

A young boy with dark hair and eyes is smiling and holding a large, light-colored teddy bear. The background is slightly blurred, showing a green chalkboard and a wooden door. The image is framed by large red abstract shapes on the left and bottom.

*Action for  
Children*

The  
**difference**  
you **make**

**Impact Report 2022/23**

# Welcome

from our Managing Director for Fundraising,  
Communications and Policy, Locks

**Right now, children in the UK are living through a brutal cost-of-living crisis. That's shortly after a global pandemic that will have shaped much of their formative years.**



Worrying about how they'll eat or stay warm leaves little space to focus on their future, their education or work, their support network or their wellbeing.

Thanks to you, Action for Children can support vulnerable children, young people and families in the UK with services to help them in these trying times. In 2022/23, we helped 765,905 children, young people and families through our services across the UK.

We're proud of what we've achieved in 2022/23. This report brings you the highlights of what you've helped make happen.

We couldn't do what we do without you. Without your generous contributions and support.

Last year, we raised £18.6 million from our individual supporters, trusts and foundations, and corporate partners. This truly incredible total is the reason we can continue to deliver vital support to families across the UK.

Looking ahead, we're excited and thankful to have you as part of the Action for Children family, making a difference to the lives of children, young people and families.

Thank you for your continued support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Locks Farmer'.

Locks Farmer

Managing Director of Fundraising, Communications and Policy (Interim)



# About

## Action for Children

It's over 150 years since our founder the Reverend Dr Thomas Bowman Stephenson saw children living rough under the arches of Waterloo Station and decided to step in. Today, many children are still going hungry. They're still cold. Some are still just surviving, not thriving. We're determined to be a vital lifeline for families living a reality that should be confined to history.

Here's how we help:

### Family support

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



### Children in care

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



### Disabled children

Supporting disabled children, young people and their families.



### Mental health and wellbeing

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



### Policy change

And we influence policy decisions to improve the lives of children and young people.



