

# The Connolly Foundation

**IMPACT STATEMENT 2024**





**The Connolly Foundation awards grants in two specific areas:**

- **Education**
- **Support for older people**



**The Foundation works with established local partners to deliver services.**



**This enables the charity to operate efficiently as it has few direct costs.**



**Welcome to our Impact statement for 2024.**

Welcome to our Impact statement for 2024. In this year's statement we have looked back to the donations we made in the year to 31 May 2022 and reported the changes that our giving has made. As Britain entered a Cost of Living Crisis our grant giving was needed more than ever, and we looked to find the most productive ways of making change in Bedfordshire.



**David Oldham**  
Chief Operating Officer



# University Bursaries

Since 2016 we have offered those who achieve the highest grades at A level a bursary of between £500 and £1,000 to help them in their first year at University, followed by bursaries of £500 in each subsequent year of their first degree.



- **To date we have supported 1,763 students.**
- **Starting with a handful of schools, we now work with 20 schools in Bedfordshire.**



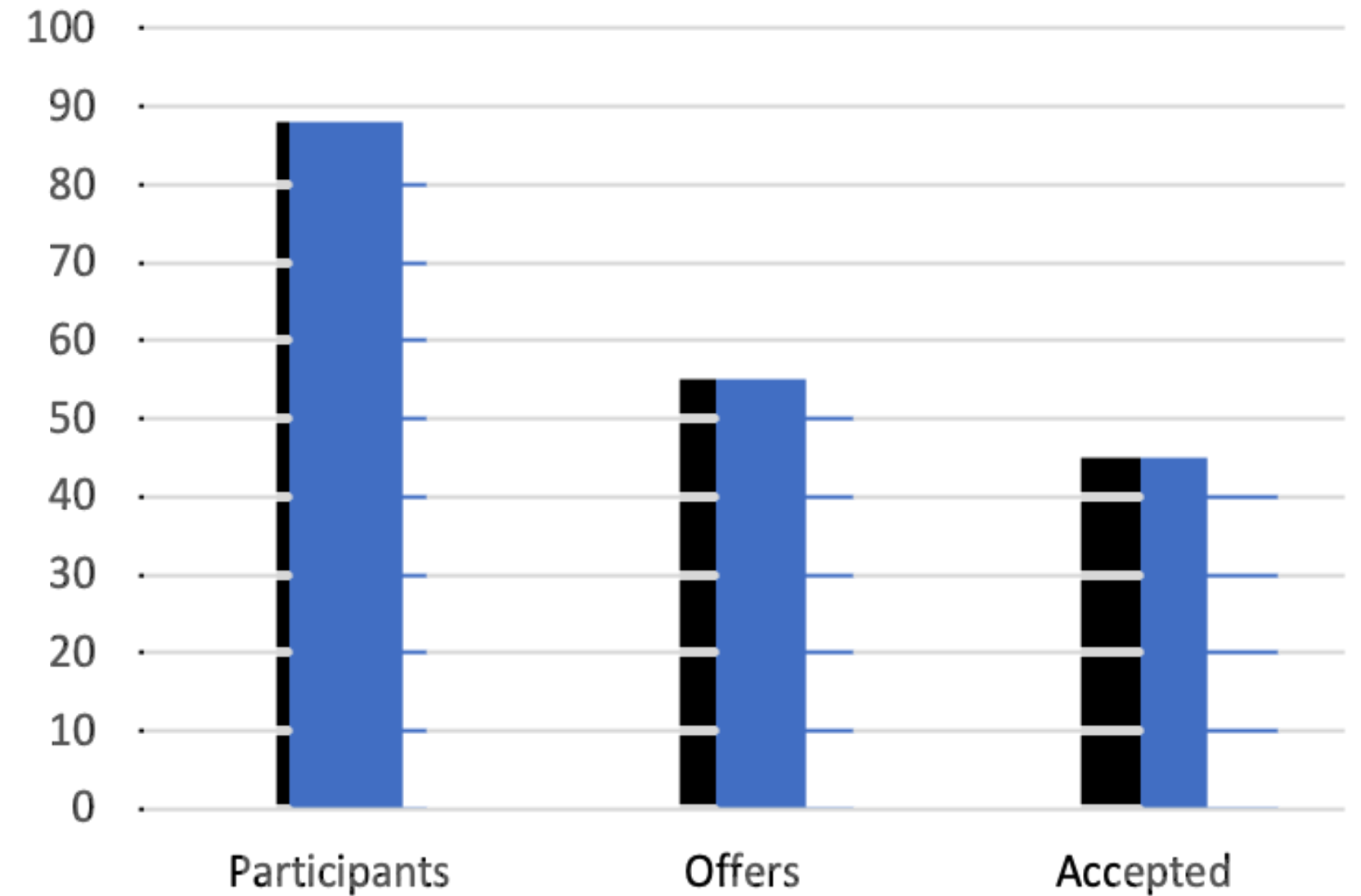
- **Our aspiration is to offer our bursaries to all A level students attending state education in Bedfordshire.**

