM technologies and the ethical issues raised by research and development, including impacts on humans, other species, and future generations.



Trustworthy and effective institutions

Strengthening trust in UK institutions

Effective and trusted institutions form a crucial part of the underpinning of any liberal democratic society. Interactions at many levels – between citizens and government, agencies, and public services – shape people's experience of democracy, influence their trust in governance, and often determine the effectiveness of social policies.

Trust in some UK institutions is, however, eroding amid political polarisation, disinformation, and fraying public services. Building on the Foundation's history, we are renewing our focus on this important area. In 2025 we named this as a key question in our Strategic Review and began scoping our areas of interest, which include:

- **Public trust** – how we can rebuild trust in institutions that themselves are accountable, transparent, and responsive to the needs and values of different communities?
- **Institutional design and innovation** – exploring what new and different institutional models might emerge in response to changing social needs, where these are appropriate, and how they might be tested.
- **Community and local innovation** – learning from institutions created in communities across the



UK and how this experience can inform wider approaches, and vice versa.

We are looking to further establish a portfolio of work covering some of these themes over the course of our strategy period and will continue to engage and convene on this topic.

In addition to our renewed focus on institutions, we remain interested in public systems and services, with a particular spotlight on the justice system and the education system.

Spotlight on the justice system

The Foundation has an established focus on justice as a pillar of a fair society. A trusted justice system is central to public confidence in the state and the rule of law, underpinning everyday social and economic life by protecting people's rights, resolving disputes, and providing redress.

We will continue to concentrate on family, administrative, and civil justice, particularly through the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory (Nuffield FJO) and our *Public right to justice* (PRTJ) programme.

While the public may have a notional right to a justice system that is effective, fair, and accessible, this right is often compromised in practice. Through PRTJ, we are confronting these challenges directly and exploring practical and conceptual measures to strengthen the system's fairness, responsiveness, and accessibility.

Building new evidence on the justice system

This four-year Strategic Fund project led by the IFS – *Transforming justice: The interplay of social change and policy reforms* – examines how 15 years of major funding cuts and policy reforms have reshaped the justice system in England and Wales.

Using newly available data, it addresses gaps in economic analysis of their impact by assessing how these changes affect access to justice, case progression, system performance, and people's lives.

The team has published several reports, including on trends in justice spending, the performance of the Crown Court, and the impact of youth club closures on crime and education outcomes. A major *State of the justice system* report is planned for 2026.

The project contributes to the wider Transforming Justice agenda by helping build a stronger research community through workshops, training, and events – including a *Royal Economic Society annual summit*, sponsored by the Foundation, aimed at encouraging economists to work on justice issues.

Findings to date have been featured in the media, cited in key policy reports such as the Independent Review of the Criminal Courts (the Leveson review), and the subject of discussions with government and legal professions.

In addition to our renewed focus on institutions, we remain interested in public systems and services, with a particular spotlight on the justice system and the education system.

Trust in the family justice system

The family justice system in England and Wales plays a central role in safeguarding children and supporting families during difficult times.

Every year family courts make decisions affecting thousands of children and adults – from ensuring a child’s safety to resolving disputes about care, contact, and well-being. Because these decisions carry such significant and lasting consequences, it is essential the system is trusted and operates in the best interests of its users.

Providing evidence to support reform

For the family justice system to work well, it needs a clear understanding of how children and adults experience it. Nuffield FJO helps provide that insight – enabling the family courts and related services to reflect on their work and keep improving.

In 2025, Nuffield FJO aimed to help improve the effectiveness of the family justice system by publishing research about children and parents’ experiences, and through a range of additional activities.

Director Lisa Harker appeared as an expert witness at a Justice Committee evidence session on the Reform of the Family Court. The session explored the performance and governance of the family justice system, emerging findings from the Private Law Pathfinder pilots, family group decision-making, the role of problem-solving courts, the availability

of support and advice for families, reforms relating to domestic abuse, and the use of data and digitalisation in the family court.

Nuffield FJO assisted in developing and promoting a toolkit to support family judges when writing to children about court decisions affecting their lives. This work was highlighted in an interview on BBC Radio Four’s Today programme, at the Centre for Justice Innovation Conference, attended by over 80 judges, and during a talk at the Judicial College.

Nuffield FJO continued to promote the Private Law Pathfinder pilot courts, which place a strong emphasis on increasing the voice of children and young people. It also drew on insights from the child-focused youth justice system to inform a child-first family justice data strategy.

In addition, Nuffield FJO championed parental advocacy, an innovative approach that strengthens parents’ voices in decision-making and supports better relationships with professionals. It also highlighted examples of inspirational and innovative practice and positive change through the Seeding change series.

Finally, the Nuffield FJO team took part in a practice week – shadowing frontline services and meeting judges, practitioners, and people with lived experience – enabling colleagues to gain invaluable insight into the services and institutions their work focuses on.

Nuffield FJO continued to promote the Private Law Pathfinder pilot courts, which place a strong emphasis on increasing the voice of children and young people.

Understanding public systems and services

We are interested in wider systems and public services such as welfare and social care, and how their design and delivery shape people's experiences of fairness, security, and trust.

Fairness in the digital welfare state

Each year, the UK spends nearly £100 billion on social security for working-age people and children. Decisions made by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and local authorities have a major impact on people's lives so ensuring their systems are fair is essential.

The *Administrative fairness in the digital welfare state* project explores whether Universal Credit claimants believe they are treated fairly in a welfare system that is increasingly digital and automated.

So far, research shows that although digital welfare services aim to make things easier for users, there are often different views among officials, advisers, and claimants about what good and effective processes look like.

The study identifies five factors that influence whether claimants feel the system is fair: usability, individualised treatment, dignity, efficiency, and neutrality.

Results have been shared widely at academic conferences, and at a major Child Poverty Action Group welfare rights conference. The project also works closely with DWP, who are actively interested in how findings can support improvements.

The impact of outsourcing social care

Trust in the provision of residential services is increasingly strained due to the substantial growth in outsourcing to private (particularly, for-profit) providers over the past 20 years, even as Care Quality Commission and Ofsted inspectors consistently

find higher quality in publicly operated and third sector homes.

Despite this, outsourcing is still routinely proposed as the answer to shortages in provision, rising need, and constrained public resources.

Evaluating the outsourcing of social care in England is developing new evidence on the impact of outsourcing on adult and children's social care. It examines the link between local authority characteristics and outsourcing, how outsourcing influences the quality and accessibility of care, and trends in the opening and closing of care homes and children's homes.

Early evidence (published in *The Lancet Public Health*) reveals that investment-owned children's homes are less present in areas of high need, and non-commercial homes are most likely to open in these areas. The team will work with social care commissioners to consider these findings and inform improvements in social care.





Spotlight on the education system

Insights into education spending

In 2025 we continued our longstanding support for the *Spending across different stages of education* project.

The year began with its flagship annual report, which set out how the pressures of shifting demographics, rising needs, and tight budgets are reshaping funding across early years, schools, and colleges in England. The report provided an authoritative evidence base and was widely cited across media and policymaking circles.

Throughout 2025, the team produced briefings, commentaries, and analyses exploring key areas in greater detail. The flexibility of our grant enabled them to respond to shifting policy priorities while remaining grounded in robust analysis.

The most influential strand focused on the escalating pressures within the SEND system, with IFS analysis central in the national debate. Their work highlighted increasing demand, growing financial deficits, and the lack of sustainable provision.

Additional outputs examined real-terms school and college funding, the implications of the spending review, demographic change, and the expansion of childcare entitlements and Free School Meals,

which together showed how demand and costs are outpacing policy assumptions. The programme continues to attract significant media coverage and engage senior government officials.

Improving teaching quality

There's widespread evidence that teachers are the most important in-school factor for determining pupil's educational outcomes. The Foundation's commitment to building trustworthy and effective institutions underpins this Strategic Fund project – *Teaching improvement through data and evaluation* – which examines the factors behind high-quality teaching.

To do this, researchers are using anonymised data from the Teacher Education Dataset (TED), to identify the characteristics and practices of effective teaching in England.

During 2025, the study found substantial teacher effects on maths and reading test scores in primary schools, providing a basis for further research on teacher allocation and development. Similar analysis is underway for secondary school teachers. In 2026, the study will use AI tools to identify which teaching practices are associated with greater effectiveness.

Findings have been presented at ResearchEd and Confederation of School Trusts conferences, and will inform strategies for recruiting, training, and retaining high-quality teachers.

Funding early years research

The Foundation has an enduring commitment to the early years, reflected in work such as the *The changing face of early childhood in Britain*, and we continue to invest in this vital stage of life to improve the systems that support children and families and create trusted services.

The *early years workforce in the UK* study addresses the crisis facing the early years sector in the four UK nations, drawing on insights from over 80 stakeholders to shape policy recommendations. These included enhancing qualifications, establishing a national pay scale, and developing clear progression

pathways – in a bid to address challenges in recruitment, retention, qualifications, and working conditions. National findings were launched at an event attended by the Department for Education in England, with roundtables for devolved governments happening in spring 2026.

A further study – *Achieving high-quality provision in the baby room of English nurseries* – examined what babies aged 0–2 need to thrive in early years education and care. It highlighted that while stimulating environments, secure relationships, and responsive interactions are essential, several factors make it difficult to meet these needs. Many baby rooms exceed recommended group sizes, and staff working with the youngest children are often less qualified, with limited access to baby-specific training.

The team is engaging national policymakers about limiting the size of baby rooms, and working with local authorities, training providers, and nursery groups to develop tailored training resources.

Early years engagement work

Findings from both projects were discussed on *The We Society* podcast, where Education Programme Head Eleanor Ireland spoke about the importance of the early years.

Drawing on our grant-funded work, we also submitted responses to the Health and Social Care Committee about the first 1,000 days of a child's life, and the Education Committee on improving support for children and families.

We have consistently highlighted the impact of *NELI* – the Nuffield Early Language Intervention programme – including in evidence on supporting children with SEND. NELI also received frequent mentions in Parliament.

Strategic Fund

The Foundation's Strategic Fund is reserved for funding original projects that have the scale and vision to anticipate and address some of the UK's biggest social and economic challenges, both now and in the future. These are major grants, typically in the range of £1–3 million and are expected to last between two and five years.

Previously funded work includes The Economy 2030 Inquiry which reported in 2023 and had significant influence on policy with both the former and current government, on pensions, investment, growth and the labour market. *The skills imperative 2035* and *The Pissarides review*, which completed in 2025, are reported on elsewhere in this report.

Looking ahead, Challenging inequalities will be published in April 2026, marking the culmination of the *IFS Deaton review of inequalities*. Over the last six years, the review has developed a comprehensive body of evidence on the causes and consequences different forms of inequalities. The publication will be accompanied by an IFS report on lessons for policymakers.

Later in the year, *Children's information: Improving lives through better listening and better data* will publish its conclusions, setting out what local and national government should do to ensure information collected about children and families is used more ethically and effectively to improve services. The final report of *Connecting pensions, health and care* will highlight how the three systems depend on one another, with the aim of shaping how reform in each area is understood and approached.

Other current Strategic Fund projects which are well underway include *Social security in a devolved UK*, *Teaching improvement through data and evaluation*

(*TIDE*), *Transforming justice: The interplay of social change and policy reforms*, and *Well-being in later life in Bradford*.

What the Strategic Fund supports

In line with the ambition of the fund, we expect applications to address at least one or more of our five priority questions. They should demonstrate originality and transformative potential, aiming to advance scholarship, reshape how policymakers think about the areas in which they work, and support innovative policy or practice development, with a clear line of sight to improving lives in the UK.

Across all our funded work, and particularly through the Strategic Fund, we are keen to support multidisciplinary research as well as experimental and innovative approaches, and we encourage more proposals that test new ideas and bring research and evaluation closer to real-world practice.

There is currently £15 million of funding available, with the first round of funding awarded under our new strategy due to be announced at the end of 2026. Future rounds will reflect further development and refinement of our strategy interests, with the next deadline for applications likely to be in spring 2027.

AI and education

Our own research programmes

The Nuffield Foundation and Ada continued their joint programme examining how AI and data-driven technologies are reshaping education. The work sits within the Foundation’s strategic focus on digital technologies, ethical innovation and an education system that equips children and young people to thrive, and aligns with Ada’s mission to ensure data and AI work for people and society. The programme aims to bring clarity to rapidly evolving policy and practice and to support safe, evidence-led decision-making by educators, policymakers, and developers.

Landscape review findings

In early 2025, we published *[A learning curve? A landscape review of AI in education in the UK](#)*.

Drawing on extensive evidence and engagement with educators, policymakers, and technology experts, it found that while AI tools are increasingly visible in schools, most teacher use remains informal and largely untested; product accuracy, transparency, and data practices are highly variable; and evaluation and governance are often insufficient. The review highlighted the need for robust, independent evidence before AI is embedded at scale, particularly regarding privacy, fairness, and efficacy.

The launch was accompanied by an event and sustained dissemination through blogs, conference contributions, stakeholder meetings, and media engagement – including a joint Nuffield–Ada letter in the *[Sunday Times](#)* calling for AI enabled tools to be safe, effective, and demonstrably beneficial for pupils.

Areas of research

Following the landscape review, the programme expanded work across priority areas. A project on AI in educational assessment is mapping current use across low and high stakes assessment, analysing

strengths and weaknesses, and exploring future possibilities for design and delivery. A complementary review on AI and careers guidance is examining where different forms of AI can genuinely support young people – and where they may introduce risks – as they navigate post-16 and post-18 choices, with a focus on design, governance, and equitable access. Both reports will be published in 2026.

The Foundation also funded exploratory work with the Education Policy Institute to understand how multi-academy trusts are adopting and governing AI within teaching and learning, with findings due in early 2026.

More Nuffield–Ada activity is likely, alongside ongoing work to shape grant applications that can strengthen the evidence base, inform policymaking, and support guidance for schools. *[Trialling an assessment protocol for LLM-powered careers advice](#)* is already underway to develop and pilot an assessment protocol for evaluating AI-powered careers advice tools in relation to human advisers.

The emphasis will remain on rigorous evaluation and responsible adoption, ensuring that AI – where appropriate – genuinely contributes to equitable educational outcomes.



Grown up? Journeys to adulthood

Our own research programmes

Grown up? Journeys to adulthood aims to understand and address the urgent challenges facing Generation Z as they chart their path towards independence.

Working closely with young people from across the UK, we have centred their perspectives and experiences, capturing insights with support from our partner [Hopkins Van Mil](#), to build a picture of what growing up feels like today. As a cross-Nuffield initiative, the project draws on expertise from the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory (Nuffield FJO) and the Ada Lovelace Institute (Ada).

A core purpose of the programme is to bring together a wide range of evidence – youth voice, data commentaries, and expert features – to deepen understanding of young people’s lives and inform the Foundation’s funding priorities, as well as future policy and practice.

Major societal shifts

Generation Z are at the forefront of major societal shifts: the legacy of the Covid pandemic, economic stagnation and uncertainty, the digital revolution, and social polarisation. Traditional milestones – leaving home, finishing education, starting work – are happening later and in different ways, shaped by class, gender, racial, and place disparities. This project, focused on those currently aged 14 – 24, is examining how we can respond more effectively to these complex issues.

