

# What foundations want to hear



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- Current trends in major foundations
- Current issues
- Conclusion

# The foundations sector



*"Once you've seen one foundation...  
you've seen one foundation."*

Source: Jenkins, Richard (2012). *The Governance & Financial Management of Endowed Charitable Foundations*. London: Association of Charitable Foundations.

# The foundations sector



## A diverse sector:

*“Strange creatures in the great jungle of... democracy”* Waldemar Nielsen, 1972

- No specific legal definition
- Shaped by founders and histories

# The foundations sector

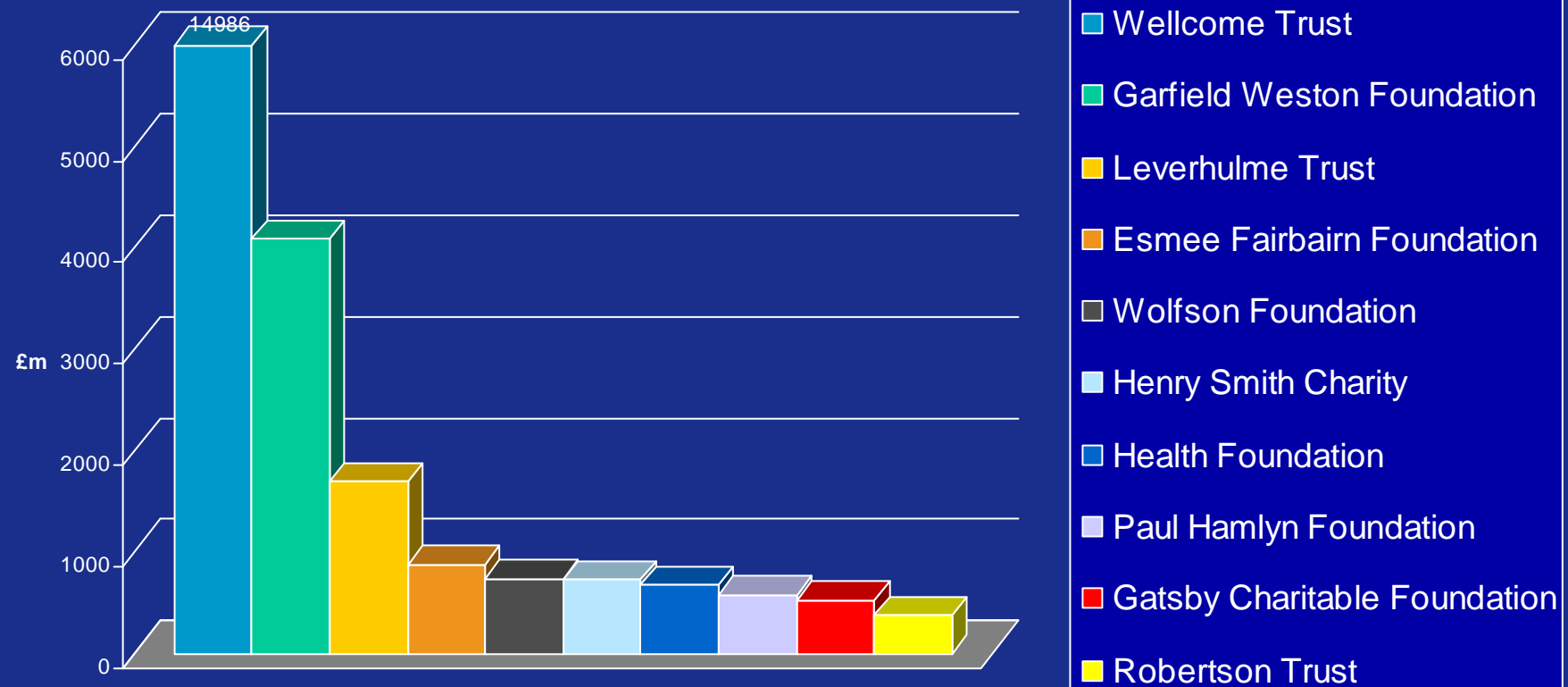


- Estimated 12,000 grant-making foundations in the UK
- Vary greatly in size
- Largest 900 have assets of £48.5bn
- Annual spend £2.3bn