# More

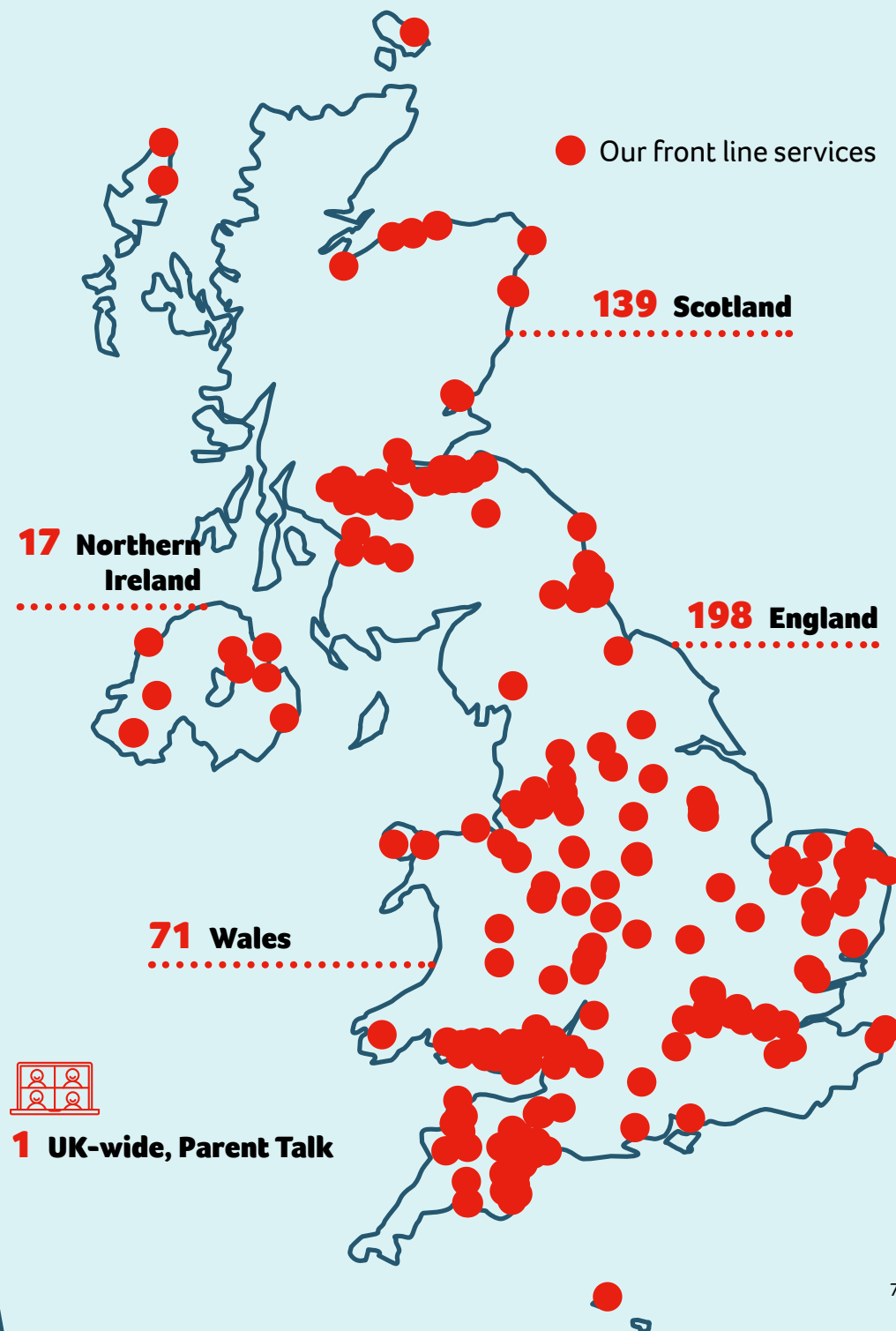
safe and happy children

We deliver **426** services in communities across the UK, in schools and online.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>68</b> Children's centres and family hubs       | <b>19</b> Adoption and fostering services                   |
| <b>75</b> Spring Nurseries and out-of-school clubs | <b>65</b> Services for disabled children and young people** |
| <b>10</b> Young carers services                    | <b>9</b> Children's homes                                   |
| <b>56</b> Support for young people*                | <b>5</b> Children's rights and Independent Visitor services |
| <b>74</b> Family support services                  | <b>1</b> Residential school                                 |
| <b>43</b> Mental health support services           | <b>1</b> Online Parent Talk service                         |

\* includes youth support, youth justice, youth employment support and youth housing support.

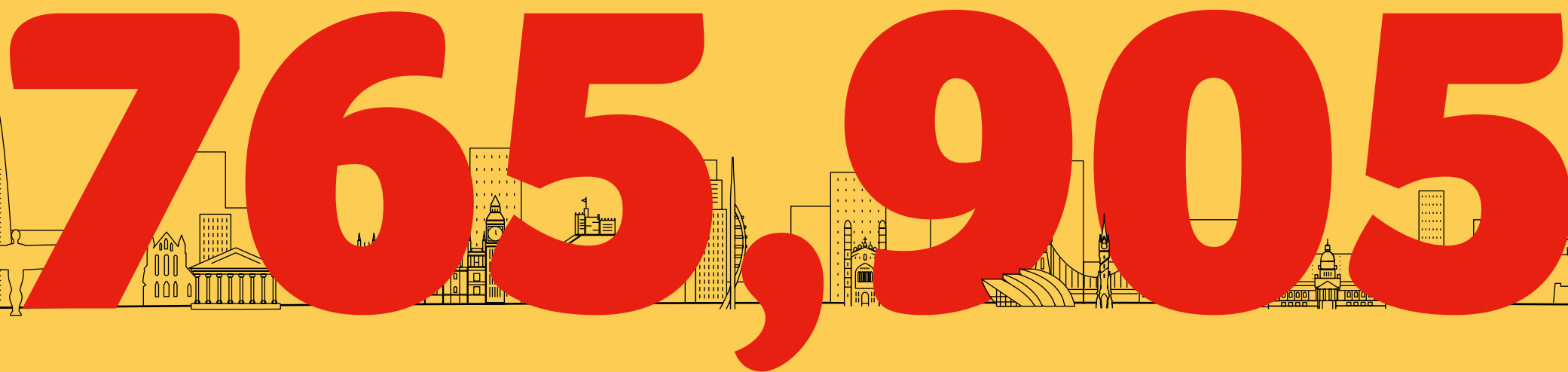
\*\*includes children's homes for disabled children, residential short breaks, and community short breaks.