Insights and evidence

Grown up? highlights in 2025 include:

- Close collaboration with the Youth Insight Group – a panel of 20 young people from across the UK – and eight deep dive workshops with a further 80 young people on: education to work, digital lives, and mental health. Their rich insights on the first two themes are captured in [Education to work: Deep dive workshops findings](#) and [Born connected: How Gen Z navigate their digital lives](#), as well as films, artwork, and other creative materials. We have drawn on these findings at other events, in policy forums and when giving evidence to the Education Select Committee.
- Data commentaries on [Rethinking journeys to adulthood](#) and [Growing up online](#), each identifying key research gaps.
- Expert features that bring a laser lens to the contemporary challenges facing young people, offering the author’s perspectives on what needs to change – [Generation abandoned?](#) by Nuffield FJO Director Lisa Harker, [The monitored generation: Navigating autonomy and independence in the digital age](#) by Natalie Foo and Cliff Manning, and [Social thinning in a digital age: The case for rebuilding the social foundations of adolescence](#) by Professor Eamon McCrory and Ritika Chokhani.
- A range of events to inform our thinking: AI and young people’s mental health – a roundtable exploring the opportunities and risks of new developments, a workshop with mental health leaders and practitioners, and [How is Gen Z faring?](#) – a well-attended event featuring presentations from the Youth Insight Group, John Burn Murdoch (chief data reporter at the Financial Times), Professor Sonia Livingstone,

Professor Praveetha Patalay, and the Foundation’s Education Programme Head Emily Tanner, plus an array of contributions from an audience of researchers, practitioners, and policymakers.

Engaging wider audiences

Our work has been highlighted through a range of media contributions. Programme lead Carey Oppenheim authored an opinion article for Children & Young People Now, positioning *Grown up?* as our response to society’s struggle to keep pace with the realities of young people’s lives. An FE News article reflected on the challenges of transitioning from education into employment, drawing on the experiences of the Youth Insight Group. The expert feature on ‘social thinning’ was republished in The Conversation, while an article in the Big Issue explored the number of children aged 16–18 in care and living in supported accommodation, adapted from *Generation abandoned?*

In addition to our events, we also held targeted meetings with policymakers about our findings, including with officials working on the government’s Youth Strategy, and ministers and their advisers.

The year ahead

In 2026 we completed our mental health theme with a further data commentary and deep dive report. We will be commissioning further expert features, and publishing an evaluation of the youth engagement work. Ada has been undertaking a major piece of in-depth peer research – *Grown up? Digital lives* – which includes a report, films made by the young people, and an exhibition, to be released in 2026. Project lead Carey Oppenheim will talk about what it means to be growing up today on The We Society podcast.

We will be connecting insights and findings across the whole project in a final report and event in the autumn.



Public right to justice

Our own research programmes

Fair and functioning justice is a cornerstone of a democratic society, underpinning social stability, economic prosperity, and the wider network of institutions on which we all rely.

Our *Public right to justice* (PRTJ) programme responds to the causes and consequences of the current failings and challenges in the justice system, stemming from deficiencies in its resourcing, operation, governance, and in the treatment of those who use it. At the same time, we also seek to explore and illustrate the wider public role and value of justice.

It builds on the Foundation's longstanding support for research on justice, and our tradition of seeking evidence-based answers to difficult public policy questions in a focused and intentional way.

PRTJ is premised on the belief that the public has the right to a system of justice that meets their needs in an accessible, fair, and effective way, with regard to their characteristics or circumstances. That system should be open, accountable, trustworthy, and uphold wider societal values.



Although this right is recognised in principle, there are ongoing doubts about whether the justice system delivers on that ideal in practice, and whether it provides the public with meaningful access to the protections it offers. These concerns stem not only from a lack of resources and political prioritisation, but also from wider shortcomings in how legal needs are addressed.

Evidence to drive reform

The overarching aim of PRTJ is to explore how well the justice system in England and Wales is delivering on people's right to accessible justice, and to develop proposals to improve that.

It takes both a top-down (systemic) and a bottom-up (user-experience) perspective, focusing primarily on the administrative, civil, and family justice systems. Its ultimate goal is to develop recommendations that promote:

- Improving access to justice for all by lowering barriers that prevent people from resolving legal problems and engaging with justice systems.
- Creating user-centred justice systems that are easier to navigate and understand, including for those without legal advice or representation.
- Strengthening the justice system as a key public institution that reflects and supports the needs and priorities of a well-functioning society.

The five-year programme began in late 2024 with the start of the evidence-building phase. As part of this, in summer 2025 we published a collection of essays by leading experts addressing the theme [*Why justice matters*](#).

We have also commissioned a series of evidence reviews and briefing papers on different aspects of the justice system and people's interaction with it, including lessons from the recent history of civil justice reform; governance and accountability structures in justice; the views and experiences of system users; and the deployment of AI in the justice system. These will be published in 2026, followed by a report at the end of that year drawing together the various strands of evidence and assessing what they reveal about the state of the justice system and where we should focus our priorities in the next phase.

Media and public affairs engagement

An article in [Prospect](#) spotlighted the launch of PRTJ, and edited versions of three essays from the *Why justice matters* essay series were published in [The Conversation](#), [The House](#), and the [Big Issue](#), extending the programme's reach.

We are identifying the most important stakeholders to engage with about this project, including MPs, government officials, researchers, third sector organisations, and arm's length bodies. This has supported the team to meet with relevant people to help refine the project's focus, and to organise a roundtable of experts to discuss key issues about justice and help advance our thinking. Our Director of Justice, Rob Street, reflected on the conversation in a [blog](#).

Our *Public right to justice* programme responds to the causes and consequences of the current failings and challenges in the justice system ...

Racial Diversity UK Fund

The Racial Diversity UK Fund supports work taking a fresh look at how patterns of racial diversity and disparity develop and shape society, influenced by the UK's colonial past. Its aim is to improve understanding of the barriers and pathways to a racially just and inclusive society.

In June we published information about the priority theme for the programme's 2025 application round, which focused on migration, arrivals, and legacies. We received a large number of applications and will announce which projects have been funded in summer 2026.

The first RDUK grants

In July we announced the first four RDUK research grants:

- *Racial equality since devolution*, led by Nasar Meer at the University of Glasgow, a comparative study of the contexts, outcomes, and potential for national race equality policies in England, Scotland, and Wales.
- *Better mixing: Supporting Scotland's diverse future*, led by Sarah Kyambi at Migration Policy Scotland, aimed at understanding the impacts of rapid increases in racial diversity across Scotland.
- *Voices for equity: Moving from evidence to action*, led by Sunder Katwala at British Future, which will undertake extensive national consultation to identify priorities for change and build a shared agenda for racial justice.
- *Decline to renewal: Race, deindustrialisation and working lives*, led by Keon West at the Runnymede Trust, focused on the impacts of industrial decline on communities of colour nationally, with an in-depth focus on experiences in Sheffield, Birmingham, and Preston.

Sharing insights

We hosted an [event](#) in November, showcasing the new grants to a capacity audience of race equality academics, policymakers, and practitioners. As well as hearing from RDUK project leads, the audience engaged in debate about whether understanding the UK's colonial past is a requisite for building a racially just future, with experts Professor Catherine Hall, the author and journalist Sathnam Sanghera, and Rupinder Parhar, head of equalities at the Greater London Authority. RDUK Programme Head Liz Gilfillan wrote a [blog](#) highlighting four priorities for change that emerged from the discussion.

We also launched the RDUK community of interest, enabling people to keep in touch with the programme's progress and findings.

In addition to our grants, RDUK is commissioning various pieces taking a new look at what we know and how we understand racial diversity issues, including a think piece on 'infrastructural racism', and a synthesis of the current evidence on racial inequalities.

The Racial Diversity UK Fund supports work taking a fresh look at how patterns of racial diversity and disparity develop and shape society ...

Oliver Bird Fund

In 2025 we continued to build the research portfolio supported by the Oliver Bird Fund, strengthening our efforts to improve the quality of life for people living with musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions.

New MSK research projects

We launched six co-funded projects with Arthritis UK, totalling £3.1 million, to develop policies and solutions that improve the lives of people with MSK conditions and help reduce economic inactivity by supporting them to join, stay in, or return to work.

INSPIRE MSK: Challenges young people face in managing musculoskeletal chronic pain is exploring young people's ability to manage MSK pain, how their ability to regulate thoughts, behaviours, and emotions has impact, and how this ability can be promoted through tools for clinical practice and for young people. Involvement of young people will be central throughout, including as team members.

Musculoskeletal conditions in underserved communities is investigating the experience of MSK pain among those living in deprived areas and from ethnically diverse backgrounds – groups that are frequently left out of research. Members of the community will be invited to act as peer researchers. The project aims to inform the design of interventions to reduce MSK health inequalities.

Four projects focus on working lives:

- *Musculoskeletal conditions, employment retention and job quality* is examining how MSK conditions impact on being able to stay in employment, and how this varies by job characteristics, region, and having other health conditions.
- *Economic inactivity, arthritis & depression: who, why & how to respond* considers how experiencing

both MSK and mental health conditions increases the risk of being out of employment.

- The *Pain-at-Work Toolkit for employees with chronic pain (definitive trial)* is a full effectiveness trial of a scalable, evidence-based toolkit supporting people with pain to stay in work, building on earlier stage Nuffield-funded research.
- *Arthritis and farmers in England: Impacts, adaptations and prevention* is collaborating with farmers in Herefordshire and Worcestershire to explore how they cope with arthritis, as reported by BBC News.

Informing policy and practice

Learnings from earlier funding rounds continue to be shared and have impact. Work from the *Mapping rheumatic and musculoskeletal disease in Scotland and Wales* project has led to collaboration with the NHS Wales Musculoskeletal Strategic Network to support the development of more person- and place-based services for people with these conditions. Meanwhile, findings from *Enriched data integration for population musculoskeletal health intelligence* have supported local decision-making in North Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent in designing services aimed at reducing inequalities in the outcomes of care. The methods developed have also informed proposals for a national audit of community MSK services across England.

Next steps

In 2026 we will ensure project findings support the development of policy and practice that enable people with health conditions to remain in employment. We are also exploring broadening the fund's focus to include other disabilities and health conditions that are increasing in prevalence and significantly affecting people's lives.

Supporting the research community

There are three main strands to the Foundation's work to support the research community.

Emerging Researchers Network

The Foundation's Emerging Researchers Network supports early career researchers working on Nuffield-funded projects through training, events, and networking. In 2025, three ambassadors were appointed – Emily Hancock (University of Sheffield), Dr Fiona Long (Cardiff University), Dr Cristina Sechel (University of Sheffield). They coordinate newsletters, drop-ins, and training events, in response to members' requests. The network also runs a LinkedIn group, is planning a training session on using AI in research, and will host an in-person event in autumn 2026, providing an opportunity for members to come together.

Outreach work

We delivered another successful 'Virtual Study Tour' for ARMA members – the UK's professional association for research leadership, management, and administration – where the grants team outlined how the Strategic Review is informing our funding priorities.

We continued to build RDUK's profile through website updates; outreach visits to race and ethnicity scholars, practitioners, and other experts; the RDUK launch event in November; and the new community of interest through which we will maintain our engagement with key thinkers, policymakers, and practitioners.

The Foundation sponsored the Society of Black Academics 2025 conference at Kings College London in September, which brought together more than 200 participants. Staff from the Foundation attended and spoke at the event.

Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology

The Nuffield Foundation has supported POST Fellowships since 2011, enabling later stage and recent PhD researchers to contribute impartial, evidence-based analysis for Parliament while gaining experience of policymaking. The scheme advances the Foundation's commitment to strengthening the use of high-quality evidence across areas aligned with our work, while supporting emerging researchers to develop skills in translating findings for parliamentary and wider audiences.

In 2025, four POST Fellows completed their Fellowships, each producing a POSTnote:

- Aysha Riaz examined violence against women and girls in schools and among children and young people.
- Lydia Okoibhole analysed access to justice, legal aid, and legal services, contributing timely evidence on pressures within the justice system.
- Vedang Narain investigated consumable wearable devices and disease prevention, and contributed to the Health and Social Care Committee's inquiry into palliative care.
- Laura Steel explored geographical differences in healthy life expectancy, engaged with All Party Parliamentary Groups, and undertook research for a select committee on regional health disparities.

Two Fellows began their Fellowships later in 2025 and will publish their POSTnotes in 2026. Ana Alonso Curbelo is assessing the future of and access to surrogacy, while Jennifer Fielder is examining improving outcomes and support for looked after children and their families.

Student programmes

The Foundation has a long history of supporting student-oriented initiatives that strengthen young people’s educational pathways, most recently through the Q-Step programme and Nuffield Research Placements (NRPs).

In recent years, this work has shifted from programmes delivered directly by the Foundation to models operated externally and underpinned by independent evaluation, with a particular emphasis on widening access to high-quality research opportunities for young people. The NRP programme is now delivered by STEM Learning, and in 2025 the Foundation’s funding for that programme ended.

NRP evaluation published

In September, the Foundation published the [independent longitudinal evaluation](#) of an earlier form of NRPs, conducted by Frontier Economics and OFE Research. The findings provide robust evidence of the programme’s long-term value.

Students who undertook placements achieved stronger STEM A level results and were more likely to progress into higher education, particularly STEM degrees at higher status institutions. The benefits were especially marked for young people from

disadvantaged backgrounds, including those eligible for Free School Meals, students from ethnic minority groups, and those who are first in their family to attend university. The evaluation also highlighted the potential for later gains in employment and earnings and reinforced the distinctive value of an immersive placement experience, while offering insights relevant to today’s hybrid model.

The Foundation has also continued to support, through its grant funding, a small number of student-focused interventions and their evaluation, particularly those with a specialised or targeted purpose.

The future of student programmes

The Foundation is exploring a more intentional, proactive approach to future student-orientated activity in response to current challenges in youth employment. This will draw on our research portfolio and evidence on what supports successful transitions and on the barriers faced by disadvantaged young people. It closely aligns with the Foundation’s new strategy to improve life chances and broaden opportunities so all young people can contribute to, and benefit from, a fairer, more inclusive society.

“For the students, benefits [of the placement] would have accrued to a greater degree to those from poorer backgrounds, helping to reduce socio-economic inequality.”

Source: Evaluation of Nuffield Research Placements: Final Impact Report

Ada Lovelace Institute

Our expert
centres

The Ada Lovelace Institute (Ada) was launched in 2018 with a mission to ensure data and AI work for people and society. In 2025 Ada published a new three-year strategy that sets out how it can help move towards a world where technology is built to support the societies we want to create rather than becoming intertwined in our lives with no regard for its consequences.

New strategy shaped by global uncertainty

Ada published its strategy at a time of extraordinary geo-political change and uncertainty, which is both shaping and being shaped by rapid technological progress and adoption. The strategy was developed in the context of deregulatory headwinds worldwide, with a striking convergence between the stated interests of some of the world's major economies and exceptionally powerful technology companies, who hold an apparent shared belief that they are in a race, with a finish line that is largely unknown or ill-defined.

