



**giffgaff**  
**2020**  
**Impact**  
**Report**

# A big hey from giffgaff

We thought it would be nice to tell you a little bit more about giffgaff. The company. The brand. The mobile network run by you. At the heart of it, we believe in something simple: 'A better way to do mobile'. It's a belief that gets us up in the morning ready to challenge the old way of doing things. We're not going to shout and stamp our feet, because with our members, we don't need to. We're just getting on with it.

We are the David amongst Goliaths in mobile-land. Big mobile networks like things their way. They tell you what handset you can have and how long you can keep it – all at a cost that suits them. They've had it too good for too long and that's where we come in. We believe we are a better way of doing things and our ambition is endless. Hence the name 'giffgaff', which is ye olde Scottish for mutual giving. That pretty much sums us up. So there it is – that's us.



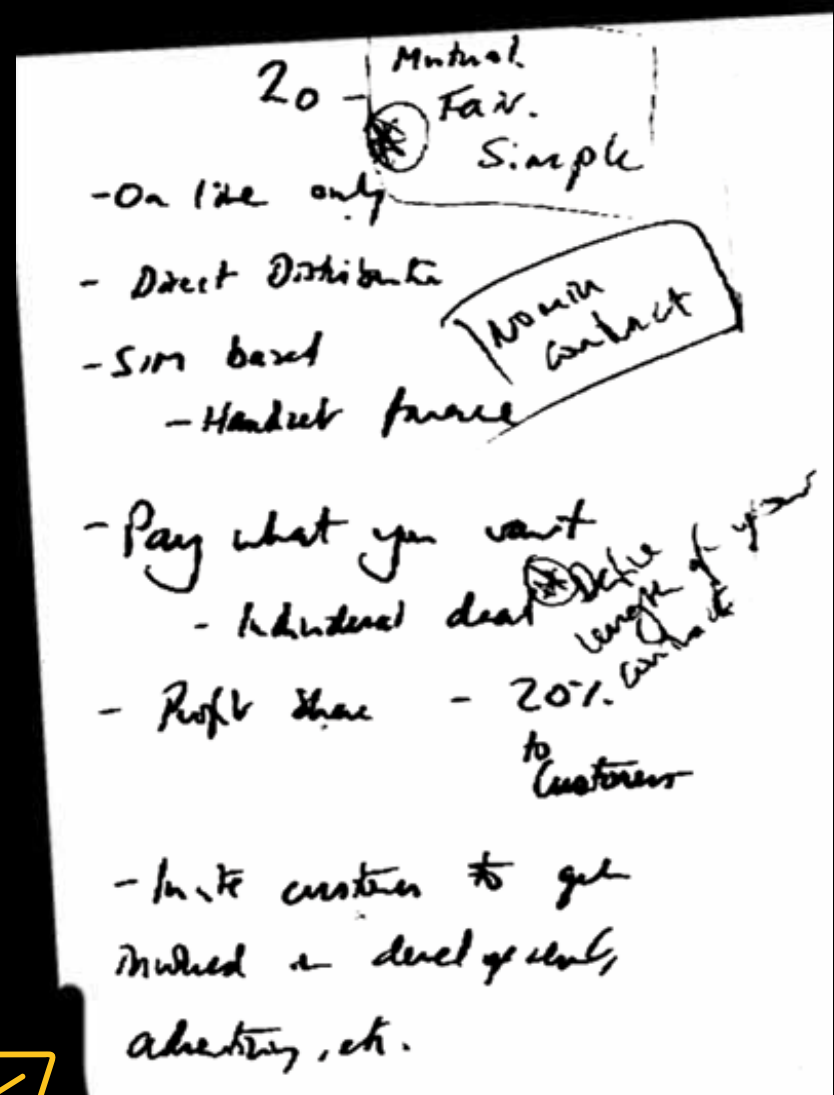
# Let's start at the start

When was the last time you ordered food in a restaurant and had to wait an eternity for it to turn up? While you wait, your tummy starts to grumble and you begin thinking: 'It can't be this hard to run this restaurant. I could run it better'. And that's exactly how we feel about mobile. We can do it better. Because giffgaff is made up of people who believe in a mutual and collaborative way to run a business.

In 2008, a super-smart man called Gav Thompson came up with an idea that mobile could be done differently. In fact, better. Maybe a mobile network could be run without the old traditions like call centres and glossy shops. Maybe the savings could be passed on in the form of super-competitive prices. Maybe someone could get rid of all that bamboozling techy talk that confuses folks. Maybe it could be powered by the people and have members, not customers, who would be rewarded for lending a hand in running things.

