



**Together
we take**

*Action for
Children*

**Our Impact Report
2024/25**

Thank you for taking action for children.

Because of support like yours, our work can continue so children don't miss out on a safe and happy childhood. And that support has kept our vital work going for more than 150 years.

Childhood is precious. We don't have long to get it right.

Every child should have a safe and loving home, food, warmth, the chance to grow and learn – the support to cope with life's challenges. But too many children don't.

That's why we have thousands of dedicated people on the ground giving children and young people the protection and practical help they need. And they're helped by you – our passionate supporters, who raise vital funds and helps us campaign tirelessly for lasting change.

**Every day, all over the UK,
we take**



Our strategy for more

safe and happy childhoods



Our vision

That every child and young person in the country has a safe and happy childhood and the foundations they need to thrive.



Our mission

We take action to change the childhoods of those who need help to thrive. Giving vulnerable children and young people the protection and practical help they urgently need and tirelessly campaigning for lasting change.



Our strategic goals

We've set seven goals to help us create more safe and happy childhoods. They're rooted in our commitment to putting the voices of children and young people at the heart of our work and driven by diversity and inclusion in everything we do.

Here's what we'll do for children, young people and families:

- 1** Grow our services to help more children and young people.
- 2** Increase the impact of our work with children and young people.
- 3** Influence policy decisions to improve the lives of children and young people.

Here's how we'll achieve it:

- 4** Attract, develop and retain brilliant staff and volunteers.
- 5** Inspire greater support for our vision and mission.
- 6** Increase our financial contribution from fundraising, nurseries and childcare.
- 7** Deliver best value for children and young people and improve efficiency.

Over the last few months, we've been reviewing our current strategy with our Board of Trustees. We'll be launching a new strategic framework during 2025/26.

You can find more information on page 28.

How we measure impact

We record the outcomes of children and young people (or their parents/carers) who use our services. We monitor and record at regular intervals or when they don't need our support anymore, and we collect evidence of improvements in their lives. Using all the available data for each outcome we arrive at the percentages in this report. We also record the number of children, young people, parents and carers who use and benefit from our services to measure reach.

Together we make a difference



Childhood is precious. We don't have long to get it right.

That's why we'll never stop taking action for children – removing obstacles to safe and happy childhoods while helping make sure every child gets the opportunity to thrive.

By consistently stepping up to support us, you're helping transform children's lives.

In fact, over the last year you've made a difference to 551,400 children, young people and families. Because of you, we're able to provide the loving, practical help they urgently need. You'll hear more about how in this impact report.

Thank you for your incredible support.

The number of UK children living in poverty has risen to a heart-breaking 4.5 million. That's 31% of all children. There are rising numbers of children entering the care system. And young people across the UK need vital support with their mental health.

That means children, young people and families need us more than ever. It's a huge challenge. But I know that we can make a lasting difference.

I'm incredibly grateful for everything we've achieved together so far.

Thank you for taking action for children.

Locks Farmer
Managing Director, Income and Engagement

In 2024/25, we took action for

551,400



children, young people and families across the UK.



Together we helped:



484,650

children, young people and families through our family support services.



5,141

children, young people, their families and carers through our services supporting children in or at risk of going into care.



50,869

children and young people (and their families) with their mental health and wellbeing.



10,740

disabled children, young people and their families.

Our services

We provide **342** services in local communities across the UK, in schools and online. And we work across four main service areas.

Family support

Supporting families to make sure children and young people get the best start in life through:

66 children's centres and family hubs.

56 family support services.

1 online service (Parent Talk).

35 Spring nurseries and out of school clubs.

12 young carers' services.

6 early intervention services for children and young people who are criminally exploited.

23 support services for young people, including youth justice, youth employment and youth support.

Disabled children and young people

Supporting disabled children, young people and their families through:

52 residential and community short breaks services.

16 homes for disabled children and young people.

3 fostering short breaks.

