



# Our impact

2022/23

**The Church of England  
Children's Society's impact  
summary, annual report,  
and financial statements**

Charity no: 221124  
Company no: 40004

**The  
Children's  
Society**

"The Children's Society  
has always been there  
for me. They have  
been the one constant  
in my life."

**Naomi**





# Contents

Chair's introduction	6
CEO's introduction	8
Our year in review	10
<b>1. Our mission, vision, and values</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>2. Our impact and achievements</b>	<b>16</b>
2.1. How we delivered our objectives	18
2.2. The areas of work we prioritise and why	23
2.3. Emotional health and wellbeing	25
2.3.1. Tailoring our wellbeing interventions to the needs of young people	28
2.3.2. Supporting children who have experienced abuse or trauma	32
2.3.3. Making sure young carers' voices are heard	34
2.4. Risk and vulnerability	36
2.4.1. Protecting children from exploitation	38
2.4.2. Improving support for children who go missing from home or care	44
2.5. Child poverty	46
2.5.1. Supporting families through the cost of living crisis	48
2.5.2. Advocating for refugee and migrant children	51
<b>3. Our future plans</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>4. Financial review</b>	<b>59</b>
4.1 Income	60
4.2 Expenditure	60
4.3 Fixed assets	61
4.4 Investments	61
4.5 Cash and working capital	62
4.6 Reserves	62



<b>5. Governance structure and management</b>	<b>64</b>
5.1 Legal status and objectives	64
5.2 Public benefit	64
5.3 Governance and management	64
5.4 Delegation and committees	67
5.5 Modern slavery	67
5.6 Principal risks and uncertainties	68
5.7 Our people	70
5.8 Supporter engagement and fundraising	72
5.9 General Data Protection Regulation	73
<b>6. Protecting the environment</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>7. Statement of responsibilities</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>8. Independent auditor's report</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>9. Financial statements</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>10. Notes to the accounts</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>11. Corporate information</b>	<b>112</b>
<b>12. Endnotes</b>	<b>116</b>

# Chair's introduction

I am delighted to introduce our impact summary and annual report for 2023.

The Children's Society has come through the very difficult pandemic in a strong position. Financially, with healthy reserves which allow us to invest, grow, and do even more. Strategically, with a new clarity of mission and focus. And organisationally, with a structure designed to promote working together and learning from one other. This is a testament to the whole team and our determination to achieve our mission, regardless of how daunting the headwinds are. And the headwinds continue, albeit in different forms. The cost of living crisis has made life harder for many of the families and young people that need us. This is especially tough coming so soon after the unique demands made by Covid-19.

I have joined an organisation doing such important work with courage and empathy for young people. Through our direct support work with young people in crisis, grounded in our philosophy to listen to the young person, we take the time to understand the full context of their lives, and tailor the support to that individual, for as long as they need it. And our early intervention work helps to alleviate issues faced by young people before these get worse and they reach crisis point.

Alongside this, we inform and train professionals and those close to young people, helping them to identify the signs of low wellbeing or crisis and respond appropriately, so that the whole system that young people engage with is improved. And we call on those in positions of power to redesign legislation, systems, and processes to become more child-centred.

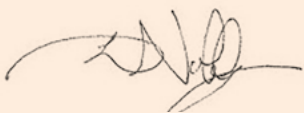
All of this work moves us towards our 2030 goal. The Children's Society has taken on the mission of turning around the decline in young people's wellbeing in the UK by 2030. Our crisis work gives us a deep understanding of the pathways that lead to trauma. This informs the early intervention work. Both allow The Children's Society to give the best guidance to others. And finally, all elements give The Children's Society both the credibility and knowledge to influence national and local government for the changes we want to see. Throughout this report, you will read inspiring examples of all of this work.

No family, regardless of their means, is unaware of the pressures that young people face today. This should be a concern for everyone. And despite the significant increase in teenagers needing help, there is a huge shortfall in services provided, with waiting periods of months and even years for first appointments. The Children's Society is more needed than ever.



The next few years offer a real opportunity for us to do even more. To help more young people hold onto hope, to prevent early signs of distress from getting worse, to work with many more professionals, and to push hard for a country that provides more protection and support as young people navigate their teenage years. We are up for the challenge.

There are many people to thank for the work that is showcased in this report. Firstly, Janet Legrand who has done so much over the past few years as chair of trustees and who was immensely generous in her handover of this role. My fellow trustees, who give their time and wisdom tirelessly because of their belief in the mission. And every single one of our supporters who give their time, money, and voice to advance our work. I also applaud all those who work and volunteer for The Children's Society. Day in and day out, they are dedicated to the cause of helping young people look forward to their futures with hope. But most of all I want to say thank you to the young people whose voices and stories inspire us constantly to do more and to do it better, so that they and all young people in the UK may flourish.



**Diana Noble**

Chair of the board of trustees



# CEO's introduction

The past few years have been difficult for many of us, and especially for our young people. As we deal with the impacts of the pandemic and face the new challenges brought about by the cost of living crisis, The Children's Society has continued to fight alongside children for a brighter future. This report shows the incredible creativity, inspiration, and commitment TeamTCS has brought to this fight in the last year to make sure we can be here for every child that needs us.

The Children's Society's Good Childhood Report 2022 demonstrated that life is still getting harder for children – shockingly, 11% of children in the UK have low wellbeing.<sup>1</sup> And the cost of living crisis has put families under yet more pressure, making it even more difficult for young people to thrive. More than 1 in 4 children in the UK are living in poverty<sup>2</sup> and thousands are facing huge challenges like exploitation, abuse, and neglect. This simply isn't right. Children are some of the most vulnerable members of our society, and teenagers in particular are at significant risk of harm. Teenagers are still children, and every one of them deserves our support.

As Diana mentioned, our goal is ambitious – by 2030, we will have overturned the damaging decline in children's wellbeing, setting a path for long-lasting growth. Over the past year, we have honed our strategy and strengthened our organisation, with our five organisation-wide objectives guiding our decisions as we build the foundations needed to realise our ambitions. We are now in an exciting

phase of planning to grow our income and impact and our trustees have been strengthening our balance sheet to enable us to move forward with confidence. We know that with young people, our supporters, and TeamTCS, we can build a society that works for every child.