These upheavals risk undoing a period of slow but meaningful progress towards ensuring data and AI work for the public benefit. We have seen new and important attempts to govern new technologies, with the EU introducing the world's first piece of comprehensive legislation to regulate AI, and the UK bringing forward laws on online safety and regulating digital markets. The global network of institutes focusing on AI safety and security has grown to include more than a dozen countries, and AI regulation and governance has been enacted or proposed in jurisdictions across the globe.

The acceleration of AI in daily life

The last seven years have also seen major shifts in data and AI deployment, capabilities, and markets –

from the increased use of predictive policing and facial recognition, to the explosion of generative AI and foundation models, to 'ambient' AI being integrated into the platforms and tools we use every day. All of this happened without much in the way of consensus-building or, in some cases, even consent.

This pace of change looks set to continue, with the widespread integration of AI into new contexts. Advancements in machine learning have led to more accurate weather forecasting and improvements in speech-to-text and translation tools. AI systems are being used in drug development and health research, as intermediaries to knowledge and content, and are positioned as being on the verge of acting as autonomous 'agents'.

There is potential for unprecedented and likely uneven acceleration in AI capabilities – whether in the coming years or decades – which could lead to sweeping changes in society. And yet, despite political expectations that increasing investment in and deployment of AI will yield public benefits, there is no clear, inclusive, and democratic political vision for what technology harnessed in the public interest should look like, or where various publics want to see those benefits accrue. While we hear much about the futures that big technology companies want to see, we rarely hear about the hopes, aspirations, and fears of diverse publics as AI becomes more embedded in their everyday lives.

Guiding questions

While the world continues to change, Ada's core mission has not. As ever, amid the narratives of hype and hope, the institute is asking: Do these new technologies work? Do they work well in context – from hospitals to schools? Do they work for everyone? And how do the power and value systems

embedded in them shape both the futures we are seeing and the futures we want to see?

These questions have shaped Ada's strategy, and form the foundation of the institute's objectives:

- **Objective 1:** Explore how people and society are being affected by AI, and what 'AI in the public interest' could mean.
- **Objective 2:** Evidence and shape the use of AI and data-driven technologies where they most impact people and society, with a focus on the public sector.
- **Objective 3:** Evaluate and inform incentives for managing AI risks.
- **Objective 4:** Examine vehicles for the redistribution of power and opportunity across society.

Through research and convening, Ada will consider the often messy and complex reality of how technologies interact with real people and real services. It will examine which models of governance will work in the public interest, and identify and challenge power imbalances and inequalities. In a time of changing and weakening institutions, it will seek to rigorously answer all these questions – holding itself and others accountable to the evidence – and to place people and society at the centre of every decision about AI.



Nuffield Council on Bioethics

Our expert centres

The Nuffield Council on Bioethics (NCOB) is an independent research and policy centre working to place ethics at the centre of decisions about biomedicine and health, for the benefit of all.

Putting ethics at the centre of decision-making

Guided by its *Making ethics matter* strategy, the NCOB provides decision makers with rigorous and timely ethical analysis to inform the choices they face.

The NCOB's independence, combined with its reputation as a leading voice at the intersection of bioethics and policy, uniquely positions it to bring together diverse perspectives from across sectors and society. It conducts thorough ethical analysis, convenes interdisciplinary deliberation, and engages widely with stakeholders in health, science, innovation, and the wider public.

These insights feed into the development of its impartial, evidence-based reports, tackling key ethical questions arising in research and healthcare.



The NCOB strives to look ahead, keeping abreast of the science and technology of tomorrow. It is the only UK organisation with a dedicated bioethics horizon scanning, futures, and foresight programme, headlined by its renowned horizon scans. These scans map the most pressing developments in biomedicine and health, and their likely ethical implications. Having already evolved the most recent horizon scan by including timeframing – providing additional useful insight for its bioethics and policy audiences – the NCOB is now partnering internationally to explore whether comparison across different countries can bolster its horizon scans further.

Three strategic priorities

Insights from horizon scanning are used to help select topics for the NCOB to work on. It currently has three strategic priority areas: reproduction, parenthood, and families; the mind and brain; and the environment and health – each raising critical ethical, social, and policy issues.

In reproduction, the NCOB's major review of the 14-day time limit for human embryo research will provide decision makers with robust ethical analysis, up-to-date scientific evidence, and a nuanced understanding of public views. The NCOB will publish findings in mid-2026, ensuring that as and when legislative reform is considered, decision makers have access to the evidence and analysis needed to make an informed judgement.

In the mind and brain priority area, its report on neural organoids – small, lab-grown 3D structures that are made from stem cells to model aspects of the human brain – will offer recommendations to guide the development of this research. Throughout 2026 the NCOB will engage widely to identify how these are taken forward in governance approaches to support ethical and responsible innovation.

In environment and health, the NCOB is examining the ethics of solar radiation modification (SRM) – emerging technologies which aim to reflect sunlight from the earth's surface to cool temperatures which are rising as a result of climate change. SRM is a form of geoengineering – large-scale interventions in earth's natural systems aiming to counteract climate

change. The project will consider the potential of SRM technologies alongside possible health impacts for human and non-human species and future generations.

Engaging with real-time issues

The NCOB is also responsive to developments outside these priority areas that demand timely ethical input. For example, it commissioned England's first Citizens' Jury on assisted dying, providing evidence and insight which have informed live parliamentary debate. And it set up a national genomics network to ensure ethics is firmly embedded within the implementation of genomic research and healthcare which sits at the heart of the NHS 10-year plan.

Although much of the NCOB's work is grounded in UK policy, bioethics is global and science and biomedical research crosses borders. Recognising the value of international collaboration and shared learning, the NCOB maintains strong links with ethics bodies worldwide and plays an active role in the global bioethics and policy community. A key focus of 2025 was strengthening its international engagement to explore how ethics can have greater global influence.

A history of impact

The NCOB's 35th anniversary report will be published in 2026 and will demonstrate how its work has led to lasting impact, laying the ethical foundations of policies, regulation, and research that has delivered tangible benefits for people and society.

The NCOB strives to look ahead, keeping abreast of the science and technology of tomorrow.

Nuffield Family Justice Observatory

Our expert centres

The Nuffield Family Justice Observatory (Nuffield FJO) was established by the Foundation in 2019 and has become a respected voice of authority on issues related to family court decision-making.

During 2025, Nuffield FJO continued to focus on the five goals that have guided its work in recent years. At the same time, it developed a new five-year strategy shaped by the insights of young people with lived experience and informed by the persistent challenges within the family justice system and the changes that are still needed to improve the experiences of those who use it. The strategy will launch in 2026.

Committed to improving family justice

Nuffield FJO is currently working to five goals for improving the family justice system:

1. To ensure children and families receive the right support, at the right time.
2. To strengthen the focus on problem-solving in the family court, rather than an adversarial approach.
3. To ensure that children, parents, and families are active participants in the family justice system.
4. To ensure that inequalities in experiences of the family court are recognised and responded to.
5. To encourage greater collaboration across the system, between different groups of professionals.

In 2025, Nuffield FJO's work continued to centre on three key areas. There was a major focus on young people and the care system, especially those in complex situations, and also babies in care proceedings. Nuffield FJO also concentrated on families who are separating and private law

proceedings, with an emphasis on children and young people's participation.

Young people in the care system

Nuffield FJO brought creativity to sharing its work and messaging on improving care for children subject to Deprivation of Liberty orders under the inherent jurisdiction of the High Court. At the *Back to Their Futures summit*, children's experiences and insights were highlighted through a screening of *A Normal Life* – a film documenting the lives of seven young people on Deprivation of Liberty orders, which was accompanied by an art exhibition.

Following the summit, the Back to Their Futures Network was established, through which information and learning on improving care is shared. The network has nearly 200 members. Nuffield FJO also continued to screen *A Normal Life*; it was shown 11 times to new audiences.

A vision for a new ecosystem of care for children in complex situations was also drawn up in collaboration with representatives from Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and children's social care – presenting an opportunity to reset services for children who experience the greatest vulnerabilities in society.

Babies in care proceedings

Nuffield FJO continued to explore the increasing number of babies being separated from their parents due to safeguarding concerns, and the experiences of the families involved. There was particular focus on parents involved in same-day and short-notice hearings (hearings that take place within seven days of the application being made), parents experiencing more than one set of proceedings (recurrent proceedings), parents with learning disabilities

or difficulties, and the increased use of residential family assessment centres.

Children’s participation

Nuffield FJO continued to collaborate with partners in England and Wales to improve children’s participation in family court proceedings, supporting the development of a toolkit to assist family judges when they are writing to children about decisions made in court about their lives, helping them feel heard and involved. The toolkit was launched by Sir Andrew McFarlane, President of the Family Division, and Nuffield FJO promotes and encourages its use.

The year ahead

In 2026, the family justice system will see the appointment of a new President of the Family Division, and a new family justice strategy is expected

following recommendations from a Public Accounts Committee report, *Improving family court services for children*. A wide range of new policies will be introduced through the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill (including new forms of accommodation for children deprived of their liberty). A new protocol on short-notice hearings, with a particular focus on ending the practice of parents of newborn babies being expected to attend court hearings on or close to the day of the baby’s birth, will be launched.

Nuffield FJO will continue to work alongside people across the family justice system as it begins to deliver its new strategy, helping to ensure that these forthcoming changes deliver better experiences for children and families.



Across the foundation: evidence to achieve change

In 2025 we stepped up our engagement activity for greater impact. We began deploying evidence on priority themes more systematically at key policy moments and adopted a more proactive approach to media engagement, achieving greater visibility and reach for our research programmes in this period. Developing relationships with key journalists, strengthening our roster of in-house commentators, and surfacing underexplored insights across our channels has been key to these endeavours.

For example, our work to raise awareness of our *Public right to justice* (PRTJ) programme highlights this approach. We secured coverage for several of the *Why justice matters* essays across major media

outlets. Targeted digital activity engaged audiences with the programme's key themes, while stakeholder mapping and early outreach helped shape the programme's direction. A well-received expert roundtable further informed research priorities, and a comment article from Rob Street – Director, Justice – followed in the sector press.

New podcast partnership

We partnered with the Academy of Social Sciences (AcSS) and the Leverhulme Trust to produce the chart-topping podcast *The We Society*. Hosted by AcSS president, Will Hutton, and featuring interviews with leading experts and public figures, the podcast explores real-world issues through a social science lens. Since the partnership launch, the series has included contributions from a wide range of Foundation staff, enabling us to reach new audiences interested in social science, public policy, and evidence-led debate.

Convening and policy engagement

We have stepped up our convening, bringing together researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and opinion formers for multidisciplinary discussion on both established and emerging issues. Our curated programme of events has played an important role in helping us build networks, translate research into policy and practice, extend knowledge, and respond to policy opportunities.

In March 2025 we held a UK four nations workshop, attended by Skills Minister Jacqui Smith, policymakers, and sector leaders, to assess the effectiveness of post-16 policies in improving the education and employment outcomes of disadvantaged students.



Our policy engagement work has further helped to strengthen the connection between our funded research and decision makers. In several key areas – including post-16 skills, education to employment, the curriculum review, and community cohesion – the Foundation has synthesised evidence across its grants’ portfolio to support cross-government engagement, and respond to consultations and select committee inquiries.

A more systematic approach to stakeholder management has strengthened our engagement across government, communities of practice, the voluntary sector, and local authorities. This coordinated effort is expanding the Foundation’s reach and authority, ensuring our evidence informs public debate, and shapes policy and practice. At the same time, our support for grant-holders – helping them refine their impact strategies and amplify their research through media and policy engagement – is building capacity across the breadth of our portfolio.

Expert centres guiding policy through media and outreach

The Ada Lovelace Institute (Ada) responded to a rapidly evolving AI policy landscape in 2025 through close collaboration between its policy and communications teams. Guided by audience insight, Ada’s efforts have focused on translating complex research into shorter, more accessible policy briefings for time-poor policymakers.

Six policy briefings published during the year reached 9.5K readers and contributed to significant policy impact, including citations by government departments, parliamentary evidence sessions, and invitations to national AI initiatives.

Complementary use of blogs and targeted media briefings also enabled Ada to respond quickly to policy developments, shaping journalists’ understanding of AI governance at key moments, including ahead of the AI Action Summit in Paris.

The Nuffield Family Justice Observatory (Nuffield FJO) continued to shine a light on the experiences of children in complex situations, particularly those

subject to Deprivation of Liberty orders. Its *Back to Their Futures summit* brought together senior stakeholders to share learning and improve practice. By combining research, convening and storytelling, Nuffield FJO centred children’s experiences, built momentum for change, and informed parliamentary scrutiny, with its evidence cited during parliamentary debates.

The Nuffield Council on Bioethics (NCOB) demonstrated the value of deliberative public engagement in shaping sensitive policy debates. In 2025, it published findings from England’s first Citizens’ Jury on assisted dying, ensuring that parliamentarians across the UK could draw on this evidence as they scrutinised proposed legal reforms. Through targeted briefings and media engagement, the NCOB helped ground legislative debate in public values, with the Jury’s evidence cited at multiple stages of parliamentary consideration.

Collectively, these activities demonstrate how communications, policy, and public affairs operate as integrated and complementary functions across the organisation. By aligning evidence with purposeful engagement, the Foundation is strengthening its position as a credible, connected, and influential voice, equipping decision makers to address complex social challenges and shape policy choices.

Foundation website upgrade

A major website upgrade has also led to improved accessibility and useability for our in-house programmes and key research pages, along with an upgraded search function and an optimised content offer to drive discoverability and engagement with our work.

Equity, diversity, and inclusion

The Nuffield Foundation's founding purpose is to advance social well-being. Our aim is to open opportunities and improve lives for individuals, families, and communities, within a just and inclusive society. Understanding and highlighting inequalities, disadvantage, discrimination, and vulnerabilities faced by people – and what should be done about them – has always been a major theme of our work, and will remain so. We focus on groups defined according to legally protected characteristics as well as others such as social class and socio-economic background, neurodiversity, migration status, and care experience. We place strong importance on an inclusive approach and on treating our partners, stakeholders, and staff with respect and dignity.

Understanding, explaining, and looking for solutions to inequality is increasingly important against the current backdrop of growing polarisation in the UK and other countries. Divisions about identity, migration, race, religion, and gender have become more pronounced and visible, accompanied by an increase in hate-driven rhetoric and incidents. This is creating a sense of fear, exclusion, and insecurity for many different communities. The context reinforces the responsibility we have, in line with our values, to act independently, remain grounded in sound evidence, and work sensitively with others.

We know that persistent structural inequalities exist in the research and funding sector. The Nuffield Foundation is part of a wider system which is not yet reflective of the make-up of wider UK society. Too often, marginalised groups have negative experiences of working in the profession. We are committed to taking practical steps to supporting change, working with other research organisations and networks to test different approaches.

Embedding EDI in our work

Our EDI action plan sets out how we will make improvements through the work we do, the people and institutions we work with, and in our own workplace. We will take an evidence-led approach, using data and insights to monitor our progress and identify future priorities; we want an organisational culture that values individuality and difference as well as fairness and respect. Colleagues need to feel empowered to contribute their different perspectives, experiences and strengths. More widely we are also seeking to better understand and tackle ethnic and gender pay gaps across our workforce.