Children in care

Caring for children and young people to give them a safe, stable and loving home through:

15 youth housing support services.

12 fostering services.

16 children's homes*

1 children's rights and independent visitor service.

1 residential school.

1 online service (Big Welcome).

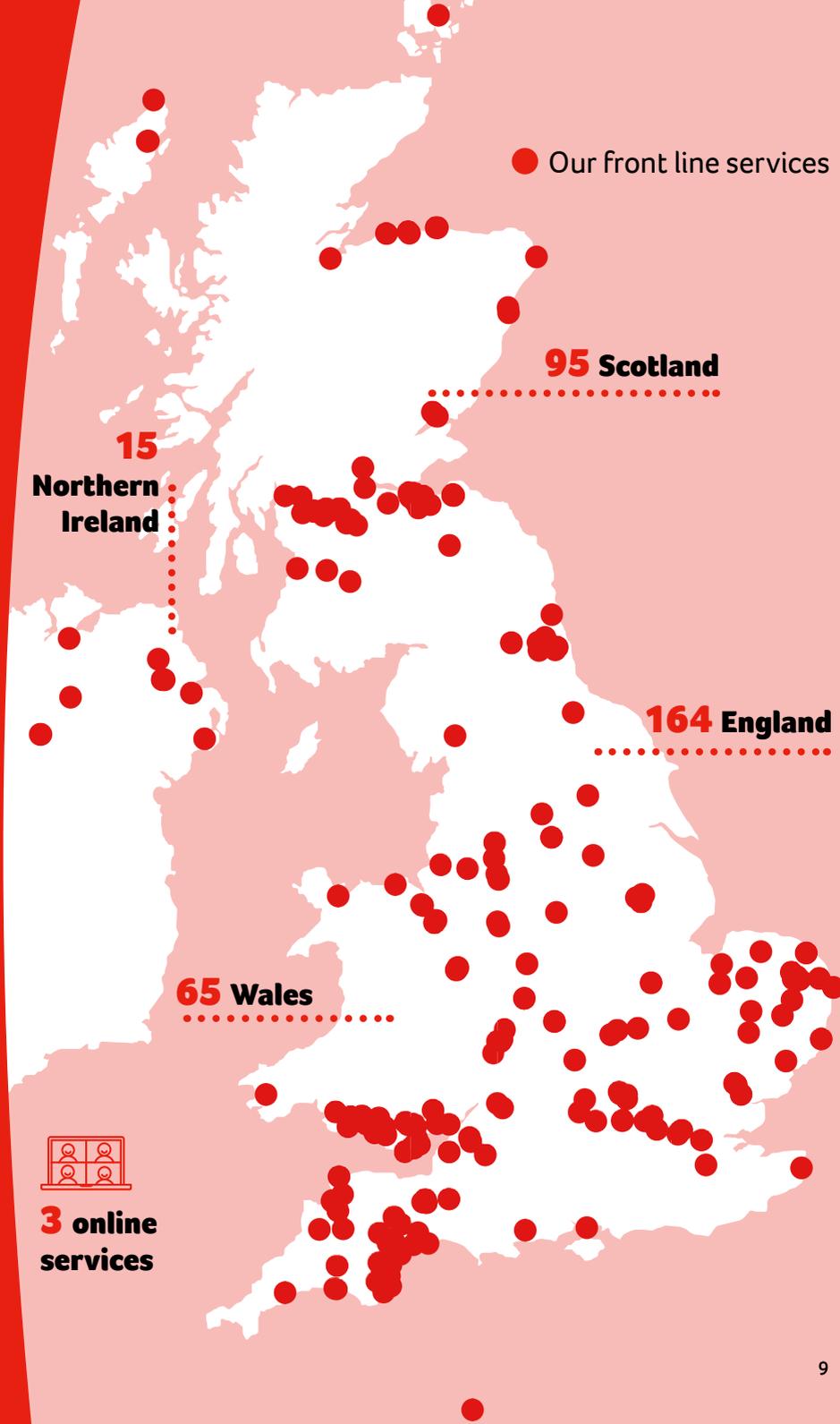
Mental health and wellbeing

Building children and young people's emotional resilience to help them overcome challenges through:

25 mental health support services.

