The London Community Foundation



Hyper-local giving in London

A practical guide for professional advisers



The London Community Foundation

Supporting clients to create meaningful impact in the communities that matter most to them

Many clients want their wealth to do more than grow. They want it to make a difference.

For some, that means tackling global challenges. For others, it means supporting national causes that reflect their values. Increasingly, however, clients are asking a different question:

How can I make a difference in the places that matter to me?

Whether it is the neighbourhood where they grew up, the borough where they built a business, or the community they now call home, clients are increasingly interested in seeing the impact of their philanthropy closer to home.

This growing interest in place-based giving presents an opportunity for professional advisers. By understanding the role of hyper-local philanthropy, advisers can help clients strengthen their connection to the communities they care about while creating meaningful and lasting social impact.

This guide explores what hyper-local giving means, why it matters, and how advisers can incorporate it into client conversations.



"You are absolutely missing a huge trick if you don't know about hyper-local and community-based giving. Making the connection with philanthropy and community at that level is an absolute no-brainer. "

Russell Prior OBE , HSBC Private Bank



Why hyper-local giving matters

Hyper-local philanthropy focuses on small, specific communities rather than large geographical areas. It could mean supporting a neighbourhood, housing estate, high street, or community that has played an important role in someone's life.

Unlike many forms of charitable giving, hyper-local philanthropy creates a direct connection between a donor and a place.

The donor can often see the difference their support is making. They may know the community personally. They may understand the challenges it faces. They may even have benefited from local opportunities themselves.

As Russell Prior, philanthropy adviser at HSBC Private Bank and former Chair of The London Community Foundation, observes, recent events have encouraged more people to focus on what is happening in their own communities and on their own doorstep.

For professional advisers, this shift is significant.

Clients are increasingly interested not only in what they support, but where their support is felt. Hyper-local giving can therefore provide a valuable complement to national and international philanthropy.



Hyper-local philanthropy at a glance



What it is

- Giving focused on a specific community or place

What makes it different

- A closer connection between donor and impact

Why clients like it

- Visible, tangible outcomes
- Personal relevance
- Stronger emotional connection

Why advisers should understand it

- It creates richer conversations about values, legacy and purpose

Where hyper-local giving fits

There are three levels of philanthropic giving and each approach has value.

Giving level	Examples
National	UK-wide charity
Local	Borough-wide initiative
Hyper-local	**Neighbourhood, estate or specific community project**

The most effective philanthropy portfolios often combine multiple approaches, allowing donors to support causes at different scales while maintaining a strong personal connection to at least part of their giving. Russell Prior describes hyper-local philanthropy as a valuable additional "asset class" within a broader philanthropy portfolio.

Understanding place-based philanthropy in London

Why London is different:

We believe London is the greatest city in the world. But London is a polarised city, of extreme inequality, of haves and have-nots. It is a city with the country's greatest wealth, but also the worst deprivation, where people struggle just to get by.

London is more than just one city. In reality, it is a collection of hundreds of distinct communities.

Each London borough experiences different needs and opportunities. Individual boroughs can be as large as some UK cities creating a patchwork of communities with unique histories and identities. From one street to the next, the experience of living in London can change dramatically.

Many clients have deep emotional connections to a particular part of London. It may be where they grew up, where they attended school, where they started a business or where family members have lived for generations.

Those connections often create powerful motivations for philanthropy.

London is home to many thousands of charities and organisations but the ones that can best meet these distinct local needs are those rooted in and trusted by their communities. Community organisations with a deep understanding of the neighbourhoods around them.

What hyper-local giving can look like in London:

A youth project offering music, arts and media training to young people at risk from radicalisation and gang culture

A drop-in providing a safe space to help adults overcome loneliness and foster community cohesion

A support service for Care-affected girls and women who have experienced sexual violence and domestic abuse

A football project combining physical activity with mentoring, to address wellbeing, mental health, life skills and leaderrship support

A community larder tackling food insecurity tby offering free cookery lessons and food parcels

…and every community organisation, social enterprise and charity project looks different from one London community to the next.