We have set out three areas of focus in our EDI Action Plan. We will:

1. Ensure that understanding and addressing inequalities, disadvantage, and discrimination remains central to the work we fund and do.
2. Increase the diversity of those we fund and work with.
3. Employ staff from diverse backgrounds and ensure an inclusive workplace culture.

EDI progress in 2025/26

In recent years we have undertaken a programme of EDI work, and 2025/26 marked the first year of our formal action plan. We have made progress in upskilling our team, identifying gaps in our portfolio, and working on aspects of our internal culture. In this first year we have also learned that we should focus on fewer priorities with clearer resourcing for greater impact, and will take this approach in 2026/27.

Our EDI Action Plan runs annually from April to March. In 2025 we:

- Hosted six seminars for staff focusing on research on racial inequalities and trauma-informed research.
- Reviewed our grants portfolio, focusing on how our funding addresses racial inequalities and incorporating learnings from our first RDUK grant round. We identified and communicated areas we are interested in funding and updated our *Guide for applicants* in October. We expect to receive relevant applications in 2026, and will continue to monitor this.
- Developed a cross-foundation inclusive events policy, ensuring that a wide range of people can engage with our events and seminars and that we are talking to diverse stakeholders.
- Sponsored the Society of Black Academics annual conference, which brought together over 200 attendees, and joined a panel discussion on impact.
- Undertook a 360-feedback exercise with our Leadership Team, which has informed inclusive leadership training taking place in early 2026.
- Continued to look at our recruitment processes, which included trialling new approaches such as longlisting a greater number of candidates and having more stages to the interview process, as well as using positive action where appropriate.
- Continued to review and update staff policies, ensuring they were compliant and reflected best practice.
- Established a new Race, Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage staff peer group and continued to promote our network groups to our staff.

Our 2026/27 EDI Action Plan begins in April 2026, and we will publish it in the spring. It will retain the three high-level aims outlined above, combining ongoing and new actions that build on what we have already achieved while drawing in new areas of focus.

Diversity monitoring

We monitor the diversity of our staff and job applicants to inform where we might need to take action to ensure we are an inclusive employer.

Table 1 presents data on four protected characteristics for Nuffield Foundation employees as of 31 December 2025. The proportion of staff from ethnic minority backgrounds has remained relatively stable (19.6% in December 2025, 19.8% in December 2024, 20.0% in December 2023). There has been a decrease in the number of staff declaring a disability (5.4% in December 2025 down from 11.5% in December 2024). The EDI Action Plan incorporates actions and initiatives to address areas of under-representation within our workforce.

In 2025 we again participated in the 10,000 Black Interns scheme, hosting five interns. We plan to offer a similar number of placements in the summer of 2026. We also hosted two apprentices, and we will continue to identify other opportunities that support young people (or returners) into work.

Finally, we continue to use accreditation schemes to provide a framework for our employment activities. We remain signed up to the RNIB's Visibly Better standard and the Age-Friendly Employer pledge, and we are a Disability Confident Level 2 employer.

Our EDI Action Plan sets out how we will make improvements through the work we do, the people and institutions we work with, and in our own workplace.

Since 2021 we have introduced voluntary diversity and inclusion monitoring of applicants, and grant-holders and their teams, to find out more about the people who apply for – and are awarded – funding.

Tables 2 and 3 present data on four protected characteristics for Principal Investigators and Co-Investigators named in applications, broken down by the year of the final funding decisions of the application round, and those who were grant-holders at the end of each calendar year.

Table 2 highlights two substantive trends in who applies to us. First, there has been a steady growth in the number of Principal Investigators with a disability, rising from 10% in the 2021 funding rounds to 22% in the first 2026 funding round. Second, there has been a sharp increase in applicant diversity in the first 2026 funding round, with the proportion of Principal Investigator applicants identifying as not White rising from 10% in 2021 to 42%, though it is too soon to know if this represents a sustained trend.

Overall, as can be seen in Table 3, trends across different protected characteristics have remained mostly stable for grant-holders since 2021.

Table 1: Staff characteristics as of 31 December 2025 (%)

Age	29 or under: 16.3
	30 – 39: 34.8
	40 – 49: 26.0
	50 – 59: 19.6
	60+: 3.3
	Prefer not to say: 0
Ethnicity	Asian or Asian British: 7.6
	Black or Black British: 3.3
	Mixed: 5.4
	Other ethnic group: 3.3
	White: 70.6
	Prefer not to say: 9.8
Disability	No: 84.8
	Yes: 5.4
	Prefer not to say: 9.8
Gender	Female: 71.7
	Male: 26.1
	Another term: 2.2
	Prefer not to say: 0

Table 2: Applicant protected characteristics, by year of funding decision

	Principal Investigator						Co-Investigator					
	2026 (%; n=225)*	2025 (%; n=42)**	2024 (%; n=426)	2023 (%; n=509)	2022 (%; n=446)	2021 (%; n=130)	2026 (%; n=281)*	2025 (%; n=63)**	2024 (%; n=698)	2023 (%; n=839)	2022 (%; n=742)	2021 (%; n=177)
Age												
29 or under	4	3	3	2	3	3	1	4	3	3	2	0
30 – 39	29	30	22	25	28	31	27	25	26	25	24	24
40 – 49	42	48	38	36	40	38	38	33	36	37	35	36
50 – 59	19	13	26	27	21	19	25	23	22	24	28	30
60+	4	8	10	9	7	8	7	15	11	9	9	8
Prefer not to say	1	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	2	2	2	2
Ethnicity												
Asian or Asian British	18	8	6	6	9	5	12	6	9	9	6	5
Black or Black British	13	3	3	3	1	1	9	2	2	2	1	0
Mixed	6	10	6	4	3	2	6	4	4	2	3	2
Other ethnic group	5	0	4	3	2	2	4	2	5	4	2	2
White	56	80	80	83	84	88	68	87	78	81	86	90
Prefer not to say	2	0	1	1	1	2	1	0	3	2	1	1
Disability												
No	73	75	75	78	83	85	80	79	79	80	80	83
Yes	22	15	20	19	12	10	17	17	16	14	17	15
Prefer not to say	6	10	4	3	5	5	3	4	5	6	3	2
Gender												
Female	57	58	67	63	62	55	63	73	60	59	58	53
Male	42	43	31	35	35	42	34	25	37	38	40	46
I use another term	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	1	0	1	1
Prefer not to say	1	0	2	2	1	1	2	2	3	3	1	1

*2026 data currently includes data only for the first of two rounds of applications on which decisions will be made in 2026.

**Technical data issues severely affected collection of information for 2025 application rounds, and this data should be considered incomplete.

Table 3: Grant-holder protected characteristics

	Principal Investigator					Co-Investigator				
	2025 (%; n=136)	2024 (%; n=147)	2023 (%; n=74)	2022 (%; n=100)	2021 (%; n=107)	2025 (%; n=265)	2024 (%; n=255)	2023 (%; n=143)	2022 (%; n=186)	2021 (%; n=191)
Age										
29 or under	1	2	1	0	1	3	4	4	4	5
30 – 39	24	26	26	21	21	24	21	22	18	16
40 – 49	44	42	31	33	32	36	36	37	40	42
50 – 59	22	22	27	30	29	27	29	22	23	23
60+	8	8	14	15	17	9	8	13	12	12
Prefer not to say	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	3
Ethnicity										
Asian or Asian British	5	5	3	3	4	3	2	1	2	2
Black or Black British	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1
Mixed	4	2	5	4	4	3	3	1	1	1
Other ethnic group	4	3	1	2	2	3	2	1	1	1
White	86	86	83	86	86	90	93	96	94	95
Prefer not to say	1	3	8	5	5	0	0	1	2	2
Disability										
No	81	81	85	86	87	81	82	81	80	81
Yes	17	16	14	14	13	14	13	15	16	15
Prefer not to say	1	3	1	0	0	6	4	4	5	5
Gender										
Female	56	58	60	61	62	58	56	58	60	61
Male	41	39	38	37	36	39	42	41	38	37
I use another term	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	2
Prefer not to say	2	2	1	1	1	2	0	1	2	0

Grants awarded in 2025

Principal Investigator and Institution	Project Name	Value (£)	Term (months)
Main Grants Fund projects funded in 2025			
Rajnaara Akhtar, University of Warwick	Exploring the child arrangements of separated families	506,786	24
Helen Whincup, University of Stirling	Permanently progressing phase 3: Adolescence and early adulthood	484,496	48
Tom Waters, Institute for Fiscal Studies	Inequalities and the future	459,282	36
Hannah Brinsden, The Food Foundation	Actionable insights to tackle UK dietary inequalities	399,609	36
Emma Slaymaker, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine	Understanding fertility intentions in 21st century Britain	381,224	24
Neil Harrison, University of Exeter	Education pathways for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children	379,394	24
Emma Moore, National Foundation for Educational Research	Pupil well-being and increased persistent absenteeism: An investigation	377,150	21
Naomi Finch, University of York	Effective hybrid work: Childcare, work-life balance and well-being	357,545	36
Tammy Campbell, Education Policy Institute	Policy change and inequalities in early childhood education and care	354,455	31
Miriam McBreen, University College London	Love to read phase 2: A large-scale evaluation	347,255	22
Ekaterina Hertog, University of Oxford	The digital lives of care-experienced children	320,000	24
Anna Remington, UCL Institute of Education	EXAMINE: Exam inequality for neurodivergent students	306,544	30
Tarek Mostafa, University of Birmingham	How context shapes skills at 18: Comparative lessons for the UK	303,406	27
Sam Wass, University of East London	Noise in early years for children from under-privileged backgrounds	299,522	35
Jack Worth, National Foundation for Educational Research	Education workforce challenges in England	299,275	36
Victoria Knowland, Newcastle University	SleepBoost: The feasibility of supporting sleep to support language	296,472	36
Michael Scott, National Foundation for Educational Research	A study of multi-grade teaching in English primary schools	293,175	19
Amrita Kulka, University of Warwick	Towards housing affordability: Local supply drivers and optimal policy	288,492	36
Ellie Suh, University of Birmingham	Examining gender pension gaps: Trajectories over time in the UK	282,244	27
Charlynn Pullen, Sheffield Hallam University	Apprenticeship pathways	280,125	23
Emilia Del Bono, University of Essex	The impacts of relational and restorative practice in schools	274,398	24

Principal Investigator and Institution	Project Name	Value (£)	Term (months)
David Robinson, Education Policy Institute	How do students with SEND fare in the transition to post-16 education?	251,378	20
Sam Holmes, Causeway Education	Addressing undermatch in HE destinations	245,873	32
Carl Emmerson, Institute for Fiscal Studies	IFS Green Budget 2026 – 2029	238,000	48
Whitney Crenna-Jennings, Education Policy Institute	Exclusionary practice in English secondary schools	237,585	21
Jack Britton, Institute for Fiscal Studies	The long-term impact of student loans in further education	236,883	24
Sam Sims, UCL Institute of Education	School climate and pupil belonging, attendance and achievement	225,153	36
Peter Dickinson, University of Warwick	Trialling an assessment protocol for LLM-powered careers advice	219,773	24
Alice Jones Bartoli, National Children's Bureau	Your baby and you: Developing the home learning environment for babies	205,936	30
Alexandra Murray, Birkbeck, University of London	Diverse disabilities: Accessibility and justice in the tribunal	198,861	24
Peter William Walsh, University of Oxford	Disengagement from the UK asylum system	179,515	27
Kerry Papps, University of Bradford	What price is free? The price effects of England's childcare reforms	168,221	24
Gregory Thwaites, Resolution Foundation	Characterising the job ladder in England	163,744	18
Gennaro Rossi, University of Reading	The effects of permanent school closures on pupils' outcomes	149,912	18
Claire Tyler, University College London	Racial inequalities in access to professional careers – what matters?	148,402	27
Gillian West, University College London	Childminder-led structured language enrichment in the early years	146,688	15
Gozde Burger, University of Bristol	Building resilience: The feasibility of adapting a child-focused intervention for parental separation	110,642	23
Joao Sousa, University of Strathclyde	2026 Scottish Parliament and Senedd election analysis	94,833	8
Carl Cullinane, The Sutton Trust	Room to grow: School-based nursery places and the disadvantage gap	92,380	7
David Phillips, Institute for Fiscal Studies	Tax, benefits and public spending in the 2026 devolved elections	79,790	7
Paul Martin, University College London	Student employment and subsequent education and labour market outcomes	76,844	18
Caroline Selman, Public Law Project	Public law litigation in the automated state	74,998	15
Helen Beckett, University of Central Lancashire	Mapping evidence on justice well-being impacts after child sexual abuse	72,541	10
Anne Power, London School of Economics and Political Science	Navigating social housing tenancies: Language and cultural barriers	69,416	11

Principal Investigator and Institution	Project Name	Value (£)	Term (months)
Nancy Lombard, Glasgow Caledonian University	Exploring the intersections between the criminal and civil courts	69,393	14
Sam Guy, The University of Sheffield	Access to justice in legal challenges to infrastructure projects	66,298	18
Sam McLoughlin, Royal Economic Society	Improving school access to essential basic economic literacy	65,150	32
Ruth Patrick, University of Glasgow	Improving policymaking processes and knowledge bases on child poverty	57,977	12
Funding for four projects, each less than £50,000		102,892	
Other grants funded from Main Grants Fund in 2025			
Funding for seven projects, each less than £50,000		54,000	
Additional funding for Main Grants Fund projects funded in previous years			
Mona Sakr, Middlesex University	Achieving high-quality provision in the baby room of English nurseries	89,535	33
Additional funding for nine projects, each less than £50,000		135,483	
Total Main Grants Fund		11,618,945	
New Oliver Bird Fund projects funded in 2025			
Holly Blake, University of Nottingham	Pain-at-Work Toolkit for employees with chronic pain (definitive trial)	700,987	36
Ross Wilkie, Keele University	Musculoskeletal conditions in underserved communities	699,914	36
Max Henderson, University of Leeds	Economic inactivity, arthritis & depression: Who, why & how to respond	683,909	36
Line Caes, University of Stirling	Challenges young people face in managing musculoskeletal chronic pain	499,495	48
Nicholas Evans, University of Worcester	Arthritis and farmers in England: Impacts, adaptations and prevention	267,665	30
Melanie Jones, Cardiff University	Musculoskeletal conditions, employment retention and job quality	236,213	27
Total Oliver Bird Fund grants		3,088,183	
New Racial Diversity UK Fund projects funded in 2025			
Keon West, Runnymede Trust	Decline to renewal: Race, deindustrialisation and working lives	499,964	29
Sunder Katwala, British Future	Voices for equity: Moving from evidence to action	366,925	36
Nasar Meer, University of Glasgow	Racial equality since devolution: Divergences, outcomes and frontiers	326,830	24
Sarah Kyambi, Migration Policy Scotland	Better mixing: Supporting Scotland's diverse future	249,817	36
Total Racial Diversity UK Fund grants		1,443,536	
All new grant funding in 2025		15,925,646	
Additional funding for Main Grants Fund projects funded in previous years		225,018	
Total grants funded in 2025		16,150,664	

Financial review

2025 is the third year of our current seven-year financial framework, which sees an increase in our charitable spending to achieve our strategic goals.