# The foundations sector



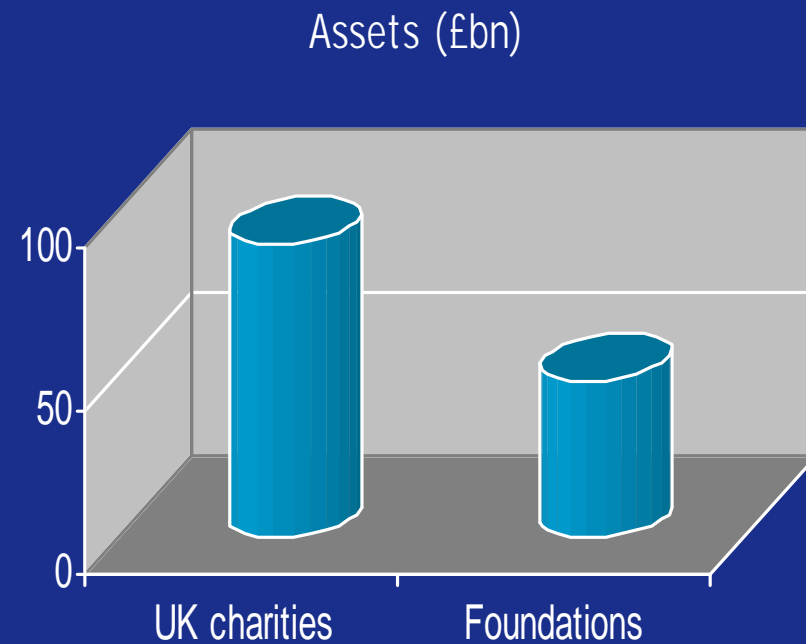
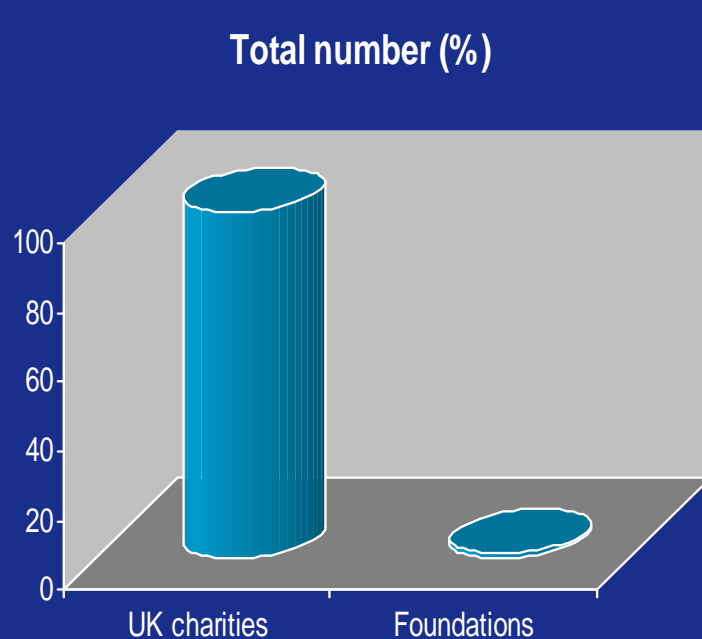
- Largest UK foundations, by asset size (March 2011)



# The foundations sector



- 1% of UK charities
- Over half total charity sector assets

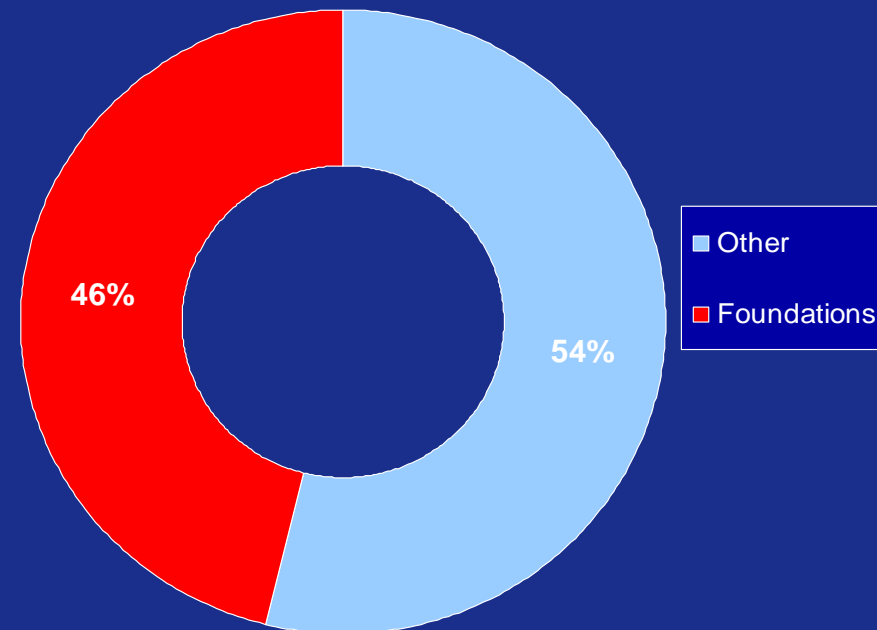


# The foundations sector



- Small % of UK Higher Education sector income
- But around 50% of largest cash gifts to UK universities

Largest non-legacy pledges to UK universities (2010-2011)