Across the country, our youth impact teams have supported 63,779 young people directly, through 73 different services. Our amazing teams help children when they're facing huge challenges like abuse, neglect, or exploitation, when they're struggling with their mental health or low wellbeing, and so much more. And our child-centred approach means that young people get the support that's right for them, helping them to transform their lives.

We learn so much from this direct practice and from the stories and voices of the young people we meet – and this makes it possible for us to prevent other children from facing the same challenges. In 2022/23, our prevention and systems change work reached new heights, impacting an estimated 863,555 young people.

Our campaigning and political advocacy work is making a real difference too. Grounded in the experiences of young people and what they have told us they need, we have continued to push for a brighter future. In a year of considerable political upheaval, it has been particularly challenging to influence for change but we have seen significant successes in spite of this. We lobbied for statutory guidance to recognise teenage relationship abuse for the first time, and our



Strengthen the Safety Net campaign helped to make an additional £1.5 billion available to low income families through the Household Support Fund. We're so proud to have been part of these campaigns and others like them, building a world that protects children and their families.

This work is made possible by the dedication and passion of thousands of incredible people across the country. Our team of staff and volunteers, whose commitment to fighting for change is inspirational. Our supporters, whose generosity and enthusiasm in standing alongside young people allow us to be here for children when they need us. And young people themselves, whose hope, voices, and needs inform all that we do. I am so grateful, to each and every one of these people.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to Janet Legrand, who stepped down as chair of our board of trustees this year, and to Diana Noble, who has taken on this role. I am grateful for the continued trust and support of the board as a whole – their insight, commitment, and guidance this year,

and particularly during the transition process between chairs, have been invaluable. I look forward to all that we will achieve together in the coming years.

The challenges facing young people have grown hugely in recent years, and 2030 draws ever closer. There is a great deal of work to be done but together, we are a powerful force for change. I hope you will continue to stand with us and with young people as we build a society that works for all children.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Mark Russell'.

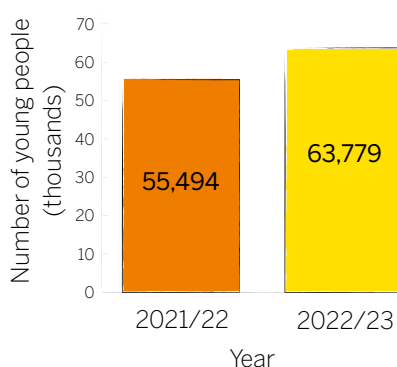
**Mark Russell**  
Chief Executive

# Our year in review, 2022/23

## Working with young people



**Figure 1.** Number of young people worked with directly.

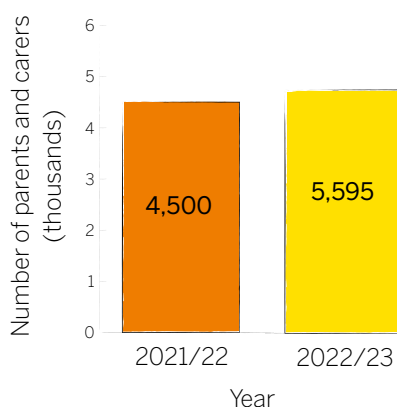


**63,779 young people** directly worked with (compared with a total of 55,494 worked with in 2021/22). This includes:

**9,438 young people** supported through one-to-one and small group work.

**54,341 young people** worked with through events (for example, assemblies, workshops, and so on).

**Figure 2.** Number of parents and carers worked with directly.



**5,595 parents and carers** directly worked with (compared with more than 4,500 worked with in 2021/22). This includes:

**2,016 parents and carers** supported through one-to-one and small group work.

**3,579 parents and carers** worked with through events (for example, workshops, information sessions).

# 73

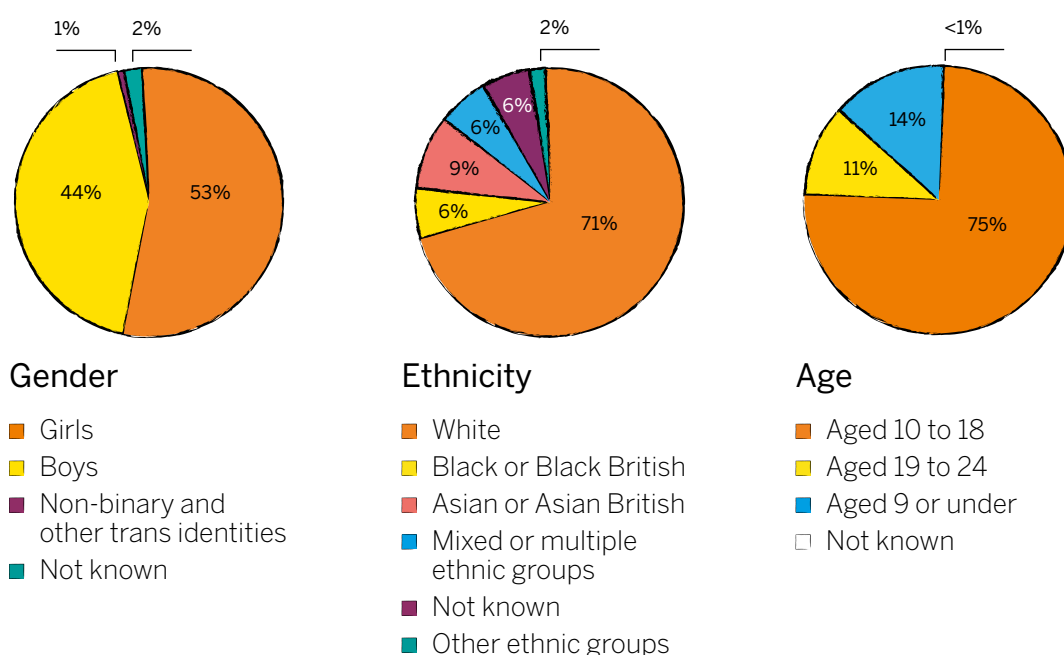
2022/23

**73 services for young people** and their families, across our three priority areas of emotional health and wellbeing, risk and vulnerability, and child poverty (compared with 78 services active in 2021/22).