1 online service (Sidekick).

**Our 16 children's homes include five homes for young people at Headlands school. Previously we counted these homes as one service at Headlands, but as they are regulated as individual homes that offer the same loving care as our other long-term homes, we're now counting them as individual services.*



Family support

A loving family and secure home life builds lifelong wellbeing for children. Sometimes, families need extra help to create that. Which is why Action for Children provides support for families through our services across the UK.



88%

of parents and carers have improved parenting skills and confidence after receiving our support.

Offering accessible parenting advice through WhatsApp

We're making sure Parent Talk, our unique digital support service for parents and carers, keeps evolving to meet the needs of those who rely on it for free, down-to-earth support.

Last summer we made Parent Talk available through WhatsApp for the first time thanks to funding from the Prudence Trust. It was incredibly popular from the start, with 66% of users choosing WhatsApp over webchat on day one.



89%

of families are managing better financially with our support.

Since Parent Talk launched in 2020, we've helped over 2 million parents through informative online content and advice from specialist parenting coaches.

Working together to end the criminal exploitation of children

The criminal exploitation of children is a form of child abuse in which a young person is manipulated or pressured to take part in criminal activity, often through threats of violence alongside serious physical, emotional and sexual harm.

Through our groundbreaking Criminal Exploitation Intervention Service, we help 'divert' young people away from crime with the help of peer mentors who've been in their shoes. We've been lobbying for urgent policy change to protect children, and expanding our services across the UK to shield them from exploitation.

In Scotland we secured government funding, alongside the Children and Young People's Centre for Justice, to create a national policy and strategy to tackle criminal exploitation. It's part of keeping the Scottish government's promise that care-experienced children grow up loved, safe and respected.

In Wales, we intensively support children and families through our Criminal Exploitation Intervention Service in Flintshire. We worked with North Wales Police and other partners to help many children and young people at risk, or actively being exploited, to reduce their risk of harm. We also contributed to the Welsh Parliament's Children, Young People and Education Committee's inquiry and report, *Children on the Margins*, which explored how to help criminally exploited children who go missing.



Creating safe spaces through our Family Clubs



Last year, we rolled out our Family Clubs across the UK, supported by Nationwide Building Society. They're safe spaces where children and families can get expert support, meet other families with shared experiences and enjoy a hot meal.

The Family Clubs are an effective way to meet families' individual needs – for example clubs dedicated to helping disabled children move into independent living.

Caroline, Children's Services Manager, said: "We were able to use the Family Fund to give children in one family new beds, because we found out through the club that they were sleeping on the floor. Being able to help them with whatever they're going through is such a benefit of the way this model works."



Swansea Family Club

Supporting mums in prison

We're here for families wherever they are – and that includes parents in prison. Our specialist staff help women create and maintain a bond with their babies so they can nurture a secure attachment. This includes sharing everyday experiences like taking them to the supermarket or the park.

Along the way we also help mums break the cycle of reoffending and develop new skills, offering one-to-one support on everything from budgeting to cooking healthy meals.



Our patron, HRH the Princess of Wales, is committed to supporting early years development. So in February 2025 she visited our Mother and Baby Unit (MBU) at Styal Prison and Young Offender Institution in Wilmslow, Cheshire. She met staff, new mums, and women who'd used our service, to hear about the huge difference we made to their lives.



HRH The Princess of Wales visiting our Mother and Baby Unit at HMP Styal in Cheshire.

Children in care

Every 15 minutes, a child goes into care in the UK. From that moment, their whole world is turned upside down. They've often already faced huge challenges and traumatic experiences in their young lives. And now they're in care, the world can see them differently. But we don't.