# Oxford Thinking

**In partnership with Wadham College, Oxford University, we have set up a programme to help give talented children from disadvantaged backgrounds the confidence to apply for university courses.**

Six schools are currently signed up to the scheme as hubs, with all secondary schools in Bedfordshire nominating up to five year ten students per school. Our funding supports the employment of experienced teachers to mentor the students and arrange attendance at events organised by Wadham College.

The Foundation started the partnership five years ago. Of the 88 pupils in the first cohort, 55 were offered places at University, and 45 took up the places offered.





# ARKWRIGHT

## ENGINEERING SCHOLARSHIPS

part of The Smallpeice Trust

In partnership with Redborne School we promote super curricular engineering activities for pupils at years 10 and 11 and encourage them to apply for Arkwright Scholarships. These are organised by the Smallpeice Trust, which provide bursaries for students in years 12 and 13 to further their studies in engineering.

In 2022 we sponsored one Arkwright Scholar (right) who has now been offered a place at a top university. Since then five pupils from Bedfordshire state schools have won Arkwright scholarships, and three of those have been sponsored by the Connolly Foundation.



**David Oldham presents Etornam Dzudzor, from Dunstable with his scholarship certificate.**



# The Connolly Foundation: SEND Multi-disciplinary Team Weatherfield Academy & Oak Bank School Joint Project 2022/23



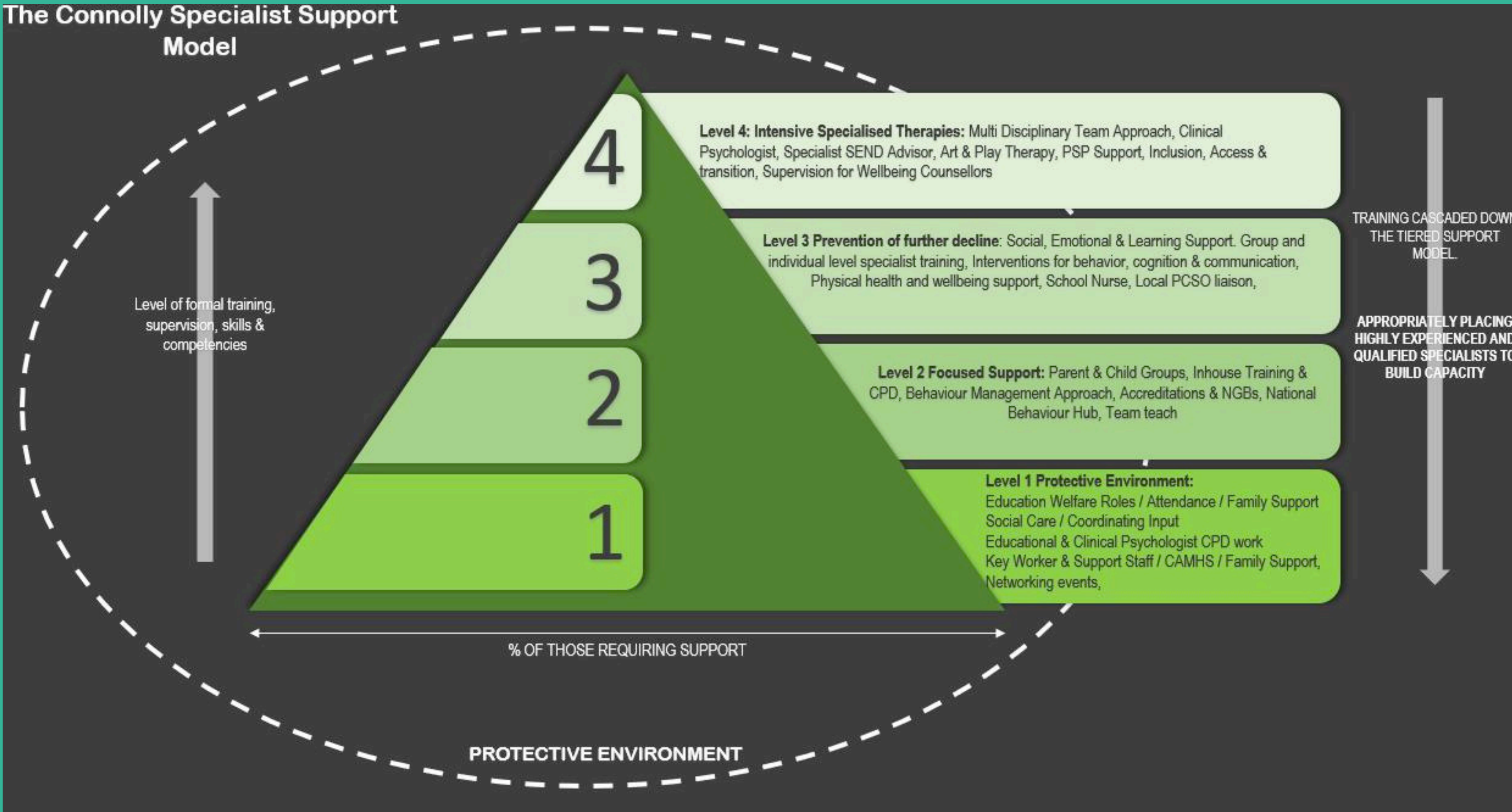
“The Connolly Foundation's generous support has facilitated a unique collaboration between two Single Academy Special Schools, focusing on the development of a Multi-disciplinary approach to Special Educational Needs & Disabilities.”