Our two key financial metrics are annual charitable expenditure and the value of our investment portfolio, both of which increased compared to the previous year.

Our charitable expenditure in 2025 was £30.8 million, an increase of £2.4 million from 2024's charitable expenditure of £28.4 million. This increase is predominately explained by increased spend in our Racial Diversity UK commitments (£1.5 million increase from 2024), the Nuffield Early Language Intervention programme (£0.7 million increase from 2024) and smaller increases across our remaining programmes.

Our investments were valued at £596 million at the end of December 2025, a £54 million increase against the December 2024 valuation of £542 million. Against our longer-term financial targets we remain significantly ahead of our target position, and so market volatility does not yet cause any concern for our long-term ability to spend at our intended levels.

Expenditure

Key components of our 2025 expenditure include:

- £11.1 million of research grants to higher education institutions and other organisations.
- £3.1 million of Oliver Bird grants, including *Pain-at-Work Toolkit* for employees with chronic pain with the University of Nottingham, which is a definitive trial testing the efficacy of the PAW Toolkit in helping people feel more able and confident at work.
- £1.4 million of Racial Diversity UK grants, including *Decline to renewal: Race, deindustrialisation and working lives* with the Runnymede Trust, which seeks to understand the legacies of deindustrialisation and chart a path towards inclusive regeneration.
- Increased expenditure for the Ada Lovelace Institute and the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, alongside an increase in the level of third-party funding support.

These activities indicate some of the ways in which we are using our financial resources to deliver the aspirations laid out in our strategy.

Investment management and governance

Our financial objectives are:

- To have the ability to spend at a sustainable rate over the medium-term (five years +),
- With the actual timing of expenditure being variable, driven by our risk appetite and quality criteria,
- While seeking to maintain in real terms the value and purchasing power of the endowment in the longer term,
- By reflecting our mission of advancing social well-being in how we invest.

Our investment objective remains to have a diversified portfolio that will allow for high and stable long-term spending, earned in a way that is consistent with our values.

The portfolio return of 13.7% (2024: 9.5%) was marginally ahead of its market-based benchmark of 13.1% (17.8%), which is based on a portfolio passively

invested with 90% in global equities and 10% in short-dated gilts. The small out-performance over the year was due to the net effects of our temporary currency hedging (to protect our US assets from a weakening US dollar) which contributed 2.2% to our 2025 return, offset by a not unusual 1.1% lag in private equity/venture capital valuations and to a lesser extent some asset allocation deviation and manager underperformance.

Within the portfolio's investment in global equities, listed equity managers returned +13.4%, slightly underperforming the benchmark (MSCI ACWI) of 13.9%. There was wide dispersion in manager performance ranging from +28.5% to +1.2% with Value managers performing well compared to Growth managers. This is a consequence of our equity diversification structure which is designed to provide exposure to different styles. During the year we replaced Arrowstreet (and in early 2026, Veritas) and used the proceeds to fund a new mandate with Legal & General.

The portfolio currently has an 75% exposure to overseas assets including 54% to the US dollar. We had previously taken out a US dollar hedge at £1 to \$1.15 but closed it in May 2025 once currencies returned to a more normal range (£1 to \$1.35). We have now returned to our policy position of running an unhedged strategy.

During the year, the Trustees received an independent report on the investment strategy from Stanhope Consulting. The Investment Committee considered the report's recommendations and concluded that it is content with the performance of its return maximising strategy and its approach of prudently embracing risk.

The Investment Committee continued to dedicate one meeting during the year to review how our equity managers implement our responsible investor expectations. As part of our underlying principle of 'know what we own', we examine our portfolio against several metrics to ensure we are not earning our returns by exploiting vulnerable people, or in an unsustainable way, and we discuss with our investment managers how they express our policy

in what they own, how they vote, and how they engage with their underlying investments.

We continue to carefully watch inflation, both globally and in the UK.

Our Investment Committee is made up of three Trustees and two independent investment professionals and fulfils a key governance role by monitoring and overseeing this area on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

Responsible investing policy

Our policy is based on three principles:

- We aim to achieve our financial returns in a way that is consistent with our charitable purpose of advancing social well-being. This includes being an engaged investor as well as avoiding businesses that are either unsustainable or seek to exploit vulnerable people.
- We aim to know what we own or be confident that our managers know what they own on our behalf, and why they own it. When investing in private equity we will seek reassurance on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) matters in line with our policy.
- We will disinvest from a manager where on balance its approach is incompatible with our interests described above.

Our full responsible investing policy is available on our website: <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/about/governance>

Asset allocation and ranges

Asset class	Target	31 Dec 2025
<i>Real assets</i>		
Global equities	65%	72%
Private assets	25%	18%
<i>Total real assets</i>	90%	90%
Short-dated gilts and cash	10%	10%
<i>Total assets</i>	100%	100%

Manager structure and principal benchmarks

Investment performance is assessed against total returns relative to a composite benchmark based on asset allocation at the beginning of each period. Performance is also compared to an appropriate peer group index (previously WM Charities Unconstrained Index). Individual manager benchmarks are set out below.

Asset class	Manager	
<i>Real assets</i>		
Global equities	Arrowstreet, GMO, Harding Loevner, Legal & General, Metropolis, Sparinvest, Veritas	
Private assets	Various illiquid funds	
<i>Nominal assets</i>		
Short-dated gilts	Internally managed	
Asset class	Benchmark	Target
Total equities	MSCI ACWI	+ 1%
Private assets	MSCI ACWI	+ 3%
Fixed interest	0–5yr ML Gilt index	-

Investment performance					
Total returns (annualised %)	1 Year	3 Years	5 years	10 Years	Since Inception (2003)
Nuffield Foundation	13.7	10.6	9.0	10.2	9.6
Bespoke benchmark	13.1	15.0	10.7	12.0	10.5
Inflation (average weekly earnings)	4.6	5.5	5.4	2.9	3.4
ARC Steady Growth Index	9.3	8.4	5.2	6.1	-
Key					
<i>Nuffield Foundation</i>	Actual performance				
<i>Bespoke benchmark</i>	90% MSCI ACWI; 10% UK 1–5-year Gilts				
<i>ARC Steady Growth Index</i>	Commonly used index for charity funds				

Reserves policy

The Foundation's reserves policy is designed to safeguard the long-term strength of the Nuffield Foundation's financial position. Our approach is to maintain the real value of the endowment over the very long term while ensuring that sufficient funds are available to meet near-term spending commitments.

As at 31 December 2025, the Foundation's total funds stood at £565 million. Of this, £535 million related to permanent and expendable endowments. The remaining balance comprised £13.0 million of restricted funds, £7.7 million of unrestricted designated funds, and an unrestricted general fund of £9.6 million.

The endowment is managed on a total return basis. Given that a significant proportion of our accounting commitments will not fall due for several years, and are fully covered by cash and cash-equivalent holdings within the investment portfolio, we consider our current reserves position to be appropriate and aligned with our long-term strategy. As such it is the Foundation's policy not to maintain an unrestricted general reserve and so we expect the unrestricted general fund to be negative at times.

Principal risks

We are responsible for the management of risks, with detailed consideration delegated from the Trustee board to the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee and supported by senior staff. We have developed a risk management approach that ensures we

consider the gap between our risk appetite and the actual profile of a given risk, as well as developing mitigations and assurances for each area of risk. Our strategic risk areas, together with key notes and actions, are:

Question	Some key notes and actions
Are we alert to our external environment and key issues? Are we innovative, trying new things?	We closely monitor policy and societal contexts in order to have impact in times of significant change. We want to guard against risk aversion and challenge ourselves regularly – including when taking grant funding decisions – on whether we are sufficiently open to innovation and change. We have included an innovation focused workstream in our new strategy.
Do our research and programmes sufficiently contribute to our strategic purpose of improving people's lives?	We have defined five dimensions of impact and test our activity – including grant funding – against these. Our communications, policy, and public affairs team works to connect the evidence that we produce with policy and practice, seeking to influence based on evidence, and we are prioritising a more externally facing approach under our new strategy. Our centres and in house programmes have set out clear theories of change and/or impact plans.
Are we alert to and managing any issues that might negatively affect our reputation?	We have appropriate checks and balances in place to prevent misconduct, fraud, mismanagement, and conflict of interest. We are transparent about who we fund and use our Guide for Applicants to explain our funding criteria and how decisions are taken. We are alert to any reputational issues and respond as needed.
Do we have the right leadership and organisational culture?	Our Leadership Team meets regularly to agree priorities and take decisions. Our new strategic priorities create a thread between organisational, team, and individual objectives. We are focusing on embedding our new values framework and behaviours.
Do we have the right workforce capability and capacity?	We keep our capability, capacity, and ability to recruit under regular review, including through the appropriate Board sub-committee. We conduct an annual key person risk assessment to identify single points of failure and to identify risk mitigation actions.
Are we making sufficient progress in embedding equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) into our work and reflecting it in our workforce?	We continue to take steps to embed equity, diversity, and inclusion in our work and our working practices. We have reviewed the first year of our formal EDI Action Plan to draw out lessons and prioritise next steps. We will continue to focus on i) what we fund, ii) who we work with, and iii) our actions as an organisation. We will publish our year 2 action plan in 2026.
Are our finance, assurance, and compliance approaches clear, robust and fit for purpose?	We are satisfied that this risk is being well managed; we have made our approach to assurance reporting clearer and more comprehensive. During the year we have undertaken a third-party review of our cyber security systems and practices, recently achieving Cyber Essentials accreditation.

Question	Some key notes and actions
Do we do have the right governance and funding structures and approaches in place?	We have governance structures in place for the Foundation and for each of the centres. In 2025 we conducted a governance review and a Board Effectiveness Review and we are implementing their recommendations.
Does our investment strategy allow us to fulfil our strategic purpose?	Our investment model has proved resilient to date; this will require continued careful monitoring over the coming period.
Do our systems support effective working and decision-making? Are we alert to the opportunities and risks of recent technologies?	We are undertaking third-party reviews of some of our systems to verify factors such as value for money, operational effectiveness, and security. We have a programme to consider whether and how to use AI tools within our organisation.

Structure, governance and management

The Trust Deed

The Nuffield Foundation is a charity registered with the Charity Commission (206601). It was established by Trust Deed on 9 June 1943 by Lord Nuffield. The Trust Deed details the objects of the Foundation which include: the advancement of health; the advancement of social well-being; the advancement of education; the care and comfort of the aged poor; the relief of handicaps; the benefit of the Commonwealth; and “such other charitable purposes as shall be declared in writing by all the Trustees”.

A Common Investment Fund was established by a Charity Commission scheme and took effect on 1 January 1980. It allowed the investments of different charities (but for which the Foundation Trustees were also responsible) to be invested as one unit. Subsequently, these funds (the Oliver Bird Fund, the Elizabeth Nuffield Educational Fund, and the Commonwealth Relations Trust) have been classified as ‘subsidiary charities’ of the Foundation and are only identified separately in the notes to these accounts.

The Trust Deed has been amended on several occasions, most recently in 2016.

Trustees

The Foundation has eight Trustees, who act jointly as a corporate body. Trustee appointments are overseen by the Staff, Nominations and Remuneration Committee. Appointments are made for an initial five-year term with the option for a mutually agreed extended term of up to a maximum of four years (which may be in the form of 2 years initially, followed by a possible 2-year extension).

The Board of Trustees meets five times a year and retains overall responsibility for all activities of the Foundation. All strategic and policy decisions are taken by Trustees collectively, advised by several committees. There are also Centre Boards for the Ada Lovelace Institute, the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory, and the Nuffield Council on Bioethics – these do not have formal fiduciary duties. A full list of Trustees is available on page 108.

Committee / Centre Board membership is as follows:

	Remit	Current Membership
Board Sub-Committees		
Audit, Risk and Governance	Responsible for the process leading to the preparation of the annual financial statements, the internal control environment, the oversight of risk management, and all corporate governance matters.	John Pullinger (Chair) Ash Amin Clare Tickell <i>Vivienne Dews + Claire Brown #</i>
Finance	Oversight of all financial aspects of Foundation operations, financial planning, and performance monitoring; oversees the implementation of initiatives which involve significant expenditure.	John Pullinger (Chair) Ash Amin Clare Tickell <i>Vivienne Dews + Claire Brown #</i>
Investment	Management and maintenance of the Foundation's investment portfolio in line with the Trustees' instructions.	Keith Burnett (Chair) Brian Bell John Pullinger <i>David Balance Julia Hobart + Gary Steinberg #</i>
Staff, Nominations and Remuneration	Oversight of the people and organisational development agenda for the Foundation, including structure, culture, remuneration, and relevant policies.	Keith Burnett (Chair) Ann Phoenix Ernest Ryder # Clare Tickell
Centre boards		
Ada Lovelace Institute	To ensure the intellectual steering, values, and independence of Ada, and maintain ongoing delivery, financial, and risk management, within frameworks set by the Trustees.	<i>Julie Maxton (Chair) Francine Bennett Rocio Concha Galguera Alix Dunn # Shakir Mohamed Ali Shah John Thornhill Chris Todd # Shannon Vallor</i>
Nuffield Council on Bioethics	Responsible for reviewing and challenging the Nuffield Council on Bioethics' work, providing assurance that it is operating within its remit and committing expenditure in line with the terms of the funding grant and the goals of the Strategic Plan. (Note that the Council has a deliberative function, with responsibility for developing the Nuffield Council on Bioethics' strategy.)	<i>Jane MacNaughton (Chair of the Board) Sarion Bowers Sarah Dickson Adam Hedgecoe Gavin Kelly Katherine Littler Dan O'Connor # Kirsten Bound + Sarah Cunningham-Burley (Chair of the Council)</i>

	Remit	Current Membership
Nuffield Family Justice Observatory	To ensure the intellectual steering, values, and independence of Nuffield FJO, and maintain ongoing delivery, financial, and risk management, within frameworks set by the Trustees.	<i>Jenny Beck (Chair)</i> <i>Clare Carter #</i> <i>Chris MacDonald</i> <i>Eamon McCrory</i> <i>Andrew Powell</i> Rob Street <i>Carol Atkinson</i> <i>Carole Burgher</i> <i>Ben Collins</i>
Panel for Trustee Remuneration	Periodically reviews the principles and levels of remuneration of Trustees and other members of our governance environment, including independent members of sub-committees and Centre Boards, and makes recommendations to the Chair of Trustees. Membership agreed with SNRC in advance of convening.	<i>Claire Brown (Chair) #</i> <i>Vivienne Dews (Chair) +</i> Deirdre Carty <i>+ one independent member</i>
<i>Italics</i>	External to / independent of the Nuffield Foundation	
<i>+</i>	Joined in year	
<i>#</i>	Left in year	

We set terms of reference for all committees and panels, and parameters for the delegation of authority to senior staff. Senior staff set further levels of delegation for operational matters. New Trustees receive an induction, including a series of meetings with other Trustees and senior staff, and a handbook for Trustees, containing information about procedures, committees, meetings, decision-making, and financial procedures at the Nuffield Foundation.