When hyper-local giving resonates with clients

Hyper-local giving is not suitable for every donor.

However, it can be particularly powerful in certain circumstances.

When it does resonate with a client, recommending hyper-local giving creates more personal, values-driven conversations both now and in the future. Your advice goes deeper and far beyond the simple benefits of tax efficiency, fund management and knowing the most appropriate charitable structure for their philanthropic goals.

Five typical client profiles

The local business founder:

The client built a successful business in a specific area and wants to give something back to the community that supported that success.

The London family:

The client wants to create a long-term family legacy rooted in a particular place.

The philanthropically curious client:

The client likes the idea of philanthropy but finds large national charities too distant from their personal experience.

The next generation:

The client wants to see visible impact and maintain close connection with the causes they support.

The community champion:

The client has a strong connection to a local area and wants to help tackle disadvantage and create opportunities within that community.

The opportunity for advisers

Philanthropy conversations are increasingly part of a broader discussion about values, purpose and legacy.

Hyper-local giving can help advisers deepen those conversations.

Benefits for clients:

- Greater personal connection to giving
- Stronger understanding of impact
- Opportunities to support communities that matter to them
- The ability to leave a visible local legacy

Benefits for advisers:

- Richer client conversations
- A broader range of philanthropic options
- Increased differentiation
- Stronger long-term relationships

Many advisers already help clients consider tax-efficient giving, charitable structures and legacy planning.

Hyper-local philanthropy adds another dimension by helping clients connect charitable impact with place.

The challenges advisers should understand

Despite its appeal, effective hyper-local giving is not always straightforward.

Many of the organisations doing the most valuable work within local communities are small, grassroots charities, CICs and community groups.

These organisations often have deep local knowledge and strong relationships within their communities. However, they can be difficult for donors and advisers to identify, assess and support directly.

Common challenges include:

- Identifying credible local organisations.
- Understanding community need.
- Carrying out due diligence.
- Measuring impact.
- Monitoring grants.
- Balancing donor interests with community priorities.

Without specialist knowledge and local relationships, even well-intentioned donors can struggle to find the right opportunities.

A framework for hyper-local giving conversations

Professional advisers do not need to be philanthropy specialists to start meaningful conversations about place-based giving. It's much more about asking the right questions and these can provide a useful starting point.

Five questions every adviser should ask:



- ☑ **Which places matter most to you?**

  Think about where you grew up, built your career, raised a family or developed important connections.

- ☑ **Why does that place matter?**

  What memories, experiences or opportunities have shaped your connection?

- ☑ **What change would you like to see?**

  What would a stronger community look like ten years from now?

- ☑ **How involved would you like to be?**

  Do you want to support a broad range of initiatives, or focus on a specific issue?

- ☑ **What legacy would success create?**

  What would you hope future generations experience as a result of your support?

Signs a client may be interested in hyper-local giving:



- Talks frequently about a local community
- Has strong family roots in a place
- Wants to see impact first-hand
- Interested in local regeneration
- Has supported local causes previously



Why local expertise matters

Turning local ambition into local impact

Good intentions are important.

Local knowledge is essential.

Every London community has strengths, challenges, opportunities and relationships that cannot be fully understood through research alone.

This is particularly true when funding small grassroots organisations.

The most effective hyper-local philanthropy combines donor ambition with local insight, community relationships and robust grant-making expertise.

What effective hyper-local giving requires



Community insight



Trusted local relationships



Due diligence



Grant management



Impact monitoring



Understanding of local needs

Bringing these elements together helps ensure that funding reaches organisations capable of delivering meaningful outcomes for local people.

Why advisers work with The London Community Foundation

For more than fifteen years, The London Community Foundation has connected donors with communities across the capital, helping philanthropic funding reach where it is needed most.

We work alongside professional advisers to make place-based philanthropy simple, effective and impactful.

You remain your client's trusted adviser.

We provide the local knowledge, networks and grant-making expertise that help turn charitable ambition into meaningful action.