**376 youth participation activities** conducted, including consultations, residentials, and podcast recordings.







**Figure 3.** Young people (n = 9,438) supported through one-to-one and small group work in 2022/23, by demographic characteristics.

## Working for change



- We continued to provide support, guidance, thought leadership, and evidence to local authorities, professionals, businesses, government, and the wider sector.
- **863,555 young people** estimated to be impacted as a result of our systems change work with over **24,000 professionals** (compared with an estimated 738,220 young people impacted in 2021/22).
- We released our eleventh Good Childhood Report. More than **2,000 children** took part in our annual survey, which was a key source for this report.

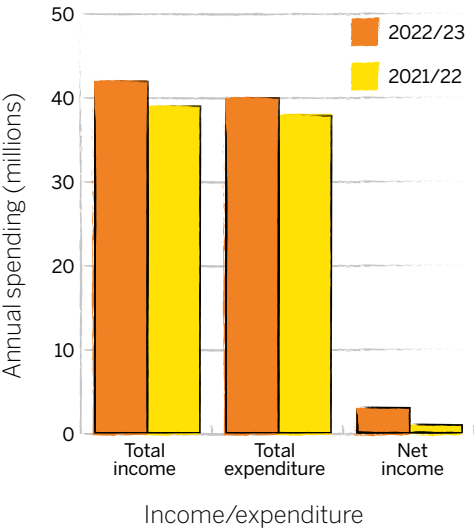
## Team TCS



- More than **135,000 people** actively supported our work through volunteering, donating, fundraising, and campaigning (compared with more than 127,000 in 2021/22).
- Around **4,000 volunteers**, including **1,800 retail volunteers** (compared with around 7,500 volunteers (2,000 in retail) in 2021/22).\*
- More than **4,300 supporters** joined our calls to action across 15 key issues, including the spring statement, local welfare assistance, the cost of living, mental health, and children's social care (compared with more than 13,000 supporters taking action in 2021/22).

\* This year's lower figure is in part due to the migration of our volunteer data to Beehive. We are in the process of clarifying the data cleansing involved in this process.

Our finances



	2022/23	2021/22
	£000	£000
Total income	42,605	39,048
Total expenditure	(40,001)	(38,007)
Net income	2,604	1,041

Figure 4. Total income and expenditure in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22.

Looking ahead



- We'll continue to focus our service delivery work on emotional health and wellbeing, risk and vulnerability, and child poverty. We'll now further explore how these themes and the issues young people face are interconnected, so that we can provide holistic support that keeps young people safe from harm.
- **Emotional health and wellbeing:** We'll be launching the pilot of our youth-designed, open access, early intervention wellbeing service in Newham later in 2023, allowing young people in the community to access support as soon as they need it. We'll test and refine our approach before scaling this nationally in the coming years.
- **Risk and vulnerability:** We're expanding our work supporting children and young people who have witnessed or experienced domestic violence. We'll collaborate with a wide range of partners to influence key inquiries, reports, and policies, including the recommendations from the independent children's social care review and the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA).
- **Child poverty:** We'll continue to work with partners to influence the Government on policies related to benefits and migration and to make sure that young people's voices are heard, their rights are protected, and families are supported.
- We want to target our work where it will have most impact. To do this, we'll be using our new theory of change to develop and implement a new framework to measure impact.
- We'll also be working to widen our supporter base to make sure we have the resources available to achieve our goals.

## Where we work

**Figure 5.** Map showing where we have worked with children, young people, and parents and carers through one-to-one and small group work in 2022/23. Each dot represents an approximate location, determined by home postcode, where at least one person was supported.



# 1. Our mission, vision, and values

## Our vision

is for a society built for all children.

## Our goal

is to overturn the damaging decline in children's wellbeing by 2030, setting a path for long-lasting growth.

All that we do is led by our

## values.

**We're brave,** unafraid to challenge injustice wherever and whenever we see it. We're fearless in our determination to make sure young people are heard. We try new things and push boundaries, and when we fail, we learn. And then we go again.

**We're supportive** and always see the good in every young person we help, inspiring them to new and greater achievements. We help them see where their lives can go and what they can become. And we listen to and respect them.

**We're ambitious** for the potential in all young people. For all that children can be in the future, and for a society that's built for all children. And we're ambitious about our role in effecting that change – pioneering new projects and boldly calling for radical change.

**We're trusted,** delivering the best care and support available for young people. We never give up on them. We stay by their side through everything, no matter how hard things get, until things have changed for the better.



"I'm hopeful  
about my future.  
I have a chance."



## 2. Our impact and achievements 2022/23

Every day, The Children's Society works directly with teenagers and young people to create a new society: one where every single child grows up safe, happy, and filled with hope for their future. Everything we do moves us further along our journey towards a society built for all children – whether we're directly supporting a young person, working with professionals to improve the systems designed to protect children, campaigning alongside our supporters to drive long-term change, or helping local authorities improve their responses to young people.

This section of our impact summary and annual report highlights the reach and effectiveness of our work during 2022/23. It first speaks to our key achievements and developments in the last year, against the objectives we set for ourselves. Then, it dives into some specific areas where we have demonstrated impact. It shares examples of our services and the important work they do to support young people and their parents, carers, and families. It shows how we deliver impact by galvanising supporters and raising awareness with the public. And it highlights the ways in which we work to influence locally and nationally, coming together with partners to drive sustainable positive systems change. This year in particular we have more

clearly articulated how we make change within these different parts of the systems that impact children and young people.

The work of The Children's Society is as varied as the young people that we meet, and demonstrating the impact of such diverse activities can be challenging. In 2022/23, we developed a new theory of change, which has provided the foundations for an updated impact measurement framework that we intend to complete and put into practice during 2023/24. By evolving our approach to impact in this way, we will be able to focus our efforts on where we make the greatest difference and track our progress as we work towards our 2030 goal.