Organisational structure and management of the Foundation

The Foundation has employed an average of 87 full-time equivalent staff (including staff of the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, the Ada Lovelace Institute, and the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory, all of whom are employed by the Foundation) during the year. The Chief Executive, supported by a Leadership Team, is responsible for the management of the Foundation and for advising Trustees on strategic and operational matters. Trustees are responsible for grant-making decisions, with delegated authorities in line with agreed procedures.

We house several semi-autonomous bodies which, although legally part of the Nuffield Foundation, have their own governing structures with distinct terms of reference. The Nuffield Council on Bioethics has a Governing Board chaired by Jane MacNaughton and a Council chaired by Sarah Cunningham-Burley; the Ada Lovelace Institute has a Governing Board chaired by Dame Julie Maxton; and the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory has a Governing Board chaired by Jenny Beck.

In 2021 we set up a wholly owned subsidiary, Nuffield Foundation Education Ltd, as a 'special purpose vehicle' for the management of the grant from the Department for Education to roll out the Nuffield Early Language Intervention. The results of the subsidiary have been consolidated into the group accounts.

Statement of grant-making policy

We seek to be an open, collaborative, and engaged funder that offers more than money. We are not simply an academic funding body, though the research we fund must stand up to rigorous academic scrutiny. We publish details of available funding and the

relevant application process on our website and promote these opportunities through our stakeholder engagement and communications.

Grants are peer-reviewed by independent referees, who include representatives from the policy and practice worlds, as well as research experts. We require ethical scrutiny of proposals involving primary research and evidence of a commitment to the communication of research findings. Trustees make final decisions on these applications.

Once a grant has been awarded, we will work with grant-holders to ensure an advisory board is in place to provide a range of technical, subject, policy, and practice expertise. We also require grant-holders to report on progress and to produce at least one publicly available output that sets out how they used their grant and what they achieved. We also require an end of project assessment, including feedback on the Foundation's performance as a grant-maker.

Statement of policy on staff remuneration

We aim to recruit and retain skilled staff to deliver the operational activities of the organisation. Staff are paid on a pay band commensurate with the responsibility their position entails. Annual pay increases are agreed by the Trustees based on recommendations from the Staff, Nominations and Remuneration Committee, taking inflation and national average earnings and any other relevant internal and external factors into account. We do not have a system of bonuses or other variable rewards but will occasionally make additional payments to staff to recognise additional levels of responsibility or contribution.

Periodically, staff pay is independently benchmarked to external comparators. We last undertook a full benchmarking exercise in the summer of 2021, to ensure that our remuneration remained in line with our external markets, and that there was appropriate internal parity. Details of senior staff pay are contained in note 4 to the accounts.

The Foundation is a Living Wage Employer accredited by the Living Wage Foundation.

Pay gap reporting

The Nuffield Foundation chooses to share the gender and ethnicity pay gaps in our annual report for transparency and accountability. We are conscious that we are below the headcount requirement for statutory reporting and that these figures are sensitive to fluctuation due to our relatively small workforce. We, however, recognise the importance of understanding what they may tell us about our recruitment and retention practices and we will continue to monitor them. Please refer to [page 62](#) for further information on our EDI Action Plan and diversity monitoring.

Gender pay gap

As of 31 December 2025, the mean gender pay gap has reduced; mean average female pay is 7.5% lower than average male pay (9.7% in 2024). Looking at the median pay gap, female median pay is now 6.6% higher than male median pay (1.9% in 2024).

For reference, our overall staff base is 72% female, 26% male, and 2% non-binary/other gender identities.

Ethnicity pay gap

Looking at the average pay of employees who have disclosed themselves as being from a White background compared with those staff from ethnic minority backgrounds, our mean pay gap has increased further over the last year. Mean average pay for White employees is now 27.7% higher than those from ethnic minority backgrounds (up from 22.8% in 2024) and the median pay gap has increased from 17.0% in 2024 to 22.7% in 2025.

For reference, 71% of our staff have disclosed that they are of a White background and 20% are from an ethnic minority background.

Statement of policy on fundraising

Section 162a of the Charities Act 2011 requires us to make a statement regarding fundraising activities. We do not undertake any fundraising activities, although we can accept offers from partners to contribute to work that we undertake.

We show these sums in our accounts as ‘donation income’. We do not use professional fundraisers or ‘commercial participators’ or, indeed, any third parties to solicit donations. We are therefore not subject to any regulatory scheme or relevant codes of practice; nor have we received any complaints in relation to fundraising activities; nor do we consider it necessary to design specific procedures to monitor such activities.

Charity Governance Code

We have previously carried out a review of our activities against the Charity Governance Code, a tool designed to help charities and their Trustees develop high standards of governance. During 2026 we intend to review our activities against the revised 2025 Charity Governance Code and consider whether to amend our action plan accordingly.

Streamlined energy and carbon reporting

Although not required for charities of our size, we have elected to report our energy utilisation as a part of our wider commitment to responsible operations.

	2025	2024
UK energy use (kWh)	117,894	113,975
Associated greenhouse gas emissions (Tonnes CO2 equivalent)	37.30	40.34
Intensity ratio Emissions per square metre	0.04	0.04

UK energy use covers gas and electricity use from our UK office plus the annual emissions from IT equipment.

Associated greenhouse gases have been calculated using the GHG Reporting Protocol and use the 2025 government emission conversion factors for greenhouse gas company reporting.

The bulk of our energy demand comes from our office use. We use cloud-based and mobile technology solutions, so our in-house IT requirements (servers etc.) have been reduced to a minimum.

We have limited energy usage other than our office and IT commitments (Foundation travel is limited and is almost entirely by public transport). We have not attempted to calculate the power consumption of staff while working from home.

Public benefit

In preparing this report, the Trustees have referred to the Charity Commission’s general guidance on public benefit and are satisfied that the activities undertaken by the Foundation meet the Commission’s requirements. As a research funder, the immediate beneficiaries are the organisations that we fund; universities, research institutes, voluntary organisations, and others. Ultimately, the beneficiaries are much wider, since the aim of our grant-making is to improve the design and operation of social policy so that the lives of potentially every person in the UK benefit.

Individual young people are the immediate beneficiaries of our student programmes, including the roll-out of the Nuffield Early Language Intervention; the public benefit reaches beyond the individuals directly supported – for example, by ultimately seeking to address the skills gaps needed for the UK to flourish.

Going concern

We monitor our going concern position throughout the year, with regular formal reviews.

Our general outlook on going concern is that the nature of the Foundation’s endowment management and its future financial commitments mean that the Trustees remain satisfied that the Foundation has sufficient reserves to continue as a going concern for the foreseeable future.

Our most recent review confirms that, as our investment value is significantly in excess of long-run target, our asset allocation is intentionally overweight on nominal / liquid funds (so strengthening our resilience to short-term adverse shocks), and as cash and gilt holdings are double the requirement to meet forecast outflows over the next 24 months, our general outlook remains positive.

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the annual report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations. Charity law requires that Trustees prepare financial statements for each financial year, in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under charity law, the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently.
- Make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions, to disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and, therefore, for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

These financial statements are published on the Foundation's website, in accordance with legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements, which may vary from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The maintenance and integrity of the Foundation's website is the responsibility of the Trustees. The Trustees' responsibility also extends to the ongoing integrity of the financial statements contained therein.

Disclosure of information to auditors

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- There is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditors are unaware.
- The Trustees have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as a Trustee in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditors are aware of that information.

Approved by the Trustees on 15 May 2026 and signed on their behalf by:



Sir Keith Burnett
Chair

Independent auditor's report

Independent Auditor's Report to the Trustees of Nuffield Foundation

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Nuffield Foundation (the 'Charity') and its subsidiary ('the Group') for the year ended 31 December 2025 which comprise the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities, the Consolidated and Charity Balance Sheets, the Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- Give a true and fair view of the state of the group and the charity's affairs as at 31 December 2025 and of the group's income and receipts of endowments and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- Have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- Have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities

under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's or the group's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise

explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and charity and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements within the Trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- Adequate and proper accounting records have not been kept; or
- The financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- Certain disclosures of Trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- We have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of the Trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' responsibilities statement, the Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the

preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's and group's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Details of the extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations are set out below.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We identified and assessed the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements from irregularities, whether due to fraud or error, and discussed these between our audit team members. We then designed and performed audit procedures responsive to those

risks, including obtaining audit evidence sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks within which the charity operates, focusing on those laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The laws and regulations we considered in this context were the Charities Act 2011 together with the Charities SORP (FRS 102). We assessed the required compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our audit procedures on the related financial statement items.

In addition, we considered provisions of other laws and regulations that do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which might be fundamental to the charity's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty. We also considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the charity for fraud.

Auditing standards limit the required audit procedures to identify non-compliance with these laws and regulations to enquiry of the Trustee and other management and inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

We identified the greatest risk of material impact on the financial statements from irregularities, including fraud, to be within the timing/completeness of recognition of investment and grant income and the override of controls by management. Our audit procedures to respond to these risks included designing audit procedures over the completeness and timing of recognition of investment and grant income, enquiries of management and the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities, sample testing on the posting of journals, reviewing accounting estimates for biases, reviewing regulatory correspondence with the Charity Commission and reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance.

Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial

statements, even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards. For example, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations (irregularities) is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely the inherently limited procedures required by auditing standards would identify it. In addition, as with any audit, there remained a higher risk of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal controls. We are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's members, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

[not yet signed]

Crowe U.K. LLP
Statutory Auditor
London

Financial statements and notes

Consolidated Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 December 2025

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £000s	Restricted Funds £000s	Endowed Funds £000s	Total Funds 2025 £000s	Total Funds 2024 £000s
Income and Endowments						
Donations and legacies	2	154	5,943	-	6,097	6,931
Charitable activities	2	11	12	-	23	46
Investment activities	7	-	-	8,171	8,171	5,334
Other income	2	39	-	-	39	45
Total income		204	5,955	8,171	14,330	12,356
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds						
Investment management costs		-	-	2,827	2,827	1,418
Charitable activities						
Main Grants		14,547	189	-	14,736	13,392
Strategic Fund		599	-	-	599	5,605
Student and other programmes		222	16	-	238	65
Nuffield Early Language Intervention		-	3,406	-	3,406	2,743
Total Charitable Activities		15,368	3,611	-	18,979	21,805
In-house programmes						
Ada Lovelace Institute		2,172	696	-	2,868	3,234
Nuffield Council on Bioethics		846	1,185	-	2,031	1,791
Nuffield Family Justice Observatory		1,416	-	-	1,416	1,058
Other in-house programmes		629	-	-	629	235
Total in-house programmes		5,063	1,881	-	6,944	6,318
Restricted funds						
Oliver Bird Fund		-	3,138	-	3,138	38
Racial Diversity UK		-	1,673	-	1,673	150
Total restricted funds		-	4,811	-	4,811	188
Effect of discounting grant liability		112	-	-	112	63
Total charitable activities	3	20,543	10,303	-	30,846	28,374
Total expenditure		20,543	10,303	2,827	33,673	29,792
Net gain in investments		-	-	69,982	69,982	43,762
Net (expenditure)/income		(20,339)	(4,348)	75,326	50,639	26,326
Transfer between funds	14	37,424	2,403	(39,827)	-	-
Other recognised gains		9	-	-	9	8
Net (expenditure)/income after transfers		17,094	(1,945)	35,499	50,648	26,334
Reconciliation of funds:						
Total funds brought forward at 1 January		174	14,908	499,715	514,797	488,463
Total funds carried forward at 31 December	14	17,268	12,963	535,214	565,445	514,797

Consolidated Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 December 2024

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £000s	Restricted Funds £000s	Endowed Funds £000s	Total Funds 2024 £000s
Income and Endowments					
Donations and legacies	2	99	6,832	-	6,931
Charitable activities	2	10	36	-	46
Investment activities	7	-	-	5,334	5,334
Other income	2	45	-	-	45
Total income		154	6,868	5,334	12,356
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds					
Investment management costs		-	-	1,418	1,418
Charitable activities					
Main Grants		13,213	179	-	13,392
Strategic Fund		5,605	-	-	5,605
Student and other programmes		45	20	-	65
Nuffield Early Language Intervention		-	2,743	-	2,743
Total Charitable Activities		18,863	2,942	-	21,805
In-house programmes					
Ada Lovelace Institute		1,617	1,617	-	3,234
Nuffield Council on Bioethics		769	1,022	-	1,791
Nuffield Family Justice Observatory		1,058	-	-	1,058
Other in-house programmes		235	-	-	235
Total in-house programmes		3,679	2,639	-	6,318
Restricted funds					
Oliver Bird Fund		-	38	-	38
Racial Diversity UK		-	150	-	150
Total restricted funds		-	188	-	188
Effect of discounting grant liability		63	-	-	63
Total charitable activities	3	22,605	5,769	-	28,374
Total expenditure		22,605	5,769	1,418	29,792
Net gains on investments		-	-	43,762	43,762
Net (expenditure)/income		(22,451)	1,099	47,678	26,326
Transfer between funds	14	18,598	2,168	(20,766)	-
Other recognised gains		8	-	-	8
Net (expenditure)/income after transfers		(3,845)	3,267	26,912	26,334
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward at 1 January		4,019	11,641	472,803	488,463
Total funds carried forward at 31 December	14	174	14,908	499,715	514,797

Consolidated and Charity Balance sheet for the year ended 31 December 2025

	Note	Group 2025 £000s	Group 2024 £000s	Charity 2025 £000s	Charity 2024 £000s
Fixed assets					
Tangible fixed assets	5	1,149	1,345	1,149	1,345
Intangible fixed assets	6	23	77	23	77
Investments	7	595,844	541,906	595,844	541,906
Programme-related investments	7	125	85	125	85
		597,141	543,413	597,141	543,413
Current assets					
Debtors	8	7,876	6,890	6,779	6,044
Bank and cash		3,853	2,504	1,911	1,439
		11,729	9,394	8,690	7,483
Liabilities: amounts falling due within one year					
Grants payable	9	(17,783)	(16,234)	(17,783)	(16,234)
Creditors	10	(5,654)	(3,398)	(4,257)	(3,390)
		(23,437)	(19,632)	(22,040)	(19,624)
Net current liabilities		(11,708)	(10,238)	(13,350)	(12,141)
Liabilities falling due after one year					
Grants payable	9	(19,729)	(18,179)	(19,729)	(18,179)
Provisions	11	(259)	(199)	(259)	(199)
Net assets		565,445	514,797	563,803	512,894
Funds					
Unrestricted funds					
Designated fund	14	7,690	7,027	7,690	7,027
General fund	14	9,578	(6,853)	9,884	(6,642)
		17,268	174	17,574	385
Restricted funds	14	12,963	14,908	11,015	12,794
Endowed funds	14	535,214	499,715	535,214	499,715
Total funds		565,445	514,797	563,803	512,894

Notes 1 – 15 form part of these financial statements.