London by numbers

15+
years supporting Londoners to invest in local communities

The London Community Foundation

£140m+
distributed to charities and community organisations

4000+
organisations supported

33
Every London borough covered

60
donor funds managed

What we provide

- Deep understanding of London's communities
- Access to trusted grassroots organisations
- Robust due diligence
- Professional grant management
- Impact reporting
- Flexible giving options
- Support for anonymous giving where required

"What would it take to end food insecurity in Hammersmith and Fulham completely?!"

Acts20:35



Case study: Acts20:35

Theme: Food insecurity
Location: Hammmersmith and Fulham
Amount distributed: Over £500,000 since 2024

"Partnering with The London Community Foundation brought a sense of credibility and reassurance to the charities we reached out to, as well as peace of mind for ourselves."

Acts20:35 is a charitable fund set up with The London Community Foundation in 2024 to tackle food insecurity in Hammersmith and Fulham.

Acts20:35 has been shaped by the belief that if everyone has access to healthy and affordable food, then they have the opportunity to live life to the full. With the huge impact of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, there's a rapidly growing need with monthly emergency food bank usage averaging 2518 individuals in 2024.

Acts20:35 has already distributed over £500,000 to 17 community projects in the borough, supporting over 50,000 local residents. The projects range from fruit and vegetable vouchers and school breakfast clubs to local food growing gardens and community meals using waste food.

Working with The London Community Foundation allows Acts20:35 to focus on what really matters to them, knowing that the funding will reach those projects that need it most and the fund itself will be efficiently managed:

"I especially appreciate how much time The London Community Foundation saves us. I know that all the administration they handle is done thoroughly and to a high standard. Having The London Community Foundation as the main point of contact allows us to read a collated version of the project reports and get to the key information around impact, change, improvement and priority needs."

The Acts20:35 founders wish to remain anonymous - another advantage of working in partnership with The London Community Foundation.

Case study: Youth Futures

Theme: Various issues affecting young people
Location: Local communities right across London
Amount distributed: £1.4 million since 2021

The Youth Futures Fund is an "All Together Fund" that unites individuals and businesses to raise essential support for young people across London. Each funding round focuses on a pressing issue, ensuring targeted and meaningful change. Past issues have included mental health, employability, relationships and supporting care leavers.

"I wouldn't know where to start to find and assess individual worthwhile charities without The London Community Foundation. I can rely on them to find and assess small charities that would especially benefit, without excessive bureaucracy and through waves of funding for different themes." (Youth Futures donor)

"I wouldn't know where to start to find and assess individual worthwhile charities without The London Community Foundation."

J. Tross (Youth Futures donor)



Case study: Salway Charitable Fund

Theme: Various
Location: Local communities right across London
Amount distributed: £250,000 since 2015

The Salway Charitable Fund was set up as an endowment with The London Community Foundation and has given out 60 grants to local community organisations in London from the returns. Supported projects include encouraging adult literacy, improving mental health, helping asylum seekers, addressing homelessness, tackling loneliness and supporting older people.

"We've learned a lot from The London Community Foundation about the importance of core funding and multi-year grants. It's not just about guiding us to the right groups but also to help make us make better decisions about how to support them."



Next steps

Helping clients give back locally

Hyper-local philanthropy is not about replacing national or international giving.

It is about helping clients create a stronger connection between wealth, purpose and place.

For many donors, that connection can become one of the most meaningful parts of their philanthropy portfolio. Hyper-local giving offers visibility, relevance and lasting impact within the communities that matter most to them.

If you have a client who wants to support a particular neighbourhood, borough or community in London, we'd welcome a conversation.