We work across three priority areas: emotional health and wellbeing, risk and vulnerability, and child poverty. These are areas of critical importance in children's lives and where we believe we can have the most impact. These three priorities sit alongside two other objectives that focus on building a community and strengthening TeamTCS. Each objective is a vital part of our journey towards our vision, and we hope that this section of our report demonstrates how they intersect and overlap to allow for impact on a wider scale.



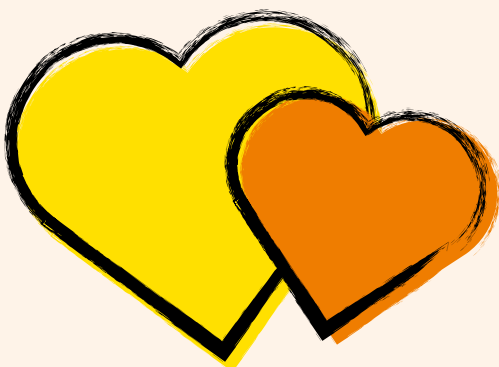
## 2.1. How we delivered our objectives

Our objectives are as bold and challenging as our goal, and together they have the potential to create real change. We set our objectives in 2021/22 and have made real progress towards delivering each of these priorities since then.

### Objective 1: Emotional health and wellbeing

We will work with children and young people, and others who support them, to create meaningful, innovative ways to respond to the early signs of their low wellbeing.

- We published our latest **Good Childhood Report** in September 2022 and shared the results with over 200 professionals at numerous sector events. The report highlighted that children's overall wellbeing (or happiness with life as a whole) is still in decline – demonstrating the ongoing importance of our work.
- Our mental health support teams enabled 55 schools to take a **whole-school approach to wellbeing**, and we delivered an evidence-based intervention to reduce self-harming behaviour.
- We were awarded the chance to develop our **early intervention** offer for young people who have experienced or witnessed domestic violence in four areas across the country.
- We developed our **digital wellbeing platform** and have started piloting it across our emotional health and wellbeing services. This is the first young person-centred digital product we've developed and the first time that we've involved our service users in a full end-to-end design process. We hope it will support young people as they transition out of our services, helping them to understand and navigate their emotional wellbeing more independently.
- We continued to build links in the education sector, helping schools to further develop their wellbeing policies and refine recommendations on the introduction of a **national wellbeing measure** for use in schools.

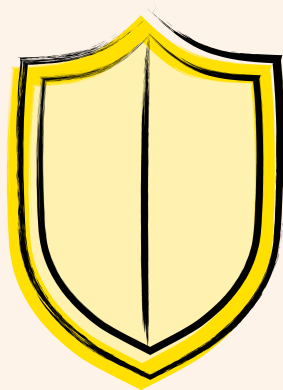




## Objective 2: Risk and vulnerability

We will actively challenge and change ineffective systems that fail to protect children from abuse and harm.

- Our Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) support programme – a consortium partnership with Research in Practice and the University of Bedfordshire – developed and launched **multi-agency practice principles**, which have cross-government support.
- We delivered **2,549 return home interviews** with 630 children who had gone missing from home and shared with the Welsh Government young people's views that every child in Wales who goes missing should be offered an interview too.
- We developed a **missing children response benchmarking assessment** tool with the NWG Network. This has helped to improve multi-agency support for missing children and boost the work of safeguarding partnerships. It has been used by 61 local authorities.
- We successfully lobbied for **domestic abuse statutory guidance** to recognise teenage relationship abuse for the first time.
- We continued **#LookCloser**, a partnership campaign run with the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre and the British Transport Police and funded by the Home Office. The campaign's website had over 16,000 visits in 2022/23, and more than 4,000 people attended our learning sessions.
- We contributed evidence to **numerous consultations**, including on modern slavery and trafficking, policing standards, and supported accommodation. We have been instrumental in supporting the compilation of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care (IRCSC) in particular, submitting several pieces to shape both the review and the Government's response to it, including helping to make sure there is an increased focus on teenagers and extra familial harm.
- We developed a new **child exploitation prevention e-learning product** aimed at the corporate sector. This will enable professionals to spot the signs of exploitation and act safely.



### Objective 3: Child poverty

We will fight to reduce child poverty, influencing policy and decision makers to make change happen.

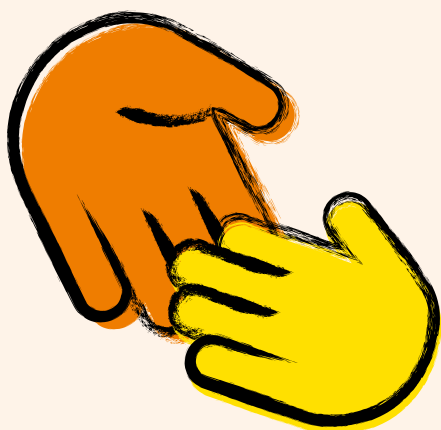
- Our **#ProtectEveryChildhood campaign** was based on first-hand accounts from young people's encounters of the benefits system, evidencing the effects of rising living costs and the need to keep benefits in line with inflation. Our political lobbying, media, and campaign communications helped make sure benefits were uprated in line with inflation (benefitting 11.3 million children in families whose benefits will be uprated). This demonstrates the power of lived experience in shaping public policy.
- Our **Strengthen the Safety Net campaign** helped to make an additional £500 million available to low income families in England through the Household Support Fund. A further £1 billion is committed for 2023/24, and removing ring fencing around pensions has freed up funding to support more families.
- We succeeded in influencing the **school census** through lobbying and the #YoungCarersCount campaign. This census now asks all young people about their caring responsibilities. This will help to raise awareness and improve understanding of the experiences of hundreds of thousands of young carers.
- We successfully rallied our supporters to write to their MPs and lobbied the Government to secure **permanent free school meals eligibility** for families with no recourse to public funds, and have developed and run training with schools across England to raise awareness of this. We estimate that this will benefit around 224,500 children in total. Our refugee and migrant services also gave targeted support to 233 children and young people.
- The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) listened to our Youth-Led Commission on Separated Children (YLCSC) and included their call for **independent guardians** in their recommendations to the UK Government. The YLCSC featured on The Children's Society's podcast, which was shared with 15,000 supporters.
- After several years of campaigning for **affordable school uniforms**, we successfully got the School Uniforms Bill passed into law. This came into effect in September 2022 and will benefit millions of children and their families. In 2022/23, we worked with Child Poverty Action Group and Children North East to equip schools to put the changes into action and 550 schools attended our webinar in May 2022.
- Our supporters wrote to 539 MPs urging them to attend the debate on the **Nationality and Borders Bill** and vote to protect children.