Opening more loving homes

We're there whenever a child needs us. Our small, family-style children's homes offer stability, security and love to children and young people.

We've been investing in the growth of Action for Children-owned homes for children in care since 2022 – we call this our residential growth programme.

We're making good progress and last year we opened a brand-new home in the north-east of England, bringing our total to five. We have four more homes ready to go, which are just waiting for registration from the inspectorate: two in Derbyshire, one in Telford and one in Wales. Our plan is to open a total of 15 by the end of 2026/27 (one more than originally planned).



“
*I used to feel alone.
Now I feel included.
I feel safe, I feel
happy. It's just a
great place to be.*
– Christopher



91%
**of children and
young people
in our care had
improved stability
in their home lives.**

Helping young people live independently



The journey from care to living independently can feel overwhelming, stressful and uncertain for young people. Through the incredible support of partners like John Lewis Partnership, our transition workers are here to help.

In 2024/25, we helped 200 young people successfully move on from care, offering practical and emotional support every step of the way.

Every young person deserves the opportunity to work, support themselves and use their talents. Our Discovering your Potential programme is aimed at care-experienced young people, supporting them to develop skills to help them find the right job.

Through the programme, we support young people to develop their aspirations, skills and ability to navigate the world of work. This can help them move out of poverty, and tackle problems that might have affected their families for generations. We've been successfully running our service in Scotland and we plan to launch it in London over the next year.

Elsewhere in our support, The Robertson Trust is generously supporting our STAY service, helping young people to stay in higher or further education in Scotland. As part of this project, we're also looking at what works for young people – collaborating with them to design support that's truly tailored for them and their needs.

Helping children find loving foster homes

Our supportive and warm foster carers help children feel at home. Sadly, we've seen a big increase in the number of children needing loving foster homes. And there's an urgent need to recruit 9,000 new foster families in the UK.

We'll continue to provide foster care services, matching children with families in all four nations of the UK. In the coming year we'll have an even greater focus on recruiting dedicated foster carers and do all we can to find safe homes for the growing number of children who need them.

To help or find out more visit actionforchildren.org.uk/fostering

Disabled

children and young people

A disabled child should have the same opportunities as any other. And a disability shouldn't stop a child achieving their hopes and dreams. Outside of local authorities, Action for Children is one of England's largest not-for-profit providers of short breaks services for disabled children and young people.

We're here to support children, whatever their needs, disability or neurodivergence.

This includes giving disabled children who need residential care a loving home from home. And providing short breaks so they can experience independence and make friends in a fully accessible and supported environment while their families focus on other responsibilities.



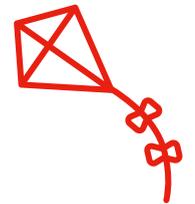
88%
of children who use our services are more able to participate in enriching activities that wouldn't otherwise be accessible.



84%
of children who use our services have improved social skills and friendships.

Celebrating an outstanding report

We're delighted that Maybrook, our first solo home in England providing personalised and nurturing care to a child, was awarded Outstanding in all areas by Ofsted. The inspection for our new home, which opened last year, spotlighted the personalised and nurturing care a child experienced and how they're supported to live a happy and fulfilled life. It described their warm and trusting relationships with staff, who know the child exceptionally well, explaining how "this young person's world has been unlocked."



Providing better spaces to play and thrive – thanks to you

Every disabled child deserves safe and fun spaces where they can play, learn and grow.

To make this happen, and thanks to your support, we regularly update our indoor and outdoor sensory areas, play areas and play equipment. Enjoying modern and robust play spaces tailored to their needs helps children regulate their emotions and behaviour. And most importantly – have fun and make friends.

Mental health and wellbeing

We know that learning how to face life's challenges can help build a lifetime of emotional resilience. That's why we work directly with children and young people, in schools and through programmes across the UK. We help them talk about how they're feeling, recognise when they need support, and know they're not alone.