Source: Ross-CASE survey 2010-2011





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# Current trends



## Professionalisation

- Greater regulation
- Impact of fundraising sector
- Beyond the founder

# Current trends



## Case study: The Wolfson Foundation

- Founded 1955
- Broad funding remit
- Current endowment £730m



# Current trends



## Changes at Wolfson Foundation

- Investments
- Governance
- Communication
- Use of funds



# Current trends



## New ways of using funds

- From responsive to proactive
- Adding value above and beyond grants
- Grants Plus
- Social investment
- Mission based investment
- Venture philanthropy

# Current trends



## Measuring impact

- Careful assessment of realistic outcomes
- Follow-up in short and long term on impact

# Current trends



## Partnerships

- Looking for ongoing relationships
- Want to stay informed and involved
- Role of development teams
  - Custodians of relationship
  - Linking funding strategy and institutional aims

# Current trends



In summary:

- Increasingly professional
- Using funds intelligently
- Measuring impact and outcomes
- Looking for partnerships

= being more **strategic**





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# Current issues

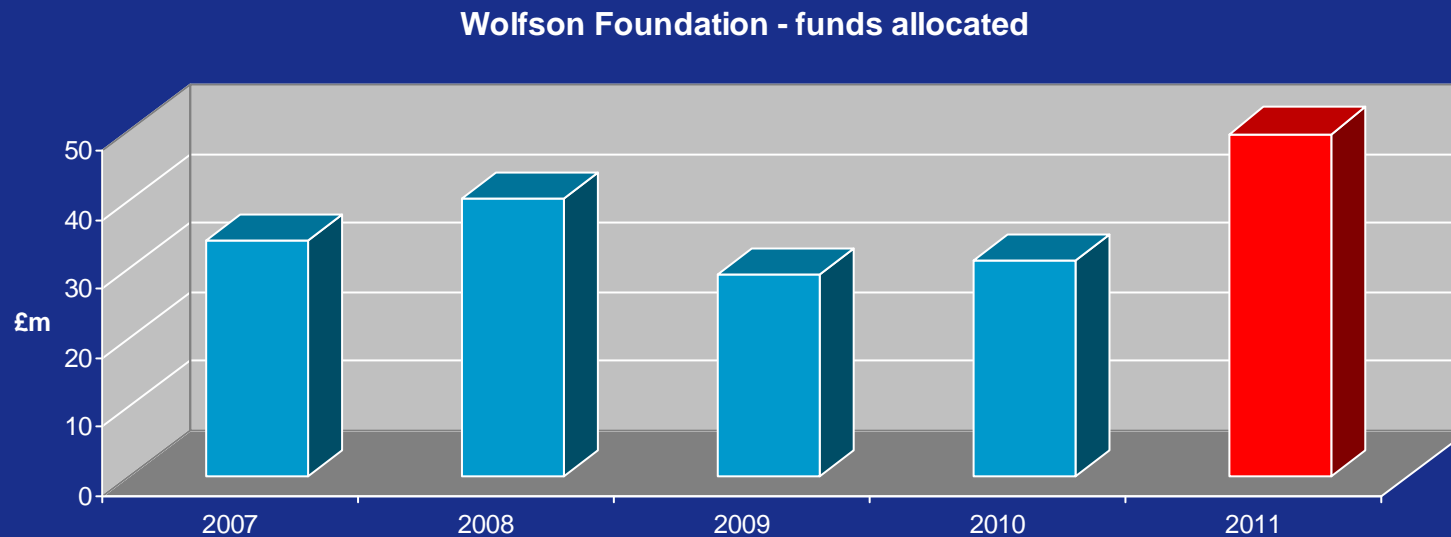


- Current economic climate
- Major foundations are generally responding by maintaining giving levels

# Current issues



- Wolfson Foundation increased investment in 2011 to £50m



# Current issues



- Foundations increasingly engaging with wider policy agenda
- Shift toward speaking with one voice
  - Giving Green Paper
- Other partnerships
  - Alliance with the Ross Group on Giving Green Paper

# Current issues



Wolfson Foundation involved in policy debates

- Current issue of setting a cap on charitable giving tax relief
- CEO involved in Education Philanthropy Action Group, leading into the Giving Summit
- Engaging with the Pearce Review

# Current issues



## Using projects to influence policy debate

- Investment in neurological research
  - Burden of neurodegenerative diseases
  - Currently underfunded
- Investment in postgraduate scholarships
  - Concern over funding of humanities



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So what do foundations want to hear





# Conclusion



## Foundations are...

- Engaged in current debates
- Looking for partnerships
- Seeking new ways to use funds
- Becoming professional and strategic

# Conclusion



## **The Wolfson Foundation wants to hear...**

- Initiatives closely aligned to our strategy
- Initiatives closely aligned to university strategy
- Organisations interested in developing close relationships
- Projects that respond to current issues in imaginative ways

# Conclusion



## Foundations want to...

- Be more than just a cash point!
- Enable new initiatives and new thinking
- Take the long-term view

A new idea of the foundation for a new century.



Thank you