## Objective 4: Building a community

We will inspire, and grow, the community of people, uniting them to achieve our shared vision.

- We ran **15 supporter campaigns** on topics ranging from local welfare assistance and the cost of living to children's social care, and reached over 150,000 supporters. 4,337 supporters actively joined at least one of our campaigns.
- 73 people ran the **London Marathon** on behalf of The Children's Society, and 15 runners took part in the **Great North Run** – including six Anglican prison chaplains.
- We were supported by **70 committee and support groups**, and **71 active community volunteers** providing over 300 hours of activity.
- Last year saw the highest number of **Christingle services** held since the pandemic, with almost 1,800 events pages published on our website (up by more than 350 on 2021/22).
- We tested 27 new supporter and commercial prototypes during the year, and reviewed and improved our **e-commerce platforms**. We re-developed our online donation form templates and introduced mobile wallet payment.
- We were delighted to welcome **new corporate partners** including Kennedys Law LLP and Manchester Airport Group.



## Objective 5: Growth and sustainability

We will transform into one united TeamTCS where we each feel equipped, valued, and supported.

- We developed an organisation-wide **theory of change** to allow us to align our resources with our vision and objectives. We're currently developing an **impact measurement framework** to help us better capture, understand, and report our impact.
- We established a **youth voice hub** – an internal working group to improve the process of weaving young people's voices into all aspects of our work.
- We ran our first comprehensive **Your Voice survey** in May 2022 for staff and volunteers. This achieved a 75% response rate, and we also launched shorter pulse surveys to provide more regular updates on how we're doing.
- We initiated executive and management **development programmes**, and consolidated our learning opportunities into a learning and development catalogue.
- We launched our Growing Together initiative. This is designed to encourage **creative learning opportunities**, hear every voice, embrace innovation, and foster inclusivity.
- We produced a **pay gap report** and initiated work on our **pay and grading review**. Between 2018 and 2021, our median and mean pay gaps narrowed and last year both were better than the UK average of 15.5%.
- Our latest talent inclusion and diversity evaluation assessment shows a positive 15% increase over our 2021 evaluation, as various **equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives** have been introduced. For example, sharing an anti-racist statement of intent in the Youth Impact domain and reviewing our organisation dignity at work policy.
- We completed phases 3 and 4 of the introduction of our **CRM implementation**, giving improved supporter insight.
- We put in place an organisational **property strategy**.
- We developed an **impact fund** so that we can use a portion of our reserves to support targeted initiatives, boosting our impact on the lives of young people.
- In recognition of the impact of rising living costs, we provided support and a **one-off payment to staff** in January 2023.



## 2.2. The areas of work we prioritise and why

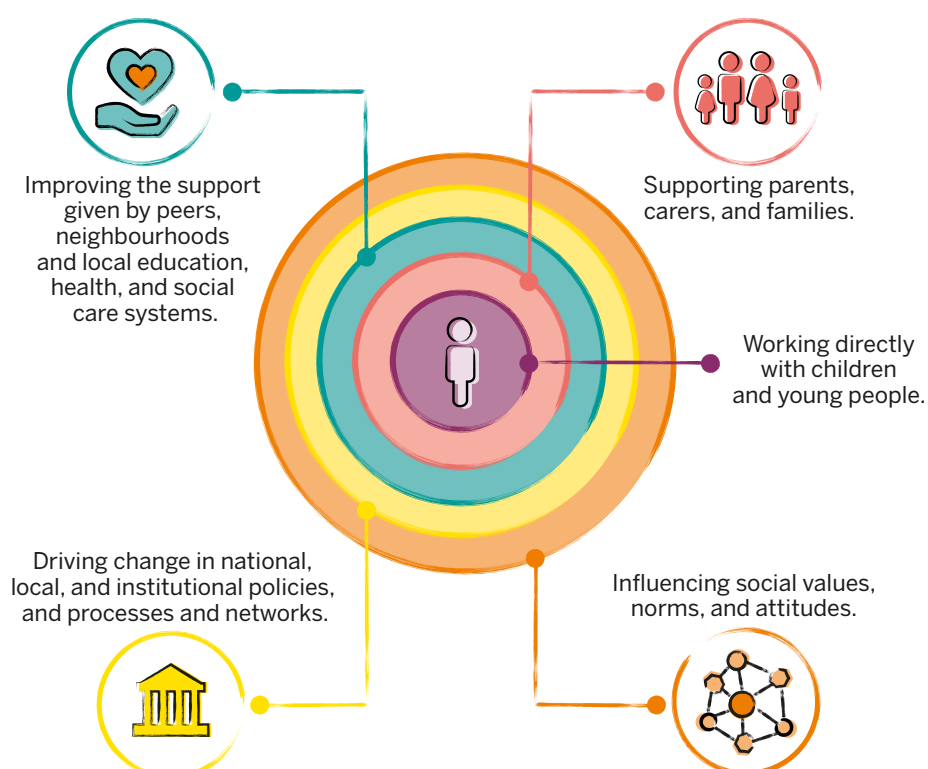
Our priority areas are emotional health and wellbeing, risk and vulnerability, and child poverty. In the following section, each priority area is explored in turn, highlighting our impact and the interconnections between each theme. No part of our work exists in isolation. For this report, we have segmented our services into our three priority areas, based on whether the services' key aims are to address one of these priority areas. However, it is important to remember that wellbeing is an important element of all our work, and all our services are likely to support people living in poverty.