Recognising how widespread mental health issues have become, we also make sure that mental health support is an integral part of our other services too.

Beating the blues

Last year, we continued to provide our internationally acclaimed **Blues Programme** for young people aged 13-19, across all nations of the UK. The Blues Programme runs for six weeks and helps young people learn emotional resilience and how to overcome low mood and anxious thoughts. It's been tried and tested all over the world and proven to make a positive difference.



83%

of young people who use our Blues Programme can now talk about their mental health and wellbeing.



A programme of love

We were overjoyed to receive this poem from a young person who attended the **North Wales Blues Programme**. He was non-speaking so communicated his feedback in writing.

“

I feel it shows how much the programme meant to him. It really moved us, and it was wonderful to see how delighted he was when he shared it. This is why I feel so proud to deliver the Blues Programme.

– Shân, Service Coordinator for our North Wales Blues Programme

The Feedback Poem

*In a world of wonder, where youthful minds roam free,
A programme born of love, go help them be,
With risks of anxiety,
The programme as a helping hand, a guiding light,
With lessons learned and wisdom shared,
They'll face life's challenges, wisdom shared,
Their mental health, a garden well-tended,
A future bright, their hearts well defended.*

Helping children bounce back

Our **Bouncing Back Programme** is designed to get children aged seven to 11 talking about how they're feeling. It gives them an introduction to their mental health and wellbeing and coping strategies to use when they need them most. It also helps them work out when they need help and who to ask.



87%

of young people who took part in Bouncing Back said they felt more confident.

“You have always been there for us.”

Seb’s start in life was far from easy as he suffered a stroke before birth, which led to epilepsy and brain damage.

At the age of two, he was referred to an Action for Children playgroup in Swansea for children with additional needs, to support both him and his mother Ishbel.

Ishbel said: “Seb has had a lot of challenges. He has very limited hearing and vision and is registered deaf and blind, but you wouldn't know it because he's adapted so well. He is so determined and feisty and has natural curiosity and energy.”

When he was seven Seb started to attend Action for Children’s Positive Outcomes Play Service after school. This offered him a safe space to play with specialist support workers.

Ishbel said: “It has been absolutely fantastic and Seb gets so much out of it. He gets to go on trips, go bowling and go swimming with people he loves and who really understand his needs.”

Seb also started having overnight care as part of Action for Children’s Short Breaks service, organised by family worker Helen.

“Helen rang and asked how I was, and I said I was fine but she could tell I wasn’t. I broke down and from that sprang the overnight respite care.



The constant hospital appointments and caring for Seb, along with caring for her parents, meant single mum Ishbel had to give up work, which put a financial strain on the family.

Action for Children was able to fund school uniform for Seb through the Turner & Townsend Fund, replace the family’s broken microwave, and offer support with Christmas food and a present for Seb through the Nationwide Family Fund.

“When Helen rang me just before Christmas and offered me some supermarket vouchers I was so grateful.”

“Seb doesn’t really understand Christmas but he loves all the twinkly lights and presents. Helen knows how much he loves music and had brought him a special present.

“Seb unwrapped it on Christmas Day and the look on his face was pure joy. It was an electronic keyboard. He was obsessed with it from day one and still is. It takes pride of place in our dining room.

“Action for Children helped me feel like I was able to give Seb a gift that he really wanted. His keyboard, which he loves, is something I would not have been able to afford myself. It was the first ever present that he was actually excited to receive.”

For Ishbel the practical support from Action for Children along with the emotional support from Helen has been life-changing.

“[Action for Children’s] support has lifted a weight off my shoulders. I can remember how bad things were when Helen first called me and I can honestly say you helped us avoid a crisis. You have always been there for us and we’re so grateful for that.”



“

Action for Children helped me feel like I was able to give Seb a gift that he really wanted.