In fact, that idea of mutual exchange – you do something for me and I'll do something for you – has been at the heart of giffgaff from day one. It's what makes us the mobile network run by you.

This is the page that Gav wrote his original notes on while at a Web 2.0 conference in sunny California.



# Our founding principles

## **1: Mutuality**

Members help in recruitment of other members, marketing and ideas, they share in the rewards of the business.

## **2: A great deal**

A low cost business model, lower charges for members.

## **3: Member Involvement**

Members help solve other members' problems, get members to spread the word.

## **4: The collective good**

Members can donate their "thank-you" rebate to charity.

## **5: Simple**

SIM only. 1 universal price point.

## **6: Online only**

We only sell direct online. All top ups and customer service are online.

## **7: Start-up mentality**

Launched and run as a distinct, separate business from O2 (our parent company).

## **8: Environmentally responsible**

Carbon neutral, maximum sustainability.



**Spreading the word**

# Our manifesto

Written in the Summer of 2009 our original manifesto sums up all our good intentions.

Typical - Just as the caring, sharing attitude of the 90s exited the swing-doors of the millennium, in came the mass-market mobile phone network on the other side. So we never really got to see how the two of them would hit it off together. (You're probably anticipating an 'Until now...' line. Here it is.)

Until now...

We're giffgaff, a David amongst Goliaths in Mobile-land. **We may be sort-of-small but we're big on that caring, sharing thing.** We believe in community; in people; In the person but specifically, that the power should rest with them.

Now, if that makes you think we're a bunch of do-gooders... good. It beats the opposite, doesn't it? In fact, we're the opposite in many respects. It's a stubborn trait that all revolutionaries have. You can be sure that if all the huge corporate mobile networks teamed up and started an anti-spongecake movement, we'd be hoisting that pro-spongecake flag quicker than you could say 'Just a thin slice, please'.

Anyway, we veered off topic. Cakes do that to a person. giffgaff is an ancient Scottish word that means 'mutual giving'. That pretty much sums us up. We believe in listening to our members. Involving them. Being run by them. Rewarding them with money. The idea is that if we all work together, we can really go places, not least to that Utopian place called Cheapersimplerfairercommunicating. (Hey, don't stamp on our dream: there is such a place.)

giffgaffers can help each other by answering one another's questions. They can recruit new people to the cause. They can come up with new ideas that improve the way we're run. They can suggest worthy causes for us to plough our money into.

Our time has come, no? Haven't the big networks become a little too faceless with their massive call centres, their glossy TV ads, their high street shops full of shiny-suited salesmen, their endless phone "deals" and their long contracts so indecipherable you sense the penmanship of Dan Brown?

Now, don't get us wrong. We're not necessarily anti-them. We wouldn't all be texting each other a squillion times a day if it wasn't for them. It's just that, surely there's room for a small one on top? One that's less, er, big... and more, er, people-y.

Come along and find out what our members think of us. Get the warts'n'all account on our website. You'll find the occasional grumble amongst the glowing tributes. And we're fine with that. It gives us clear direction on where our members think we have to make improvements.

We think we might be onto something. If you think we might be too, then please give us a trial run (and unlike Hotel California, if we aren't being true to our word, you can always leave) and join the community that believes there is a better way to do mobile.

# Our Governance

14 brave pioneers took Gav's idea on and despite a few naysayers and people who still thought the world was flat, giffgaff was born on the 25th of November 2009. Like all new businesses, it was tough at the beginning, but the good ship giffgaff soon got wind in its sails and members started climbing aboard.

Right from the off, the way we went about things was important. We're 100% owned by Telefonica UK who own lots of super, spectacular brands like O2, but we didn't want to sit at 'mum and dad's house', so we squashed ourselves into an old rectory in Beaconsfield, Bucks.

As the business grew, so did the giffgaff team and soon we left the Old Rectory behind for sunny Uxbridge. Did you know, for about 200 years most of London's flour was produced in the Uxbridge area? In the 19th century, Kingsmill opened and they're now one of the best known bakers in the country. There is also a Bakers Yard.

We are still proud to be owned by Telefonica UK today, and whilst we have our own brilliant leadership team who steer the good ship 'giffgaff', some of the O2 team sit on our board alongside Ash Schofield, our CEO. Mark Evans (CEO @O2\*) and Patricia Cobian (Chief Financial Officer @O2 UK) challenge us to stay true to our founding principles and to continue to make the mobile market better.

(\*Board members accurate for year 2020)



# So what do we actually do today?

From day one we set out to be a little different and that goes for what we offer too. Like all good communities, you get something back for what you put in.

## Goodybags

Our flexible monthly plans are called goodybags. They're packed full of data and can be cancelled whenever members want them to be. We also recommend the best plan for our members, even if it means they spend less.