**Figure 6.** Young people (n = 63,779) worked with through one-to-one and small group work and events, by priority area.

Priority area	No. of children and young people supported through one-to-one and small group work	No. of children and young people worked with through events	Total no. of young people worked with
Emotional health and wellbeing	5,605	43,281	48,886
Risk and vulnerability	2,482	9,498	11,980
Child poverty	1,340	1,017	2,357
Other	11	545	556
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,438</b>	<b>54,341</b>	<b>63,779</b>

**Figure 7.**

Five ways we impact children and young people and the systems surrounding them. These icons are used throughout the impact section of this report to show how we are making change in these areas.<sup>3</sup>



## How we measure impact

We measure the impact of our work in several different ways. This includes asking young people how they feel about different aspects of their lives at the beginning of our work with them and revisiting those topics after they have engaged with our services. We track these 'outcomes' using different tools, depending on what is most appropriate for the type and length of work we are doing with the young people in our services. In this report, we have reported changes in outcomes where before and after data are available for at least 25% of service users. This is based on the response rates that we typically see across our services.

We also use a feedback survey to ask young people about their experiences of our services, including how satisfied they are with the support they received. For this feedback survey, we have reported figures when at least 20% of service users have completed it. This is based on external trends in response rates to online surveys as well as our typical internal response rates.<sup>4</sup>

We know it's not always possible or appropriate to collect this data, but we are working hard to try and improve our impact measurement response rates. Tracking young people's progress in this way is crucial in helping us to understand how we're making a difference.

We also gather data about the reach of our work. Due to the complexity of the needs of some young people, in our total reach numbers there may

be occasional instances where an individual has been counted multiple times as a user of multiple services. When capturing demographic data, we aim to make sure that data reflects the young person's self-reported gender identity and ethnicity. However, sometimes this data may be incorrect or missing if only completed by the adult referring the young person into the service. We are working internally to improve the inclusivity of the questions we ask, as well as the completeness and accuracy of the data we collect, while ensuring we create a safe and validating experience for the young people we work with.

We understand the influence of our services through gathering feedback and speaking to stakeholders. For every one professional we work with, we estimate that approximately 35 young people could benefit from systemic change (based on estimates of how many young people professionals across different sectors come into contact within their work). This metric will be reviewed as part of the development of our impact measurement framework.

We further evaluate our impact through independent evaluations (for example, see our Checkpoint service on page 29 and our Prevention programme on page 40), as well as evaluations conducted by our internal team (for example, see our Climb service on page 38).

## 2.3. Emotional health and wellbeing

**In 2022/23:**

**18 emotional health**  
and wellbeing services

**5,605 children and young people** supported through one-to-one and small group work

**43,281 children and young people** worked with through events (for example, assemblies, workshops)

**1,609 parents and carers** supported through one-to-one and small group work

**3,030 professionals** reached by these services

**106,050 young people** estimated as reached through systems change work

Our emotional health and wellbeing services include long-term support, one-to-one therapy, group work, peer support, and drop-in services.



"I felt like I hadn't been heard before. Now, I have hope."

### What are emotional health and wellbeing?

Wellbeing is about how we're doing. It's about how we feel about our lives and ourselves. There are two different measures of wellbeing. Objective wellbeing focuses on social indicators of quality of life like health, education, and income. Subjective wellbeing is about personal experiences and an individual's own views of how they feel about their lives.

### Wellbeing and mental health – what's the difference?

Although there is a relationship between mental health and wellbeing, they are not the same thing. Some of us might have 'good' mental health, and some of us might experience mental health challenges, like depression or anxiety.

Our mental health affects how we think and feel and how we cope with stress and relate to others. It can also change throughout our lives. Some of us might experience mental health issues for a few months or a year; others might face more long-term challenges.

While our wellbeing can be affected by both our physical and mental health and vice versa, it can also be affected by other things happening in our lives. Some of us might have low subjective wellbeing but no symptoms of mental illness; others might have high subjective wellbeing alongside being diagnosed with a mental health condition.





## What do we know about children's emotional health and wellbeing?

Each year, we publish the Good Childhood Report, a piece of research into children's subjective wellbeing which centres on children's own views of how their lives are going.

Our Good Childhood Report 2022 found a continuing decline in trends in children's overall wellbeing.<sup>5</sup> A larger proportion of children we surveyed in 2022 were unhappy with school than with the other aspects of their lives they were asked about, and the pandemic's impact was laid bare – 11% of children indicated that they did not cope well with overall changes due to the Covid-19 pandemic.<sup>6</sup>

Every young person should be able to access support for their wellbeing and mental health as soon as they need it, but too often this is not the case. A 2022 survey by YoungMinds found that more than four in ten young people surveyed waited more than a month for support after seeking it and more than a third said they did not feel supported by their GP when trying to access support or advice.<sup>7</sup> Shockingly, more than one in four of the young people surveyed said they had tried to take their own life as a result of having to wait for help. This is unacceptable, and we urgently need to address this gap in support. Our services aim to improve young people's emotional and mental health and wellbeing, providing tailored, child-centred support when it's needed.

## What are the impacts of low wellbeing?

Low wellbeing has been found to be associated with how we feel about our relationships with family and friends, how we feel about the world, and how we interact with others. In the short term, it can make day-to-day life really difficult for young people, impacting their education, friendships, and more. It can have a significant long-term impact too, contributing to ongoing challenges in other areas of a young person's life.

## How does our work support young people's emotional health and wellbeing?

The following section gives some examples of how our emotional health and wellbeing services provide targeted, integrated, evidence-based interventions. This includes long-term, one-to-one therapy, group work, and more. Some of our services work in schools, colleges, or universities, while others engage with families and communities or provide support tailored to young people facing specific challenges. Our youth voice activity, meanwhile, works to include young people in key decisions. This influences and informs our work as an organisation.