– Ishbel

Influencing policy to improve children's lives

Policy change has the potential to improve the lives of millions of children. That's why it's a vital part of our work, alongside the support and care we provide through our services.

Thanks to your support, we focus on where the need is greatest, where there's an opportunity for change and where our unique expertise helps maximise our impact for families.

Influencing people in power

After the 2024 General Election announcement we sprang into action to make sure change for children led the next government's agenda. We mobilised our supporters to contact local candidates, asking them to champion the needs of children. Candidates visited a service in Staffordshire to see how we're supporting families. We were pleased to see that manifestos from Labour, the Liberal Democrats and the Green Party reflected many of our policy calls. These ranged from helping parents into work, to investing in early intervention to nurture more safe and happy childhoods.

Improving children's social care

Children urgently need high-quality homes with loving care to thrive. So, in September 2024 we launched our ambitious A Place to Call Home campaign, calling on UK governments to take immediate action and make it happen.

We're delighted the UK government has taken on some of our recommendations to help make sure there are enough homes for children and improve forecasting, planning and commissioning. With the help of supporters like you, we'll keep calling for the further change that's needed.



Tackling child poverty

4.5 million UK children now live in poverty. That's 31% of all children. We know many of you share our concern at these rising numbers, and have joined our calls for greater support for families. Last year, we shared 10 immediate policy options with the UK government to tackle child poverty and support families into decent, secure work. We also published a new report, *Sick and Tired*, which investigated the hardships and work prospects of sick and disabled parents relying on incapacity benefits.

In Scotland, our child poverty campaigning helped persuade the Scottish government to provide funding from 2026 to mitigate the two-child limit for Scottish families. It also announced a new duty to increase all Social Security Scotland benefit payments by inflation each year.

In March 2025, we launched our *Paying the Price* report. It showed how the UK government can lift 1.2 million children out of poverty by 2030 while halving child poverty in 20 years and eliminating deep child poverty. At the packed Westminster launch young campaigners Louise, Freya, Georgia and Aaron spoke powerfully about their experiences of poverty.

Our campaign continues – find out how you can support by visiting actionforchildren.org.uk/support-us/campaign-with-us/child-poverty/

Raising funds and awareness

Thanks to amazing supporters like you, we continue to inspire the public and raise vital funds that make sure more children have safe and happy childhoods.

Every day, vulnerable children across the UK need our support. And every day, you take action.

Dedicated supporters join our special events to raise much-needed funds for children, including our fabulous Starry Night Gala, Ultimate News Quiz, Spring Lunch and Never Mind the Business. Across five cities, you give up your beds for our annual Boycott your Bed to help provide vital support to vulnerable families with nowhere else to turn.



You share your resources, get your workplaces behind our cause and donate your time and expertise to support our services. You run thousands of miles, bake hundreds of cakes and use your platforms to shout about our campaigns.

You include us in your worship, your wills and in your hearts.

All this hard work, dedication and love meant that in 2024/25 we raised an incredible £17.9 million. We're so grateful to our volunteers and supporters for taking action for children so they don't miss out on a safe and happy childhood.

Philanthropy and Trusts

This year, major donors have spearheaded incredible work, helping us deliver essential services right across the UK. And we are grateful to our incredible network of Trusts and Foundations supporters, large and small, whose belief in our mission continue to make a lasting difference.

Corporate partners

We're so grateful to our corporate partners for their brilliant support and commitment this year. Their dedication and drive has been instrumental in helping us expand our reach, deliver lasting impact and create happier childhoods across the UK. **Thank you.**