Across the UK we helped



765,905



**children, young people and families in 2022/23 –  
that's nearly 95,000 more than the previous year.**

# Family **support**

**We reached 652,357 people through our family support services. That's an increase of 17% from the previous year.**

And after using our services like children's centres and family hubs, 76% of families are functioning more effectively with improved boundaries. And 77% of children are doing better in school.



## Reaching more families through Parent Talk

Our award-winning digital service for parents, Parent Talk, has continued to grow to meet the increasing demand for information, advice and support.

.....  
In 2022/23, Parent Talk supported

**539,842**

parents, including 6,869 people in one-to-one coaching sessions.



Parent Talk provides information, advice and guidance as well as the option for live one-to-one chat with experienced coaches for parents with children aged 0-19, or under 25 for those with special educational needs.

## There when families need us – Aakash's\* story

After separating from his ex-partner, Aakash, from Northern Ireland, was given full custody of his two young children, both under five years old. Social Services have been involved with the family due to mum's drug and alcohol misuse and supported Aakash in ensuring the children were safe.



In order to take on full time parenting responsibilities, Aakash had no other option but to give up his work. He was also waiting for an important change to his visa status which would mean he could apply for benefits. This meant that he had no income to support his family as a single parent.

His daughter, who has been diagnosed with a developmental delay, attends one of Action for Children's centres, dedicated to supporting parents and children under four years old to help them prepare for school.

The family receive weekly support from their family support worker through phone calls, home visits, doorstep visits, on site one-to-one play visits and respite creche. And Aakash also received some financial help through our Crisis Fund.

Aakash's support worker also helped him apply for the government funding that he so desperately needed while he is still unable to work.

Now, things are looking up for Aakash and his children. They have recently moved into their own house and his daughter is thriving.

Aakash tells us,

**“**

*...we have suffered, but things are slowly getting sorted out and we're happy now. Without the support, everything would have been so much harder for me – I have so much respect for my support worker and Action for Children.*

\*This story has been made anonymous

# Children in care

**We care for children and young people to give them a safe, stable and loving home.**

Our services supported

5,570

people children and young people in care.



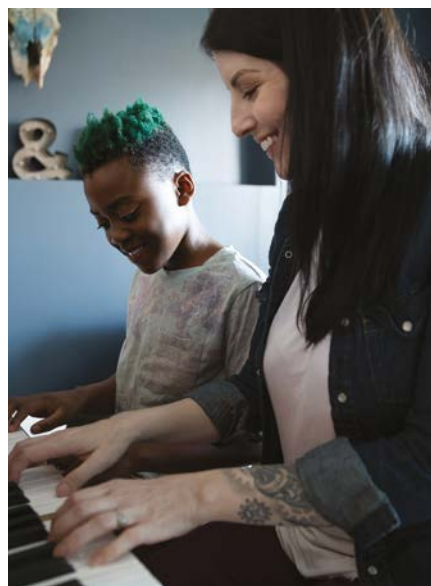
**In addition we supported 3,476, young people with homelessness prevention information, some of who are care experienced or on the edge of care.**

86% of children and young people in our children's homes have improved stability, meaning they're not moved from home to home.

And 80% have improved employment skills.

**In 2022/2023**

- We purchased two new properties, one in Wales and one in the North East of England and we have undertaken refurbishment work on both. We also completed the development work on another property ready for registration by Ofsted.
- We were thrilled to have communal spaces in some of our residential homes transformed by the team at John Lewis & Partners as part of our relationship with John Lewis Partnership and their commitment to supporting children in care. Watch the video of one renovation [here](#).



# Disabled children

**Our specialist services for disabled children and young people supported 15,813 people.**

Last year, we continued to provide residential disability services for children and young people, with **over 10,137 children and young people** enjoying one of our Short Breaks.

**Outside local authorities, we're England's biggest provider of disability services for children and young people. And we're a market leader in providing empowering care and support for families with a disabled child across the UK.**

Across our services for disabled children:

83%

of disabled children and young people have improved social skills, friendships and communication skills.



**And 86% had opportunities to participate in activities that they may not otherwise have had.**

With demand for long-term residential placements for children and young people increasing, we've expanded two of our Short Breaks services in North Wales and Glasgow to also include some residential places.