All that we do seeks to improve children's wellbeing. In the next section on our work tackling risk and vulnerability, we'll show how our work to support children who are being exploited, for example, reduces risk of harm and helps young people to build positive relationships. Later, when exploring our work addressing child poverty, it's clear that our campaigning on benefits and local welfare assistance has addressed financial challenges that many families were facing.

### 2.3.1. Tailoring wellbeing interventions to children's needs

It's vital that we work together to provide tailored, holistic mental health and wellbeing support that is embedded within communities. We support government, local authorities, youth services, and schools to measure and boost wellbeing in communities, and work directly with young people and their families to offer targeted, child-centred interventions that look to improve wellbeing and give young people the tools they need to stay healthy.



#### The right support at the right time



Our **RISE** mental health support team (MHST)<sup>8</sup> is commissioned by the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board, the NHS, Health Education England (HEE), and the Department for Education's (DfE) Mental Health in Schools programme, and works in schools in Newcastle and Gateshead. It is integrated with local child and adult mental health services and works on a single point of access model to reduce waiting list times. Our trained education mental health practitioners (EMHPs) take a whole-school approach, working alongside education professionals and parents and carers to offer low intensity mental health support for children aged 5 to 18. This includes one-to-one support, group and drop-in sessions, assemblies, and digital resources.

In 2022/23, RISE directly supported 710 young people across 55 schools through one-to-one support and group work. We reached a further 27,857 children through wider school events. Outcomes data were available for 115 of the 163 (71%) young people who were supported by one-to-one work. After receiving support, 92% of these young people (106 out of 115) experienced improved outcomes relating to goals they set with their practitioner. 36 out of 37 young people who completed our feedback survey were satisfied with the support they received.



#### Looking forward

Wellbeing interventions should be based on evidence about children's thoughts and experiences. That's why we're piloting a wellbeing measurement tool with a school in Newcastle. Our practitioners are helping the school understand data on pupils' wellbeing and adapt their wellbeing provision in line with students' needs.



### A wraparound response: working with schools and partners



Recognising that schools are an important touchpoint where young people can access support, our **Checkpoint** team in Torbay has been piloting an evidence-based approach to support children and young people who are struggling with self-harm. This includes delivering dialectical behavioural therapy for adolescents in a school setting and facilitating workshops with young people on skills like describing and understanding their emotions and self-soothing.<sup>9</sup>

In 2022/23, this service supported 43 young people. An evaluation of this intervention, conducted by researchers at the National Institute

for Health Research and Care Applied Research Collaboration – South West Peninsula, found that using this therapy in a school setting had several benefits. Out of the 22 students for whom data were available, 17 said they self-harmed once a month or more before receiving treatment; after support, this was reduced to just 7 students. The evaluation also involved interviews with 7 young people, 16 members of school staff, and 1 parent. These indicated that students' interpersonal relationships also improved, through the development of emotional self-regulation and empathy. The intervention helped teachers to provide earlier, more timely support for children who might otherwise have experienced long NHS waiting times.

### Daniel's story

Growing up, Daniel had always been happy enough. He was doing well at school, and he enjoyed hanging out with his friends. But when he was a teenager, his mental health began to spiral. He didn't know how to cope, and he started taking drugs to try to numb the pain he was feeling. His dad, Sam, felt powerless as he watched his son become more and more unhappy. Feeling utterly shattered and broken down, Daniel took two overdoses in the space of a week and was hospitalised.

That's when Sam reached out to The Children's Society. When Daniel came home from hospital, he met with one of our specialist practitioners, Steve. At weekly sessions, Steve worked with Sam and Daniel to give them a framework to navigate what had happened and begin to heal. Because Daniel loved martial arts and yoga, Steve focused the sessions on learning about meditation and yoga, helping Daniel find new ways to cope. Sam joined a family support group too.

For Daniel, getting the right support was transformational. Now, he and his dad are looking forward to the future with hope. Because we take a holistic, child-centred approach, we were able to support Daniel in a way that was tailored to his needs – making the help he received more effective.

*"The sessions felt like they were meant to be in my life."*

Daniel



### Amplifying young people's voices



Listening to and amplifying the voices of young people is a vital part of our wellbeing work. Statistics from **The Good Childhood Report** continue to be used by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and are a key source in the DfE's annual State of the Nation report on children's wellbeing – our research influences policies and practice at the highest level.

- **3,449 downloads** of the full Good Childhood Report 2022 (from launch to 31 March 2023)
- More than **200 people joining** launch events across the country for the 2022 report
- **307 pieces of media coverage** when the report launched, including in The Guardian and The Independent and on Times Radio
- **372 mentions on social media** during the launch period.

As well as this, we provided **multiple consultation responses** relating to children's emotional health and wellbeing in 2022/23. For example, in February 2023, we collaborated with a health policy influencing group, coordinated by the National Children's Bureau, to provide feedback to the Hewitt Review, an independent review of integrated care systems. Using evidence from our direct practice, we highlighted that change is needed to ensure local mental health and wellbeing services work well for young people.

We were pleased to see the review's subsequent emphasis on cross-system collaboration to meet children's needs and removing health inequalities that begin in childhood, and their assertion that integrated care boards should clearly reference the needs of young people in their forward plans. We look forward to building on this work to make sure that children's voices are embedded in the practices of local health systems.



### Looking forward

In July 2022, we submitted a comprehensive response to the Department of Health and Social Care's (DHSC) consultation on their mental health and wellbeing plan,<sup>10</sup> both as The Children's Society and in coalition with the Fund the Hubs campaign. We included direct responses from young people, as well as evidence from our services and research.

Unfortunately, in January 2023 the Government announced that the mental health and wellbeing plan would be replaced by a broader major conditions strategy.<sup>11</sup> While we welcome the commitment that mental health issues will be tackled urgently alongside conditions such as cancer, we are concerned that this new strategy will be insufficient in meeting the level of change required or the support children and young people need for their mental health and wellbeing. While this new strategy is being developed, we will continue to work with civil servants and coalition partners to make the case for children's mental health.