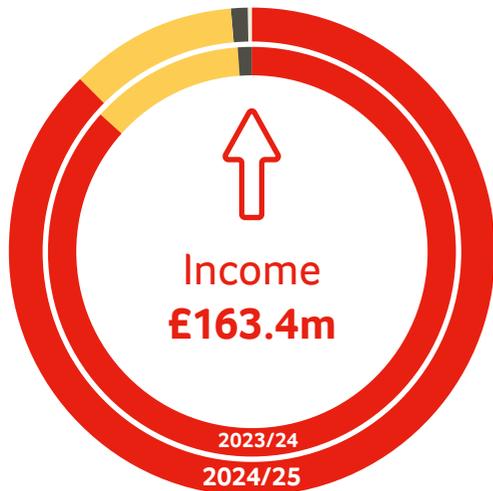
Honouring legacies

To honour the incredible people who've given us a gift in their will we created Sky of Stars, our tribute website. When we receive a gift from someone's will, we'll add a star in their name to our Sky of Stars. A star to remember the difference they've made.

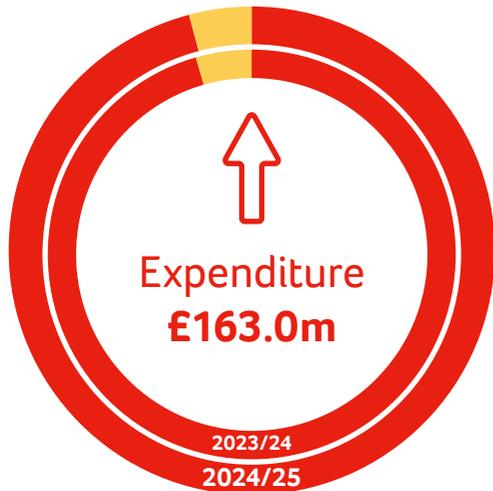
We're so thankful and inspired by every supporter who gave a gift in their will this past year. Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of just over 180 supporters, over a quarter of our donated income was raised this way.



Our financial performance



| Income | 2024/25 | 2023/24 |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Charitable activities | £143.9m | £136.3m |
| Donation and legacies | £17.9m | £17.2m |
| Investment income | £1.1m | £1.6m |
| Other | £0.6m | £0.2m |
| Total | £163.4m | £155.3m |



| Expenditure | 2024/25 | 2023/24 |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Charitable activities | £155.6m | £154.3m |
| Fundraising | £7.4m | £6.7m |
| Other | £0.0m | £0.0m |
| Total | £163.0m | £161.0m |

Where your money goes

In 2024/25 84p in every £1 was used to create safe and happy childhoods. The remainder was invested in fundraising and admin costs to run the charity.

For every £1 we spend:

84p helps children, young people and families.

4p on fundraising.

12p on admin.



For more detailed financial information, check out our [Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25](#).

How we created more safe and happy childhoods

Expenditure on activities to help children



£61.1m

Family support



£38.5m

Children in care



£41.0m

Disabled children and young people



£14.3m

Mental health and wellbeing



£0.7m

Policy and campaigning

Our **focus** for **2025/26**

Over the last year, we've been revising our strategy so that we're better able meet the needs of children and families and adapt to the ever-changing environment we're operating in. We'll launch the updated strategy in 2025.

In the meantime, we'll continue to work towards our goals by prioritising the following activities over the next 12 months:

- ★ Continuing to grow our impact by aligning our growth and influencing priorities to our new ambitions.
- ★ Developing and opening more children's homes in our residential growth programme.
- ★ Scoping options to replace our Children's Outcome Recording System to better identify and highlight our impact.
- ★ Developing our participation plan – including appointing new Young Ambassadors to carry on the successful work of those who're leaving us.
- ★ Embedding our refreshed Diversity and Inclusion strategy and action plan.
- ★ Amplifying our brand story to make sure more people recognise and engage with our vital work.
- ★ Exploring new ways to raise money and diversify our income.
- ★ Using our digital capabilities to find new ways to be more efficient.
- ★ Supporting our services through digital and launching new ways to raise money.
- ★ Embedding our new Continuous Improvement Team to help us be more efficient.



Thanks

to you

We'd like to say thank you to our patron, and all our ambassadors, celebrities, supporters, boards and committees who give their time to make more childhoods safe and happy.