# Mental health and *wellbeing*



**Our evidence-based mental health services build resilience and help children and young people cope with life's challenges.**

.....  
Last year, we supported

**88,689**

children and young people with  
their mental health and wellbeing.



## Delivering our Blues Programmes

Across Wales, Scotland and England, we provide our internationally acclaimed Blues Programme run by trained Action for Children specialists. The six-week wellbeing initiative provided in schools for 13-19-year-olds teaches emotional resilience, reduces low mood and anxious thoughts and, crucially, gets teenagers talking.

## Bouncing Back

Bouncing Back provides a two-week programme that's open to all primary and secondary school aged children, giving them an introduction to their mental health and wellbeing, coping strategies like CBT, and how to manage day to day challenges.

**Last year, Blues and Bouncing Back helped more than 18,000 children and young people.**



**71%**

of young people indicated an increase in  
their self-esteem after the Blues Programme.



**89%**

of young people would give the  
Blues a 4 or 5 Star rating.

99% of children and young people who accessed one-to-one support from our Staffordshire emotional wellbeing service reported progress in their goals. And 82% of parents/carers felt their child's emotional health and wellbeing had improved as a result of our support.



# Campaigning for *change*

## We work to improve children's lives by influencing policy change.

We maximise our impact by focusing on areas where there is the greatest need, an opportunity to influence change, and where Action for Children has specific and relevant expertise and evidence.

Here's a summary of our successes over the last year.

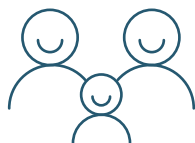
### Giving more children the best start in life

We've successfully advocated for greater focus on the importance of the early years in policy making, and for specific changes so parents and their children get better support.

.....  
In England, the government announced

## £300m

for 75 new family hubs.



**That included £50 million for parenting support services for parents of children under two years old.** This is something we had been calling for in our research 'Beyond Reach', showing how many parents missed out on crucial early years services.

### Helping to fix the children's social care system

We worked with six other charities to support over 90 care experienced young people to travel to Westminster to make sure their voices were heard in the government's response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.

And our research, '**Early help is a crucial public service**' was one of the few pieces of charity research quoted by the government to make the case for a new approach to family support, which they will trial in 12 local authorities in England.



### Fighting child poverty

We campaigned and advocated for an increase in the Scottish Child Payment, resulting in a confirmed increase to £25 per week from 14 November 2022, while we also joined 120 organisations, who wrote to the First Minister asking her to double Scottish Child Payment bridging payment. This resulted in a payment worth £260 to struggling families.

### Supporting exploited children

Building on our experience of supporting children in the justice system, we have successfully shaped the Children's Care and Justice Bill in Scotland and the decriminalisation of exploited children in Wales.

# Our **finances**

**We maintain strong financial systems so we can sustain our support to vulnerable children, young people and families.**

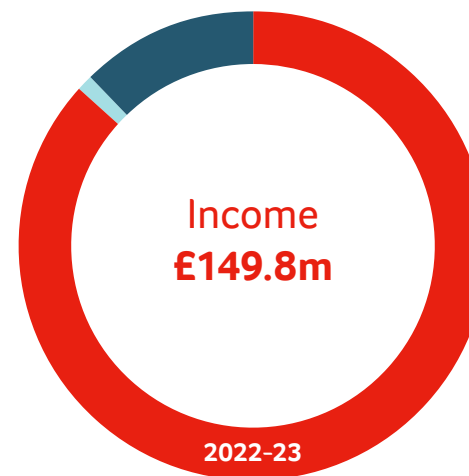
With the help of our incredibly generous supporters, we raised £18.6m in voluntary income from donations and legacies in 2022/23. Of this, £12.6m (2021/22 £12.9m) was unrestricted income thanks to the continued loyalty of regular donors and supporters. £6.0m (2021/22 £6.3m) was restricted to specific programmes such as our mental health work and children in care.

Our flagship fundraising campaign, Secret Santa, exceeded its targets raising £1.7m including gift aid. This was in part due to us investing in TV advertising for Secret Santa for the first time.