How can we help

- Explore potential opportunities for a client
- Discuss place-based giving strategies
- Identify community priorities and local needs
- Establish a charitable or donor advised fund
- Develop a tailored giving approach aligned to a client's values and goals

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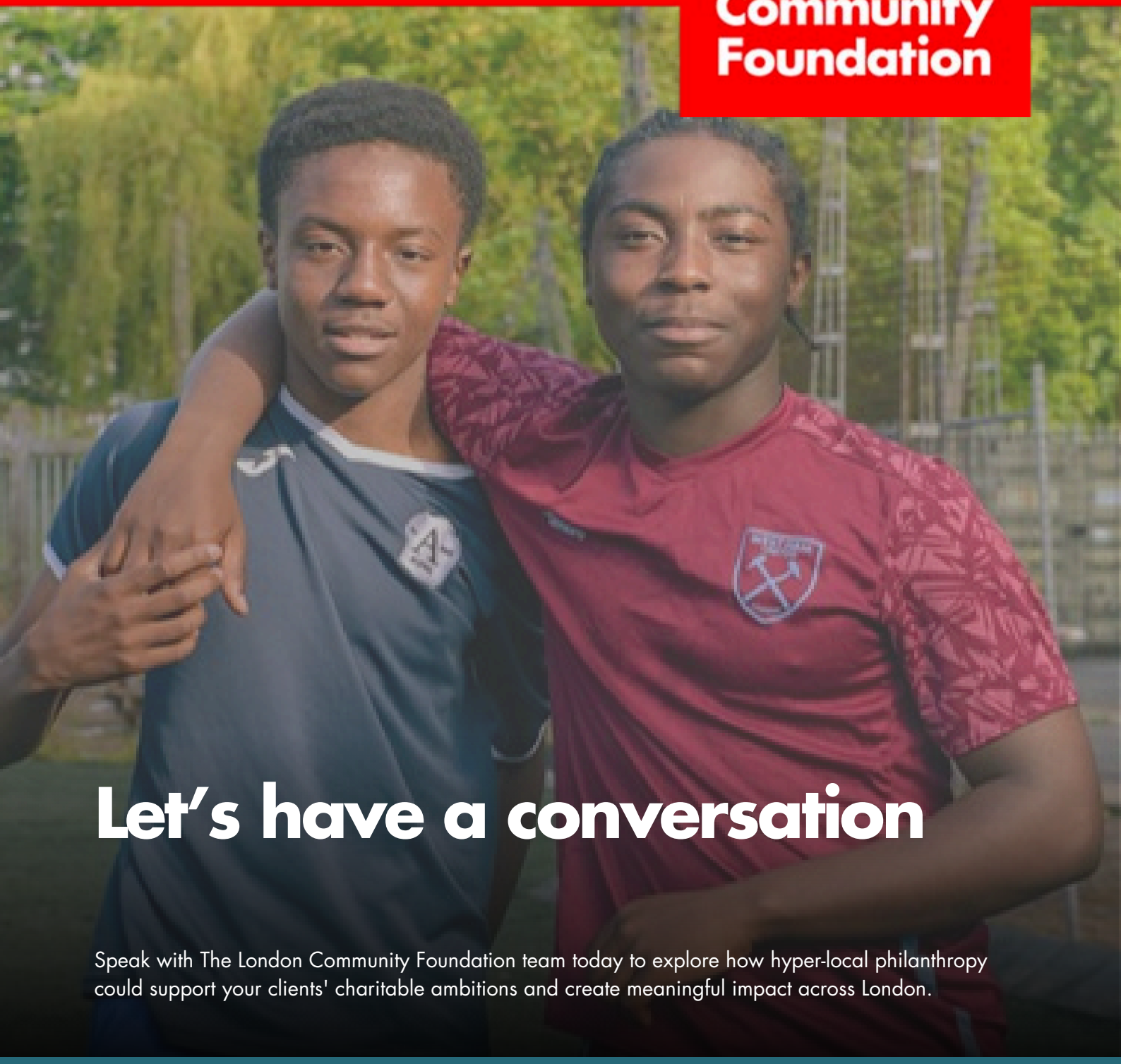

Let's have a conversation

Speak with The London Community Foundation team today to explore how hyper-local philanthropy could support your clients' charitable ambitions and create meaningful impact across London.

The London Community Foundation

Paul Buchanan MBE
CEO
paul.buchanan@londoncf.org.uk

Nick Diamond
Senior Adviser
nick.diamond@londoncf.org.uk

londoncf.org.uk

Registered Charity 1091263