## Credit

For people who aren't into monthly plans, they can also buy credit. It works on a pay as you go basis. And also covers a few things our goodybags don't, such as international calls.

## Payback

Members get Payback points for bringing people to giffgaff, helping out on the forums and generally being a good egg. The points can be swapped for cash or credit, or given to charity.

## Phones

We sell both new and refurbished phones and will also take customers' old phone off their hands and give them cash in return.



# giffgaff members

As you will have gathered by now, our members are at the heart of everything we do. They are the chutney to our cheese, the Sonic to our Tails - and we currently have 3.7 million members making up our base.

Here are some lovely stories about these people, and how they have helped to shape the giffgaff business.

**Darren** became the first member to spend one million minutes on our online community since we launched. He has contributed more than 25,000 times to our community and solved tens of thousands of our members' issues. Top job, Darren.

**Green69** is a legend. He created some key websites for us, most notably micrograff and nanogaff which were used to order and send out SIM cards that we didn't have. He also built the original members' platform, which hosts all member-created content for us. Nice one.

After a data outage in 2018 our brilliant members voted to donate nearly £400,000 of their refund money to Crisis at Christmas, helping to provide food and shelter to rough sleepers.

In fact we love our members so much, they now feature in all our adverts.

**Bluemoonbaz** really got the ball rolling for us, by telling the world what being a giffgaff member means to him and why he's stuck with giffgaff for over 10 years. We loved his story so much, that he's even the voice of our giffgaff voicemail. Nice one, Baz.





# Showing the love

## **Recommended by our members**

So, you've seen how much we love our members. Well it turns out that they think we are pretty great too. They've shown their love by giving us a market leading Net Promoter Score (NPS for short). This means that giffgaff members are highly likely to recommend us to a friend. Aw, thanks guys.

## **Recognised by industry experts**

It's not only our members who think we're great. We've managed to pick up a few awards along the way which we're really proud of. In 2020 we were named both Uswitch network of the year and also a Which? Recommended Provider.



# It's Payback time

You've heard us tell you that we believe in mutual giving (after all, that's what giffgaff means). Which is why we pay our members for lending a helping hand (yes, really). And we call this reward Payback. Here's how it works:

Here are some lovely stories about these people, and how they have helped to shape the giffgaff business.

- 1.** Earn points - Each time members do something to earn Payback points (like bringing mates to giffgaff or helping out on the community) we'll add the points to their account.
- 2.** Rack 'em up - We'll send our members an update at the end of each month telling them how many Payback points they've earned.
- 3.** Cash 'em in - Twice a year members can convert points into cash, credit or a donation to charity.

## **Every year we match our members' donations**

It's our mission to identify and support causes that really matter and bring communities together. Since Payback launched, with our members, we've donated a massive

# £972,025.32

to charity and in 2020 we supported:

**Dogs Trust** (£24,084.80), **Centrepont** (£18,063.60), **Place2Be** (£9,031.80), **The Bus Shelter MK** (£6,021.20), **British Dyslexia Association** (£3,010.60), **Mental Health Research UK** (£25,432), **Marie Curie** (£19,074), **Trussell Trust** (£9,537), **Changing Lives UK** (£6,358), **Restless Development** (£3,179)

# giffgaff gives back

Nothing could have prepared us for what 2020 held in store.

When the coronavirus pandemic hit, we had a responsibility to keep our staff safe and make sure our members could stay connected - to their loved ones, their work places, their schools.

As always, we focussed on what we do best - putting community first.

As an online only business we were quickly able to switch to working from home, and via the power of Zoom we put our best heads together to see what we could do to help our members and communities.

## **Helping people in need**

We launched Goodybank, which enabled our members to donate 2,049 goodybags to other members in need. We also partnered with Neighbourly to support their Community fund with a donation of £25,000. Alongside donations from our members this helped us to support over 200 different charities, donate over 40,000 meals and help over 50,000 people in need. From food banks to mental health community groups, LGBTQ+ and black communities, and charities fighting homelessness.

## **Keeping vulnerable people connected**

To help people stay connected we gave away over 800 phones and over 7,700 preloaded SIM cards to vulnerable communities. And when folks decide to trade in their phone via the giffgaff "Sell My Phone" page, they can now choose to donate the value of their handset to charities helping to reconnect the disconnected in local areas across the UK. A big warm thank you to all our members.

## **Keeping members connected**

For our members who couldn't leave the house to buy a giffgaff voucher, or were struggling to get a goodybag or credit for other reasons related to Covid-19, our agents had access to a hardship fund to ensure all our members could stay connected.