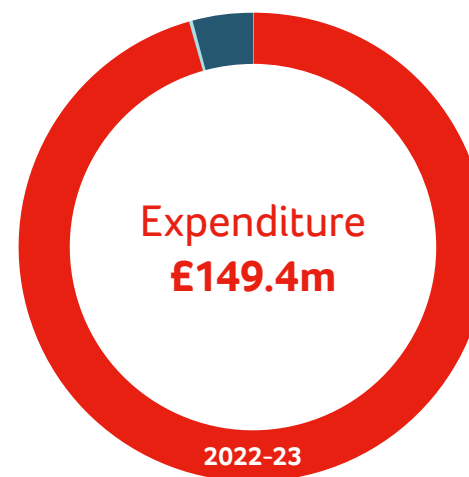
Our partnership with John Lewis and Partners also helped to uplift our Christmas fundraising as well as providing significant brand awareness for Action for Children by featuring us in their Christmas advert.

Our special events have fully recovered after the pandemic now, with gala events such as Ultimate News Quiz, Spring Ladies Lunch and Women of Influence raising over £400k in March 2023. We're incredibly grateful to the supporters who left us a gift in their will last year. Legacy income was £4.7m, which is £0.8m more than the previous year.

Overall, we're pleased to have performed £2.4m or 15% better than budgeted, particularly in a tough fundraising climate due to the cost of living crisis.



Income	2022-23
Income from running children and family services	£129.9m
Donations and Legacies	£18.6m
Investment	£1.3m
<b>Total</b>	<b>£149.8m</b>



Expenditure	2022-23
Costs for running children and family services	£127m
Cost of Raising Funds	£6.3m
Support costs	£16.1m
<b>Total</b>	<b>£149.4m</b>

# Our **focus**

for 2023-24

**Looking back at the last year helps us to plan ahead for the next.**

We'll continue to work within the framework of our strategy, which is structured around seven goals within our four core services areas.

Here are just a few highlights of what we'll be focussing on for the coming 12 months.

**More safe and happy childhoods:**

Read more about our strategy [here](#).



Growing the number of our residential children's homes.



Investing in improving the efficiency of our systems and processes.



Continuing to include the voices of children and young people in our work.



Expanding family support, disability and child criminal exploitation services by developing key areas and models.



Creating innovative new ways to fundraise, and to grow our partnerships.



Attracting, developing and retaining brilliant staff.



Developing new and robust ways to measure and record our impact.



Increasing the impact of our policy campaigns and influencing, building public support and political backing across the UK.



Expanding our media and press coverage, maintaining and growing our active supporter base, and increasing awareness of our brand.

# Our **thanks**

**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**

Jenny Agutter OBE

Richard Farleigh

Jessica Hynes

Sian Lloyd

Larry Lamb

Michael Buerk

Mary Nightingale

Kevin Whately

Angela Rippon OBE

Dermot Murnaghan

Emily Maitlis

Matthew Lewis

Diane Keen

Martha Kearney

Nerys Hughes

Shirley Anne Field

David Tanner

Sharon Horgan

★ **Our charity ambassadors**

Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top

Gordon Bullock

Lavinia Carey OBE

Flora Martin MBE

Lord McConnell of Glenscorrodale

Sister Eluned Williams MBE

Baroness Kathleen Richardson  
of Calow

Bill Bottrill

Neville Shulman CBE

Paul Renney

★ **Our supporters**

Aberdeen FC Community Trust

Arcadis

Arco

BASE

BBC Children in Need

Capgemini

Capita





BRE Limited  
 Chapman Charitable Trust  
 Charities Aid Foundation  
 Civica UK Ltd  
 Clive Henry Group  
 CMC Markets PLC  
 Cognizant  
 David and Ruth Lewis Family  
 Charitable Trust  
 David Lister Charitable Trust  
 Dell Technologies  
 Ella's Kitchen  
 FirstGroup plc  
 Foster Wood Foundation  
 Garfield Weston Foundation  
 Giggling Squid  
 Guernsey Community Foundation  
 Herbalife  
 Iceland Foods Charitable  
 Foundation  
 Jamieson Corporate Finance  
 John Lewis Partnership  
 John William Wright Trust  
 KLA Foundation  
 Laver Cup  
 Liverpool Football Club Foundation  
 Mercedes-Benz  
 Moondance Foundation