## The support of the Connolly Foundation has made possible

- **Staff Appointments:** Employment of specialist staff, including clinical psychologists and a specialist SEND advisor.
- **Professional Provision and Skills Enhancement:** Additional professional provision to enhance skills and well-being.
- **Therapy and Support Services:** Identification and addressing of specific therapy needs. Capacity and skills building for staff teams. Support and training provided to other schools in Central Bedfordshire. Outreach support to Central Bedfordshire and Luton schools.
- **Clinical Psychologist Impact:** Direct clinical work four days weekly across both sites for children and families. Indirect clinical work, including staff drop-ins and whole school training. Weekly supervision for the well-being teams.
- **SEND Advisor Impact:** Assessments and reports for pupils. Training delivered for intervention coordinator and SENCO team. Consultation surgeries with NHS Speech and Language Service.

In the calendar year 2023 the team sponsored by The Connolly Foundation had **116** referrals and supported more than **140** young people with Special Educational Needs attending mainstream schools through the outreach programme.

A strategic framework places children, families, school settings, and Local Authorities at the core of the schools approach to SEND. The approach is structured around a comprehensive four-tiered model of support - see below.





# Bedford College

In 2022 the Foundation gave 55 bursaries of £500 to students studying Health and Social Care at Bedford College.

We also gave a capital grant of £50,000 to buy high quality teaching equipment for Health and Social Care.