The surplus generated by the Charity in 2025 after gains and losses was £50,909k (2024: gain £26,213k).

These financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on 15 May 2026 and were signed on their behalf by:



Professor Sir Keith Burnett
Chair

Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows

	2025	2024
Note	£000s	£000s
Net cash flows from operating activities		
Net cash used in operating activities	(22,836)	(24,080)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Investment additions	(7,991)	(5,216)
Investment fees paid directly from portfolio	2,036	729
Investment cash withdrawals	7 22,000	24,000
Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets	5 (31)	(60)
Investment income	7 8,171	5,334
Net cash provided by investing activities	24,185	24,787
Reconciliation of cash and cash equivalents/net debt		
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January	2,504	1,797
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 December	3,853	2,504
Change in cash and cash equivalents/net debt in the year	1,349	707
Reconciliation of net income to net cash flows from operating activities		
Net income for the year	50,648	26,334
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation	5 227	225
Amortisation	6 54	163
Investment income	(8,171)	(5,334)
Gains on investments	(69,982)	(43,762)
Gains on revaluation of programme-related investment	(40)	-
Increase in provision	11 60	-
Increase in grants payable	3,098	958
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	2,256	(433)
Increase in debtors	(986)	(2,231)
Net cash outflows from operating activities	(22,836)	(24,080)

There is £5.2m of cash held in investments (2024: £7.6m) which are not available for immediate use to further charitable activities. These are being held as part of the investment portfolio to generate investment returns.

Notes to the financial statements

1. Principal accounting policies

a. Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, as modified by the revaluation of investments and in accordance with applicable Accounting Standards. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the second edition of the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice issued in October 2019 (the 'SORP'), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and the Charities Act 2011. The Nuffield Foundation is a public benefit entity and is registered with the Charity Commission in England and Wales (Charity number: 206601)

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis and the accounting policies below are consistently applied. Based on the nature of the Foundation's endowment management and its future financial commitments, the Trustees remain satisfied that there are no material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the ability of the Foundation to continue as a going concern for the foreseeable future.

The Foundation's financial statements are presented in pounds sterling and rounded to thousands. The functional and presentation currency is the pound sterling.

b. Basis of consolidation

Consolidated accounts have been prepared which include the Foundation and its subsidiary company, Nuffield Foundation Education Ltd. The Nuffield Foundation Education Ltd is a private company limited by guarantee that was incorporated on 5 May 2021.

The consolidation is on a line-by-line basis. Amounts owed and owing between the entities have been eliminated from the consolidated

balance sheet and consolidated statement of financial activities.

c. Estimates and judgements

The Foundation must make certain estimates and judgements that have an impact on the policies and amount reported in the annual accounts. The estimates and judgements are based on historical experiences and other factors including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable at the time such estimates and judgements are made. Actual results may differ from these estimates. These are reviewed on an ongoing basis and any revisions are recognised prospectively.

The key estimates and judgements made by the Foundation are addressed below.

I. Investments

The carrying value of investments is subject to estimates, assumptions, and judgements of their fair value. In determining this amount, the Charity ensures its managers adopt the International Private Equity and Venture Capital Valuation Guidelines, applying the overriding concept that fair value is the amount for which an asset can be exchanged between knowledgeable willing parties in an arm's length transaction. The nature, facts, and circumstance of the investment drives the valuation methodology.

II. Fixed assets

The actual lives of tangible and intangible fixed assets and their residual values are assessed annually. In reassessing asset lives, factors such as economic and future market conditions are considered, as is the remaining life of the asset and projected disposal values.

III. Dilapidation provision

The dilapidation provision requires management's best estimate of the expenditure that will be incurred based on contractual requirements. The timing of cash flows and any discount rates used to establish net present value of the obligation requires management's judgement. The provision was recognised in 2020 and will be assessed regularly for fair value.

IV: Discounting of long-term grant commitments

Grant awards are often paid out over a number of years and non-current liabilities are discounted to net present value based on expected future cash outflows. The discount rate used is taken from the interest rate earned on Foundation's cash accounts and is assessed annually. Due to historic low interest rates, this become material for the first time in the 2023 and was presented for the first time in those accounts. The movement on the balance is shown in 2025 as the third year of presentation.

d. Income

Investment income represents dividends and interest generated from the investment portfolio, including any associated tax credits or recoverable taxation. This income is accounted for on an accruals basis and is allocated proportionally to the underlying funds.

Grants and donations are accounted for when the charity has entitlement to the funds, probable receipt and the amount is measurable. Where income is received in advance, it is deferred until the charity is entitled to that income.

e. Expenditure

Costs of raising funds represent amounts paid to the Foundation's external investment advisors and managers. This excludes fees (both public and private equity) which cannot be identified separately and therefore are shown net of the income received.

Charitable expenditure comprises grants and other payments made by the Trustees in accordance with criteria set out in the trust deed.

Grants are charged to the Statement of financial activities when allocations are approved by the Trustees and notified to the recipient, less any awards cancelled or refunded. Grants awarded subject to conditions are included as expenditure at the point at which the Trustees make an unconditional offer of a grant to the applicant.

Multi-year grants are recognised at their present value where settlement is due more than one year

from the end of the accounting period and where the effect of discounting is material. The discount rate used is the most current available estimate, as discussed in Note 1c.

'Other costs' include staffing, hosting seminars and conferences, commissioned research, or evaluations together with any direct costs immediately attributable to a specific activity. 'Support costs' reflect the apportionment of costs shared by all activities.

Redundancy and termination payments are recognised when there is a demonstrable commitment on an individual or group basis that cannot be realistically withdrawn.

f. Basis of allocation of costs

Investment management costs and charity administration costs are allocated to the funds in proportion to their holding in the endowment at the beginning of the year. Where identifiable, costs related to Charitable activities or governance are attributed to appropriate activities and funds in full or, where not separately identifiable, are apportioned using the most relevant allocation basis for that expenditure.

g. Investments

Quoted investments are included in the accounts at their bid price as at the balance sheet date. Unquoted (for example, private equity) investments with no readily identifiable market price are included at the most recent valuations from their respective managers.

h. Taxation

The Foundation is a charity within the meaning of Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010. Accordingly, the charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains within categories covered by Chapter 3 of Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

The non-charitable subsidiary of the group is subject to UK Corporation Tax. However, it is able

to make a qualifying charitable donation (Gift Aid) to the Foundation to reduce any taxable profits following the Deed of Covenant signed in 2024.

No tax charge arose in the period.

i. Exchange gains and losses

All realised and unrealised exchange gains and losses are accounted for in the Statement of financial activities.

j. Financial instruments

The Foundation has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments apart from the derivative instruments held. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

k. Fixed assets (tangible and intangible)

Fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Assets over a value of £5,000 are capitalised. Assets under construction are not depreciated until they are brought into use. Depreciation has been calculated at the following annual rates, in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Software	3 years
Computers	3 years
Equipment	5 years
Infrastructure/IT systems	5 years
Fixtures and fittings	10 years
Artwork/Antiques	20 years

l. Total return accounting

The Charity Commission permitted the Foundation to adopt the use of total return in relation to its permanent endowment on 7 February 2006. The power permits the Trustees to invest permanent endowments to maximise total return and to make available an appropriate portion of the total return for expenditure each year. Until this power is exercised, the total return shall be an 'unapplied total return' and remain as part of the permanent endowment. The Trustees have decided that it is in the interests of the Foundation to present its expendable endowment in the same manner in note 13,

although there is no legal restriction on the power to distribute the expendable endowment.

The Trustees have used the values of the permanent endowments at 31 December 2003 to represent the 'Preserved Value' of the original gift.

m. Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are donations, investment income, and other income received or generated for the objects of the charity without further specified purpose and are available as general funds. Some of these funds are designated by the Trustees to fund specific strategic programmes.

Restricted funds have arisen from restrictions applied by donors. Expenditure that meets these criteria is identified to the fund, together with a fair allocation of support and charity administration costs.

The endowed funds of the Foundation consist of both permanent and expendable capital funds. Income generated from the expendable endowment funds is applied to the general fund or, where specified, to restricted purposes. A total return distribution is made each year from the endowment funds to fund charitable activities.

n. Pension costs

The Foundation makes contributions into a defined contribution pension scheme for its employees. Pension costs are charged as they are incurred.

o. Provisions for liabilities

Provisions are recognised when the Foundation has a present obligation (legal or constructive) as a result of a past event, it is probable that the Foundation will be required to settle the obligation, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

The amount recognised as a provision is the best estimate of the consideration required to settle the present obligation at the end of the reporting period, taking into account the risks and uncertainties surrounding the obligation.

Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the amount expected to be required to settle the obligation is recognised at present value using a discount rate. The unwinding of the discount is recognised as a finance cost in profit or loss in the period it arises.

The Foundation recognises a provision for returning the new office at 100 St John Street back to its original state at the end of the 20-year lease term.

2. Income

	2025			2024		
	Unrestricted £000s	Restricted £000s	Total £000s	Unrestricted £000s	Restricted £000s	Total £000s
Donations and legacies						
<i>Grants received in support of:</i>						
Nuffield Early Language Intervention	-	3,075	3,075	-	2,896	2,896
Nuffield Council on Bioethics	99	854	953	99	1,835	1,934
Ada Lovelace Institute	55	321	376	-	1,863	1,863
Oliver Bird Fund	-	1,677	1,677	-	133	133
General Grants	-	16	16	-	105	105
	154	5,943	6,097	99	6,832	6,931
Charitable activities						
Sales, royalties and fee income	11	12	23	10	36	46
Other income	39	-	39	45	-	45
	50	12	62	55	36	91
Total	204	5,955	6,159	154	6,868	7,022

3. Expenditure

a. Charitable expenditure

	Direct costs		Support and governance costs	Total 2025
	Grants	Other		
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Main Grants	11,564	1,301	2,342	15,207
Strategic Fund Grants	-	12	588	600
Cancelled Grants	(472)	-	-	(472)
	11,092	1,313	2,930	15,335
Student and other programmes	54	184	-	238
Nuffield Early Language Intervention	-	3,191	215	3,406
In-house programmes				
Ada Lovelace Institute	-	2,133	735	2,868
Nuffield Council on Bioethics	-	1,553	478	2,031
Nuffield Family Justice Observatory	-	1,124	292	1,416
Other in-house programmes	-	536	93	629
	-	5,346	1,598	6,944
Restricted funds				
Oliver Bird Fund	3,088	7	43	3,138
Racial Diversity UK	1,444	106	123	1,673
	4,532	113	166	4,811
Effect of discounting grant liability	112	-	-	112
Total charitable expenditure	15,790	10,147	4,909	30,846

Expenditure relating to charitable activities contributes collectively to the achievement of the Nuffield Foundation's five priority questions and is managed and reported on a programme, and fund, basis. Accordingly, expenditure cannot be meaningfully or reliably apportioned to each strategic question individually.

a. Charitable expenditure (comparative information)

	Direct costs		Support and governance costs	Total 2024
	Grants	Other		
	£000s	£000s		
Main Grants	10,239	1,324	2,161	13,724
Strategic Fund Grants	5,055	15	535	5,605
Cancelled Grants	(332)	-	-	(332)
	14,962	1,339	2,696	18,997
Student and other programmes	63	2	-	65
Nuffield Early Language Intervention	-	2,546	197	2,743
In-house programmes				
Ada Lovelace Institute	-	2,447	787	3,234
Nuffield Council on Bioethics	-	1,362	429	1,791
Nuffield Family Justice Observatory	(205)	992	271	1,058
Other in-house programmes	-	165	70	235
	(205)	4,966	1,557	6,318
Restricted funds				
Oliver Bird Fund	-	-	38	38
Racial Diversity UK	(24)	63	111	150
	(24)	63	149	188
Effect of discounting grant liability	63	-	-	63
Total charitable expenditure	14,859	8,916	4,599	28,374

b. Support and governance costs

	2025	2024
	£000s	£000s
Staff costs	2,173	2,117
Office costs	1,935	1,739
Information technology	610	535
	4,718	4,391
Governance costs		
Amount payable to statutory auditors (inc VAT):		
Statutory audit	56	54
Grant audit	4	13
Other services relating to taxation	2	15
Amounts paid to other advisors:		
External assurance work	-	3
IT audit	-	4
Trustees' remuneration	84	100
Trustees' expenses	1	5
Legal fees	44	14
	191	208
Total support and governance	4,909	4,599

See note 1f for basis of allocation

4. Personnel costs

	2025	2024
	£000s	£000s
Wages and salaries	5,500	5,274
Social security costs	670	569
Other pension contributions	584	526
Redundancy costs	4	53
	6,758	6,422
Average number of staff employed in year:	Number	Number
Grant-making	17.9	16.6
Ada Lovelace Institute	26.4	27.7
Family Justice Observatory	7.6	7.7
Nuffield Council on Bioethics	16.0	14.1
Support services	27.6	27.7
	95.5	93.8
Average number of full-time equivalent staff in year	86.6	85.8
Remuneration of higher paid staff		
Between £60,000 and £69,999	6	5
Between £70,000 and £79,999	8	8
Between £80,000 and £89,999	4	4
Between £90,000 and £99,999	2	-
Between £100,000 and £109,999	3	4
Between £110,000 and £119,999	3	2
Between £150,000 and £159,999	-	1
Between £180,000 and £189,999	1	-

Employer's pension contributions for higher paid staff were in total £265k (2024: £215k). Redundancy payments of £4k (2024: £53k) were made during the year.

The Nuffield Foundation paid pension contributions during the accounting period at a rate of £2.20 for every £1 of member contributions up to a maximum of five times the member contribution, together with an additional flat rate sum regardless of contribution, of £1,284 per employee (pro rata to their hours) for starters prior to January 2022.

The key management personnel of the Nuffield Foundation during the year were its CEO and Directors, including the Directors of the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, the Ada Lovelace Institute, and the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory. They form the Leadership Team, responsible for planning, strategy, and major decision-making within the organisation. Their combined remuneration during the year was £1,384k (2024: £1,309k). They received no benefits additional to those received by other staff.

5. Tangible fixed assets

Group and Charity	Other assets £000s	Assets under Construction £000s	Total £000s
Cost or valuation			
At 1 January 2025	2,109	-	2,109
Additions	-	31	31
Disposals	-	-	-
Transfers	-	-	-
At 31 December 2025	2,109	31	2,140
Depreciation			
At 1 January	764	-	764
Charge for year	227	-	227
Disposals	-	-	-
At 31 December 2025	991	-	991
Net book value			
At 31 December 2025	1,118	31	1,149
<i>At 1 January 2025</i>	<i>1,345</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>1,345</i>

All tangible fixed assets are held for continuing use in the Foundation's activities.

Assets under construction are AV equipment for all meeting rooms at 100 St John Street, which were installed in early 2026.

6. Intangible fixed assets

Group and Charity	Software £000s	Total £000s
Cost or valuation		
At 1 January 2025	977	977
Additions	-	-
Disposals	-	-
Transfers	-	-
At 31 December 2025	977	977
Amortisation		
At 1 January 2025	900	900
Charge for year	54	54
Disposals	-	-
At 31 December 2025	954	954
Net book value		
At 31 December 2025	23	23
<i>At 1 January 2025</i>	<i>77</i>	<i>77</i>

Intangible assets include infrastructure systems such as our CRM system, accounting ERP system, HR system, and website.