Morton Fraser LLP  
 Newcastle City Council  
 Newcastle Youth Fund  
 Nominet  
 Northumbria Police & Crime  
 Commissioner  
 Pilkington Charities Fund  
 Rocket Licensing  
 ROX – Diamonds and Thrills  
 Rolex  
 Salesforce  
 Sally and John Roberts  
 Sarnia Housing Association  
 Scottish Friendly  
 Smurfit Kappa Foundation  
 Sport England – Families Fund  
 Squarepoint Foundation  
 Starling Bank  
 The Alice Ellen Cooper-Dean  
 Charitable Foundation  
 The Charles Jacob Charitable Trust  
 The Gannochy Trust  
 The Lord Provost's Charitable Trust  
 The Methodist Church  
 of Great Britain  
 The National Lottery  
 Community Fund  
 The Northwood Charitable Trust  
 The Premier League

The Robertson Trust  
 The Scottish Government  
 The United Reformed Church  
 Transparency  
 Turner & Townsend  
 Twilio  
 UPS  
 Volant Charitable Trust  
 William Grant Foundation

★ **Boycott your Bed Chairs**

Sarah Gates, Northern Ireland  
 Marguerite Clarke, Northern Ireland  
 Philip McCauley, Northern Ireland  
 Sue Carter, Wales  
 Sam Alsop-Hall, England South  
 Vivienne Hoskins, England South  
 Howard Hall, England North  
 Steve Rake, England North  
 And all our Boycott your Bed  
 board members.

★ **Spring Ladies Lunch Committee**

Lynda Myles-Till MBE (Chair)  
 Barbara Gaion  
 Elizabeth Hammond  
 Ciara Hurley-Stewart  
 Charley Lowe  
 Kimberly Metaxa  
 Denise Parkinson

Elena Shchukina  
 Maureen Tadros  
 Ugo Arinzeh  
 Sarah Gibbon

★ **The Ultimate News Quiz  
2020/21 Committee**

Chris Shaw (Chair)  
 Martha Kearney (Chair)  
 Baroness Jenkin of Kennington  
 (Chair)  
 Alastair Bennett  
 Robin Elias  
 Vivien Fowle  
 Kay Breeze  
 James Max  
 Kate McAndrew  
 Lou Plank  
 Bill Rudgard  
 Dianne Stradling  
 Lucy Tuck  
 Simon Vigar  
 Luke Jones  
 Lucy Crystal  
 Karthi Gnanasegaram  
 Sam Ross  
 Lizzi Watson  
 Dan Faulks  
 Michael Salter-Church  
 Steve Sidebottom

★ **Woman of Influence Board**

Pauline Mitchell (Chair)  
Teri Porter (Vice Chair)  
Vicky Fleming-Brown  
Eve Robertson  
Patries MacIntyre  
Karen Musgrave  
Kelly Cooper-Barr  
Louise Mahon  
Marion White MBE  
Rowan Main

★ **Never Mind The Business Committee**

Colin Taylor  
Pete Lowie  
George Nisbet

★ **The Sports Dinner Committee**

Steven Wilson  
Robert Burns  
Alan Stirling  
David Tanner  
Julie Inglis

★ **Gleneagles Golf Committee**

Sandy Martin (Chair)  
Maitland Walker  
Donald Smith  
Alison Donnell  
Mark Taylor  
Alison Culpan  
Jim Rennie  
Catrine Miquel

★ **Never Mind the Business Swansea Committee**

Paul Thorburn (Chair)  
Anthony Lovell  
Chris Honour  
Philip Reason  
Rebecca Laugharne  
Richard Morgan

An **enormous**  
**thank you**

Thank you to our extended celebrity family who use their skills, influence and platforms to help vulnerable children by supporting Action for Children.

And thank you to all the young people, families and staff who have shared their experiences to help tell the story of the difference we make.

We also want to take this opportunity to honour the memory of all our incredible supporters who generously bequeathed a gift in their will to Action for Children.



# Get *involved*

To find out more about the work we do across the UK – and how you can support us – visit:

**[actionforchildren.org.uk](https://actionforchildren.org.uk)**

Or get in touch with our **Supporter Care Team** on: **0300 123 2112**.

## **Action for Children**

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