We concentrated on Health and Social Care to help build the workforce that is needed to support older people.



**Since then the Foundation has expanded its programme to include Central Bedfordshire College and Barnfield College in Luton.**

**In 2023/24 we awarded bursaries to more than 400 students and donated more than £140,000 to Colleges for specialist teaching equipment.**



# **Working Options**

**Working Options offered Insight From Industry sessions with Health and Social Care employers for school and college students with an interest in the Health and Social Care sector.**

**The Connolly Foundation paid £55,000 over three years to Working Options to deliver the sessions.**

**Working Options delivered the programme to 19 different schools and colleges in Bedfordshire.**



# Graduate Tutors

In 2020/21 we started funding recently graduated students considering teaching as a career who are being employed by Redborne School in Ampthill for two terms to work in eight schools in Bedfordshire.

They work with teachers to support students on an individual or small group basis particularly focusing on disadvantaged students and catch-up work.

In 2023/24 we funded 24 graduates working in twelve different schools. The feedback we have received from schools, pupils and parents has been very positive. Graduates gain a benefit in terms of work experience, with 11 tutors to date changing their career plans and going into teacher training courses.

*'The confidence of these students has rocketed.'*  
Sarah Davies, Assistant head - Vandyke Upper

# Vandyke Upper School

**In 2022 The Connolly Foundation donated £200,000 towards a new Sixth Form Centre for Vandyke Upper School.**

In 2023, 19 students gained three grades B or higher in their A Levels and received bursaries from The Connolly Foundation, an increase from 10 in 2022.

Headteacher Tim Carroll said: 'We had outgrown as our sixth form student numbers have almost doubled in size in the last three years. We are very thankful for the support and generosity of Connolly to help provide this fantastic building.'

Student Alex Lunn, 16, said: 'The building and the space it provides is very helpful and I really benefit from it. I use it every day.'

Fellow student Ashley Biers, 17, added: 'It is nice to have such an accessible and pleasant place to go for study.'





***"The support of the Connolly Foundation makes a huge impact on our work and on the lives of young people in Bedfordshire."***

**Youthscape CEO, Chris Curtis**

The Foundation is continuing to support Youthscape, Luton in their work to improve the educational outcomes of young people. Youthscape supports young people facing big issues that have a negative effect on their lives – affecting their education, their emotional wellbeing and their motivation for making the best of their future. Their work concentrates on where the biggest difference can be made to these outcomes – mental health, social and educational disengagement.

In 2024 Youthscape worked with 1,961 students of whom 475 were involved in intensive courses. The Connolly Foundation donated £100,000 towards the running of Youthscape in 2022.



**The Foundation donated £50,000 to Keech Hospice in 2022 towards the costs of delivering end of life care.**

**In 2023, Keech provided care for 1,863 adults and children, either within the Hospice or through their outreach service.**





# Alzheimer's Research

The Foundation pledged £50,000 over five years to Alzheimers Research's Early Detection Of Neurodegenerative Diseases (EDON) project, which investigated using activity trackers, wearables and smart phone apps part of an annual health check to facilitate early diagnosis of dementia.

The project has now completed and the Foundation has diverted its funding towards another research project.

# Health Promotion

In 2022 The Connolly Foundation donated £6,000 each to four local Housing Associations to run health and exercise classes in their old people's homes.

The project was run in partnership with Bedford Borough Council's health promotion team.

Over the year 150 sessions were delivered with about eighty people regularly attending their local sessions.

*After I had a fall the exercise classes really helped me to get back on my feet.*





# Buzzer buses

The Connolly Foundation donated £10,000 to Buzzer Buses in 2022 towards a new bus to help older people in the Leighton Buzzard area with transport.

In its first year of use the bus completed 2,000 journeys, carrying more than 100 people every week.



# Connolly Foundation

01525 872014

enquiry@connollyfoundation.org.uk

[www.connollyfoundation.org.uk](http://www.connollyfoundation.org.uk)