Here's a great example of the mutual giving that makes us giffgaff:

"Just donated £10 after getting help when I couldn't go out the other week. I'm so grateful for the £8 goodybag it saved my sanity" **djloafs**, giffgaff member

## **Supporting members with homeschooling**

We also supported homeschooling families by providing 100GB of free data through the Department for Education and free rating sites such as the NHS website.

# Over at the gaff

As well as raising money for the Covid crisis with our members, giffgaffers also supported other causes close to our hearts.

From riding skateboards, to collecting conkers – our Move Money Mention efforts raised a whopping **£7,115.50** for Cancer Research UK. A special mention goes to our Head of Media & eCommerce Performance Mark Vardy, who rode his bike for 24hours straight – a true giffgaff legend.

Our Christmas Toy Drive helped us deliver toys to over 60 families in need in the Uxbridge area in 2020.

And we still managed to celebrate our 11th birthday, albeit remotely, with an online comedy night.



# Looking after our giffgaffers

After starting with our 14 brave giffgaff pioneers, the giffgaff crew has now grown to a whopping 183. And having seen that working from home could work brilliantly, we now let giffgaffers choose where they want to be. So now we have people calling in from Plymouth to Leeds as well as in the gaff in Uxbridge.

We are a happy bunch at the gaff - and we work with Gallup using their Q12 engagement survey to help us understand how giffgaffers are feeling and where we can make improvements on the way we work. Our score in 2020 was a whopping 4.19 out of 5. We are very proud that we were able to navigate a tricky year without the need to make any redundancies. Plus all our giffstaffers achieved their bonus targets, plus an extra one on top.

In a typical week you'll find giffgaffers enjoying a free breakfast at the gaff, logging on for virtual HIIT and online yoga, or meeting up for a kickabout.

And when times get tough we have our Mental Health First Aiders on hand to lend some support.



# Our Green HQ

We are super proud of the green credentials of our giffgaff HQ in Uxbridge. Belmont house is BREEAM certified 'Excellent' and in 2020 we won a Green Apple Gold Award for our environmental performance. The building has 50m<sup>2</sup> of solar panels on the roof, rainwater harvesting, 58 cycle storage spaces and lockers, 20 electric car charging points plus 300m<sup>2</sup> of biodiverse sedum roof.

## **Offsetting our energy use**

In 2020 we used 94039 kWh of energy in the office, of which 86% came from renewable energy sources and we've been exploring how we can use more renewable energy in the future. This energy use created 2.5 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e. We have now offset our carbon usage by investing in Gold Standard Certified Climate Projects. Our investment will be used to help plant biodiverse forests in Panama. All this means that we are now proudly able to say our office is Carbon Neutral for 2020.

## **Resisting landfill, saving water & chasing renewables**

We are also considerate of our waste in the office, and in 2020 nothing was sent to landfill. Approximately 47% of our office waste was recycled, 33% was converted into renewable gas and organic fertiliser and the rest is converted into energy.

We used 159m<sup>3</sup> of water in 2020 (1.6% of that was rain water collected from our roof) Moving forward we want to tighten our environmental belts by setting up a formal Environmental Management System which will help us keep track of all the little changes we make to look after our planet, and plan for the bigger projects we have committed to, like working towards an office run on 100% renewable energy, calculating our Scope 3 emissions and setting science based reduction targets.



# People we are proud to work with

Continuing to find a better way to do mobile is the challenge that gets us out of bed everyday, but we need some fantastic partners to help us on our journey.

Some of the companies that we are really proud to work with include Firstsource, our member experience experts who help us drive our sector leading member satisfaction score. Firstsource is committed to becoming Net Zero in their operations by 2030. They are also a community-minded bunch who recently organised fundraising activities in aid of Northern Irish Cancer Care and to support Tommy McGlinchey, a Firstsource veteran battling chronic illness (<https://www.firstsource.com/corporate-social-responsibility/>). Nice one.

Since launching in early 2020, our friends at Recycle Your Electricals have been busy. They've been encouraging millions of families to recycle their unwanted electricals, awarding grants and loans to help support recycling charities and plants during the Covid-19 lockdown, and working with local communities to make reuse and recycling easier for everyone. We were able to partner with them to help our members find their nearest mobile phone recycling point.

NTT DATA are our data partner who have helped us move from 20 tech updates a year to over 1,500 a month. Key to this was their ability to be flexible in the way they worked, helping our engineers work differently to achieve the excellence needed. NTT is also committed to becoming Net Zero by 2050, and a 50% reduction in emissions by 2030 (<https://uk.nttdata.com/about-us/environmental-social-and-governance/sustainability>).

## **So that's us**

We hope that our little intro has helped you understand what we're all about and why we do things the way we do.