7. Investments

a. Investments and market values

	2025	2024
Group and Charity	£000s	£000s
Market value at 1 January	541,906	517,658
Purchases at cost	157,471	330,415
Sales at market value	(157,709)	(330,629)
Cash withdrawals	(22,000)	(24,000)
Other	6,194	4,700
Realised and unrealised gains	69,982	43,762
Market value at 31 December	595,844	541,906
Historic cost of listed investments at 31 December	519,297	486,478

'Other' movements include fees and expenses paid directly from the investment portfolio, income received, and accrued income charges.

b. Disposition of investments

Group and Charity	2025	Movement				2024
	£000s	Purchases £000s	Sales £000s	Gains/Losses £000s	Other £000s	£000s
Listed equities	427,781	70,008	(99,164)	48,901	3,385	404,651
Fixed income	56,182	19,219	(10,661)	955	1,394	45,275
Private equity	106,668	10,399	(7,759)	9,266	976	93,786
Currency hedging	1	4,412	(5,849)	10,803	1	(9,366)
Cash	5,212	53,433	(34,276)	57	(21,562)	7,560
Total	595,844	157,471	(157,709)	69,982	(15,806)	541,906
Total UK investments	149,848					220,293
Total overseas investments	445,996					321,613
Total	595,844					541,906

'Other' movements include cash withdrawals, fees, and expenses paid directly from the investment portfolio, income received, and accrued income charges.

c. Income from investments

	2025	2024
Group and Charity	£000s	£000s
Global equities	5,025	2,468
UK government bonds	1,401	1,429
Private equity	1,417	1,031
Cash	328	406
	8,171	5,334

d. Illiquid assets and investment commitments

At the year end, the Foundation had undrawn commitments to private equity funds of £56,773k, which are expected to be called at various dates between 2026 and 2036. Over a similar period, the current investments in private equity funds are expected to be realised by a return of capital. The carrying value of the private equity investments of £106,668k reported above (7b) represents the latest valuations of the funds at or prior to 31 December 2025 as provided by the relevant fund managers. However, it is not possible for the Trustees to liquidate these investments prior to the future return of capital.

e. Currency hedging

At 31 December 2025, the charity had no open forward exchange contracts. Contracts that settled during 2025 were entered into to reduce the charity's currency risk arising from global diversification in its investment holdings.

The forward exchange contracts resulted in a translation gain of £11m which is included within the overall value of the equity investments above.

f. Programme-related investments

The Foundation holds 100,000 Ordinary Shares in Charity Bank Ltd with a nominal value of £50k and its net asset value is valued at £125k. This is a company with a mission to tackle marginalisation, social injustice, and exclusion and facilitate social change through investment.

g. Investment in subsidiary

The Incorporated Trustees of the Nuffield Foundation is the sole subscriber of the Nuffield Foundation Education Ltd (a company limited by guarantee), which is registered in England and Wales (Company Number 13377195). Each member is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the company in the event of liquidation.

The company's principal activity is delivering the NELI programme to schools with support via a grant from the Department of Education.

The company has made a Gift Aid donation to the Foundation of £94k (2024: £215k). This payment is outstanding at the year end.

Nuffield Foundation Education Ltd Profit and Loss

	2025	2024
	£000s	£000s
Total Income	3,336	2,779
Profit/(Loss) after tax	94	216

Nuffield Foundation Education Ltd Balance sheet

Net Assets/(Liabilities)	-	-
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8. Debtors and prepayments

	Group 2025	Group 2024	Charity 2025	Charity 2024
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Accrued income	6,596	4,239	3,521	2,343
Other debtors	1,280	2,651	1,279	1,651
Amounts owed by subsidiary	-	-	1,979	2,050
Total debtors due within 1 year	7,876	6,890	6,779	6,044

9. Grants payable

	2025	2024
Group and Charity	£000s	£000s
Grants awarded but not paid at 1 January	34,413	33,456
Grants awarded in the year	16,151	15,357
Grants cancelled in the year	(472)	(560)
Grants paid in the year	(12,692)	(13,903)
Discounting of grant liabilities	112	63
Grants awarded but not paid at 31 December	37,512	34,413
Payables within one year	17,783	16,234
Payables after one year	19,729	18,179
	37,512	34,413
Analysis of grant awards		
Awarded to individuals	8	-
Awarded to institutions	16,143	15,357
	16,151	15,357

Grants awarded to individuals represent POST Fellowships where a Fellow is no longer associated with an institution and has been awarded directly.

For a list of research, development and analysis grants awarded in the year please see [pages 67–69](#) of the report.

10. Creditors falling due within one year

	Group 2025	Group 2024	Charity 2025	Charity 2024
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Income Tax and National Insurance	197	165	197	165
Accruals	1,557	1,416	1,556	1,416
Other creditors (inc trade creditors)	2,039	777	643	769
Deferred income	1,861	1,040	1,861	1,040
	5,654	3,398	4,257	3,390

Deferred income brought forward has been fully utilised in the year.

11. Provisions for liabilities

	2025	2024
Group and Charity	£000s	£000s
At 1 January	199	199
Revaluation	60	-
At 31 December	259	199

The Foundation recognised a provision during 2020 for returning the new office at 100 St John Street back to its original state at the end of the 20-year lease term. This has been revaluated in 2025 for current market rates.

12. Commitments under operating leases

At 31 December 2025 the Foundation had the following future minimum payments under non-cancellable operating leases:

	2025	2024
Group and Charity	£000s	£000s
Not later than one year	824	822
Later than one year and not later than five years	2,940	3,282
Later than five years	7,316	7,795
	11,080	11,899

The Foundation's operating lease includes the office building at 100 St John Street which was leased in August 2020 for a 20-year term.

Lease payments recognised during the year total £777,183 (2024: £684,000).

13. Statement of total return

	Permanent Endowments	Expendable Endowments	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s
Investment return			
Restricted and unrestricted investment income	-	7,841	7,841
Endowment investment income	329	-	329
Unrealised gains	2,819	67,163	69,982
Gains on revaluation of programme-related investment	-	40	40
Investment management costs	(114)	(2,713)	(2,827)
Total return for year	3,034	72,331	75,365
Less: application of return	(879)	(38,947)	(39,826)
Net total return for year	2,155	33,384	35,539
Unapplied total return			
At 1 January	12,668	298,734	311,402
At 31 December	14,823	332,118	346,941
'Preserved' value at 31 December 2003	7,581	180,731	188,312

14. Funds

a. Fund movements

	Balance at	Income	Expenditure	Gains/ (losses)	Transfers		Balance at	
	1 January 2025	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	Endowment £000s	Other £000s	31 December 2025
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Endowments								
Permanent endowments								
Elizabeth Nuffield Educational Fund	4,346	71	(24)	605	(189)	-	-	4,809
Commonwealth Relations Trust	15,904	259	(89)	2,214	(691)	-	-	17,597
	20,250	330	(113)	2,819	(880)	-	-	22,406
Expendable endowments								
Oliver Bird Fund	32,146	524	(181)	4,489	(1,400)	-	-	35,578
Main Fund	447,319	7,317	(2,533)	62,674	(37,547)	-	-	477,230
	479,465	7,841	(2,714)	67,163	(38,947)	-	-	512,808
Total endowed funds	499,715	8,171	(2,827)	69,982	(39,827)	-	-	535,214
Expenditure reserve								
Restricted funds								
Elizabeth Nuffield Educational Fund	-	-	(189)	-	189	-	-	-
Commonwealth Relations Trust	5,190	-	(1,673)	-	691	123	-	4,331
Oliver Bird Fund	5,472	1,677	(3,138)	-	1,400	-	-	5,411
Ada Lovelace Institute	604	333	(696)	-	-	-	-	241
Nuffield Council on Bioethics	1,038	854	(1,185)	-	-	-	-	707
Nuffield Early Language Intervention	1,935	3,075	(3,406)	-	-	-	-	1,604
Student and other programmes	669	16	(16)	-	-	-	-	669
Total restricted funds	14,908	5,955	(10,303)	-	2,280	123	-	12,963
Unrestricted funds								
Designated								
Strategic Fund	2,087	-	(599)	-	-	3,588	-	5,076
Ada Lovelace Institute	2,499	55	(2,172)	-	-	876	-	1,258
Nuffield Family Justice Observatory	2,391	-	(1,416)	-	-	331	-	1,306
Other	50	2	(2)	-	-	-	-	50
Total designated funds	7,027	57	(4,189)	-	-	4,795	-	7,690
General fund	(6,853)	147	(16,354)	9	37,547	(4,918)	-	9,578
Total unrestricted funds	174	204	(20,543)	9	37,547	(123)	-	17,268
Total expenditure reserve	15,082	6,159	(30,846)	9	39,827	-	-	30,231
Total Funds	514,797	14,330	(33,673)	69,991	-	-	-	565,445

The transfer of £39,827k between the endowments and expenditure reserve is the total return distribution for 2025 (see note 13). This is comprised of £8,171k investment income from the endowments plus £31,656k of capital gains.

Other transfers of £4,918k include a designation from the General Fund to the Strategic Fund of £3,000k, plus £1,918k for support costs in year for the Strategic Fund, the Ada Lovelace Institute, the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory, and Racial Diversity UK.

b. Analysis of funds – 2025

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Expendable endowment	Permanent endowment	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Investments	-	-	573,438	22,406	595,844
Other fixed assets	-	-	1,297	-	1,297
Net current assets/(liabilities)	17,268	12,963	(41,939)	-	(11,708)
Liabilities due after more than 1 yr	-	-	(19,988)	-	(19,988)
Total funds	17,268	12,963	512,808	22,406	565,445

Analysis of funds – 2024

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Expendable endowment	Permanent endowment	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Investments	-	-	521,656	20,250	541,906
Other fixed assets	-	-	1,507	-	1,507
Net current assets/(liabilities)	174	14,908	(25,320)	-	(10,238)
Liabilities due after more than 1 yr	-	-	(18,378)	-	(18,378)
Total funds	174	14,908	479,465	20,250	514,797

c. Description of funds

- The Elizabeth Nuffield Educational Fund is a permanent endowment, established for the advancement of education and in particular the award of scholarships, grants, or loans to women and girls who require financial assistance. It is used to part fund the Education grant programme.
- The Commonwealth Relations Trust is a permanent endowment, held for the purposes of promoting a common understanding between the unity of ideals in the United Kingdom and the other members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. It is used to fund our Racial Diversity UK programme.
- The Oliver Bird Fund is an expendable endowment, restricted in its use for research into the prevention and cure of rheumatism and associated diseases. It is used to fund research into musculoskeletal conditions.
- The Ada Lovelace Institute is funded both from restricted external funding and from unrestricted designated funds (Nuffield's commitment). It is an independent research and deliberative body tasked to ensure data and AI work for people and society.

- The Nuffield Council on Bioethics is jointly and equally funded by the Nuffield Foundation, the Wellcome Trust, and the Medical Research Council; this is managed as a restricted fund, held for the purpose of funding an independent body that informs policy and public debate about the ethical questions raised by biological and medical research. It also receives additional external funding from other organisations which is held as restricted funds.
- The Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) is a restricted fund held for the purpose of delivering the NELI programme to schools and is solely funded by the Department of Education. Unspent income is not expected as this is claimed in arrears by DfE.
- Student and other programmes is a restricted fund comprising commitments made to the Nuffield Research Placements and restricted royalties received for the Nuffield Early Language Intervention programme.
- The Main Fund includes Lord Nuffield's original endowment and a variety of subsequent gifts that have been subsumed into this fund.
- The 'Expenditure Reserve' is that part of the Foundation's net assets that the Trustees have determined to be currently available for future expenditure. It comprises a general fund and a number of designated funds:
 - The Strategic Fund represents the Nuffield Foundation's designated commitment for major, longer-term projects.
 - Ada Lovelace Institute represents a commitment to further this work, as described above. Its funding above covers the period to 2029 (11 years from inception).
 - The Nuffield Family Justice Observatory represents a commitment to the development and pilot delivery phases of an initiative to support the best possible decisions for children by improving the use of data and research evidence in the family justice system

in England and Wales. Its funding covers the period to 2026 (8 years from inception).

- Other designations include commitments made to co-funders for the Nuffield Council on Bioethics.
- For all restricted funds, unspent income is restricted to the purpose described above.

15. Related party transactions

a. Transactions with Trustees

Each Trustee is entitled to an annual allowance by virtue of the provisions of the Trust Deed. During the year, Trustees received £11,000 (2024: £11,000) and the chairman received £17,703 (2024: £17,703), with the total paid to active Trustees during 2025 of £84,000. In addition, Trustee Indemnity Insurance was purchased during the year.

	2025	2024
	£000s	£000s
Trustee remuneration	84	100
Travel expenses and accommodation paid to the Trustees		
Trustee duties	1	5
CIFAR	4	2
Total	5	7
Number of Trustees receiving expenses	1	8

During 2023 one of our Trustees was appointed a Fellow of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (CIFAR). This Fellowship receives an annual grant, starting in 2024, for which the Nuffield Foundation will act as the administrator. During 2025, costs associated with the Fellowship came to £9k (2024: £2k), and income was received of £16k (2024: £18k). These are included in the SOFA and the expenses are included in the table above.

b. Transactions with subsidiary

The Foundation is expecting a gift aid donation of £94k from Nuffield Foundation Education Ltd (2024: £211k). The Foundation received a Gift Aid donation relating to the prior year of £215k from Nuffield Foundation Education Ltd (2024: nil).

	2025	2024
	£000s	£000s
Intercompany balance at 1 January	2,050	1,822
Gift Aid donation to parent charity	94	211
Gift Aid received	(215)	-
Recharge of direct subsidiary costs charged to parent	50	17
Intercompany balance at 31 December	1,979	2,050

Reference and administrative details

Trustees

Professor Sir Keith Burnett CBE, FRS, FAPS, FOSA, FInstPhys, FLSW FRS (Chair)
 Rt Hon Sir Ernest Ryder TD, DL, FRSA (Deputy Chair) (until 16 May 2025)
 John Pullinger CB, CSTAT, FACSS (Deputy Chair from 1 August 2025)
 Professor Ash Amin CBE, FBA, FACSS
 Professor Brian Bell
 Deborah Cadman OBE (from 1 May 2026)
 Professor Lorraine Dearden FACSS
 Professor Ann Phoenix FBA, FACSS
 Dame Clare Tickell DBE, FRSA, FOGI

Senior staff

Gavin Kelly, Chief Executive (from January 2025)
 James Brooke Turner, Investment Director
 Deirdre Carty, Director of HR and Office Services
 Mark Franks, Director of Welfare
 Danielle Hamm, Director of the National Council on Bioethics
 Lisa Harker, Director of the Family Justice Observatory
 Josh Hillman, Director of Education
 Natalie Leon, Director of Finance and Information Systems
 Gaia Marcus, Director of the Ada Lovelace Institute
 Rob Street, Director of Justice
 Nicola Webb, Director for Strategy and Engagement

Principal address

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