★ **Our patron**

HRH The Princess of Wales

★ **Vice Presidents**

Ken Deeks MBE

Lynda Myles-Till MBE

★ **Our celebrity ambassadors**

Angela Rippon CBE

David Tanner

Dermot Murnaghan

Fatima Whitbread MBE

Jenny Agutter OBE

Jimmy Akingbola

Larry Lamb

Martha Kearney CBE

Richard Farleigh

Ronnie Archer-Morgan

Sharon Horgan

★ **Our celebrity supporters**

Ainsley Harriott MBE

Andrew Jenkins

Brian Cox CBE

Cat Simms

Celia Imrie

Connie Simmonds

Dame Joanna Lumley

Dame Judi Dench

Debbie Bright

Dr Ranj

Fats Timbo

Gary Lineker

George Glynn

Georgia Jones

Harry Redknapp

Hue & Cry

Janette Manrara

Janey Smith

Jay Howard

Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink

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Kat Shoob

Kate Thornton

Kelsey Parker

Kerry Godliman

Laura Hamilton

Lesley Joseph

Louis Theroux

Louise Boyce

Olivia Cox

Pandora Christie

Rebecca Ferguson MBE

Roxie Nafousi

Sanam Harinanan

Sola Akingbola

Sophie Tea ART

Sue Holderness

Tom Price

Vaness Feltz

★ **Our charity ambassadors**

Baroness Armstrong
of Hill Top OBE

Sir Iain Livingstone

Flora Martin MBE

Rt Hon Lord Jack McConnell
of Glenscorrodale

Rt Hon Alun Michael

Dame Mary Perkins DBE

Baroness Kathleen

Richardson of Calow

Neville Shulman CBE

★ **Our supporters**

*Major donors, trusts, foundations
and statutory funders:*

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Community Project Fund

BBC Children in Need

Chapman Charitable Trust

City Bridge Foundation

The Eveson Trust

Jakob Hørdér

Guernsey Community Foundation

Lloyds Bank Foundation
for the Channel Islands

LTA Foundation

Michael Cornish Charitable Trust

Newcastle City Council -
Newcastle Youth Fund

Northumbria Police &
Crime Commissioner

Shared Care Scotland -
Short Breaks Fund

Smurfit Westrock Foundation

Souter Charitable Trust

Social Investment Fund

Suffolk Community Foundation

The Alice Ellen Cooper Dean
Charitable Foundation

The Charles Jacob Charitable Trust

The Distillers' Charity

The Gannochy Trust

The National Lottery
Community Fund

The Northwood Charitable Trust

The Prudence Trust

The Robertson Trust

Welsh Government and
Carers Trust Wales

William Grant Foundation

The William Leech Charity

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The Sir Reo Stakis Charitable Foundation
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Unity Trust Bank
Wallace Whittle

We'd also like to thank all those supporters who wish to remain anonymous.

★ **Young Ambassadors**

Holly
Holly B
Callum
Miracle
Mariana
Chloe
Rachel
Anah
Troy
Emily
Freya
Emry
Chan
Nikita
Louise
Eden

★ **Boycott your Bed 2024/25 Boards**

[Boycott your Bed, London](#)
Matt Goodstadt (Chair)
Vivienne Hoskins (Chair)
Ken Deeks MBE (Founder and Action for Children Vice President)
Alison Evershed
Adrian Leer
Alistair Sargent
Caroline Shaw
Charlotte Brown
Chris Mason
Chris Sykes
David Jobbins
Den Donovan
Georgia Wright
Harman Sidhu
Joanna Moss
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Karolina Fidrych
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Chloe Adams
Brenda Campbell
Jasmine Lim
Killian O'Rawe
Lyle English
Ryan Mulligan
Sean Delvin

Boycott your Bed, Cardiff

Amy-Beth Probert

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Thank you for taking



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