### 2.3.2. Supporting children who have experienced abuse or trauma

Experiencing challenges like abuse and trauma can have a massive negative impact on young people's emotional health and wellbeing in both the short- and long-term. They might feel alone or afraid, not knowing who to talk to. They might be dealing with symptoms like flashbacks or panic attacks because of what's happened.<sup>12</sup> It's vital that they get the support they need.

Our skilled practitioners use a child-centred approach to support young people who have experienced complex trauma, including child sexual abuse and domestic violence. We have decades of experience in this space and are now growing our range of services to better support children who are living in a home with domestic violence.



#### Offering therapeutic support



Our Manchester **Resolve** service, commissioned by Manchester City Council, supports children and young people aged 5 to 18 who have experienced or witnessed domestic violence. Most of the young people referred to us still live in the home where domestic abuse is currently happening and need immediate support. Resolve aims to reduce the long-term impact of domestic violence and abuse on young people through psychosocial intervention, counselling, and play therapy.

In 2022/23, we supported 113 children and young people. Outcomes data were available for 80 young people (71% of all young people supported). 98% of these young people (78 out of 80) had improved outcomes, including reporting greater understanding of safety and healthy relationships and improved wellbeing. All 31 of the young people who completed our feedback survey were satisfied with the support they received, and we are delighted that this service now has confirmed funding support until March 2025.

We are now implementing a new service, **Resolve@**. Commissioned by the Home Office, Resolve@ delivers an early intervention model in Shropshire, Torbay, Merseyside, and Rochdale, providing brief therapeutic interventions immediately after an incident of domestic violence or abuse has been reported. This will help reduce the time young people spend waiting for help and their risk of experiencing traumatic distress.

A similar early intervention model has shown promise in our Checkpoint service. We have developed an evidence-based model to reduce waiting lists for support for children who have experienced sexual abuse, and ultimately delay and reduce the onset of post-traumatic stress. In 2022/23, we supported 128 children and young people. Out of the 35 young people for whom outcomes data are available, 27 experienced improved outcomes, including reduction in risk and improved mental health outcomes related to anxiety and depression.



### Here for families



In Nottingham, our **Safe Choices** service delivers trauma-informed support for young people who have been, or are at risk of being, sexually exploited or abused, and their families. It also raises awareness among parents and carers through group and one-to-one sessions, and practitioners attend multi-agency meetings, acting as advocates for young people within the social care system.

In 2022/23, Safe Choices supported 66 young people. Out of the 35 young people for whom data are available, 30 experienced improved outcomes, including improved knowledge about exploitation and improved wellbeing. 11 parents and carers received targeted help too, while 107 were supported through wider events.

### Natasha's story

Natasha works as an intensive support worker for The Children's Society, helping young people who are at risk of or who are being sexually exploited. For Natasha, the most important thing is building a strong relationship with the young people she supports – it can't be rushed.

One young person she worked with was very quiet and reluctant to talk. Natasha spent time getting to know her and tried to talk to her about online safety and consent. When the young person said she wasn't interested, Natasha told her she was allowed to leave whenever she liked. The young person did, and a similar thing happened the following week. But for Natasha, this was progress. The young person felt empowered not to have a conversation she didn't want to have and to assert herself. And it established a level of trust that made a huge difference as the young person's support continued.

Unpicking a traumatic situation and finding ways to keep a young person safe and help them move forward is a long and complicated process. Sometimes, progress might be difficult to see. Natasha makes sure that the young people she works with feel empowered to move at their own pace, giving them back a sense of autonomy and power. For young people who have experienced traumatic situations like sexual exploitation, this is really important.

“They need us to  
reassure them that they  
can recover from this.”

**Natasha**

### 2.3.3. Making sure young carers' voices are heard

Across the UK, there are thousands of young carers under the age of 18 looking after a friend or family member. Their extra responsibilities can have a big impact on their lives – making it more difficult for them to dedicate time to school, and to make friends or relax at home, all things they should be able to enjoy in their childhood.<sup>13</sup> Our work with young carers helps them to understand their rights and make time for school and fun. We also advocate for young carers, calling on professionals and government to address their needs.



#### Making young carers visible

The 2021 ONS census data reported there are approximately 120,000 young carers aged 5 to 17 in England;<sup>14</sup> however, we believe that this is a serious underrepresentation, as schools have never before been required to ask young people about their caring responsibilities. We were worried that many of them were missing out on support.

During the pandemic, we supported HitsRadio to launch the **#YoungCarersCount** campaign. This highlighted the experiences of young carers during lockdown and called for a child's carer status to be included in the school census. The school census is led by the DfE and collects information like pupil's background details, special educational needs, and educational history.

We are proud to say in 2022/2023, young carers were added to the school census return for the first time.<sup>15</sup> As data quality improves overtime, we believe this will give a much clearer picture of the numbers of young carers across England and how they're impacted by their caring responsibilities and should help to significantly improve the support they receive.





### Opportunities for participation

A young carer from our **Include** national participation group, supported by the Co-op Foundation, attended an afternoon tea reception at the House of Lords on the Young Carers Action Day, hosted by the Carers Trust. At the event, young carers gave speeches sharing their experiences and challenged MPs and peers to take action. One young carer who attended delivered a copy of an open letter to 10 Downing Street,<sup>16</sup> signed by more than 80 CEOs (including Mark Russell) and 300 professionals, parents, carers, and young carers.

*"Today was such an  
incredible experience.  
Thank you for the opportunity  
of a lifetime."*

### Young person

Every year, we run the **Young Carers Festival** with YMCA Fairthorne Manor. We were delighted to welcome over 800 young carers to the festival in 2022. The theme was 'Time to be me', with a focus on creating space for young carers to be themselves, have fun, and relax with their peers, and talk openly about the issues that are affecting them. The Children's Commissioner's office joined the festival as part of their research on family life and has since included the young carers' voices in the first part of their independent family review.<sup>17</sup>

2.4. Risk and vulnerability

In 2022/23:

31 risk services

2,482 children and young people supported through one-to-one support and small group work

9,498 children and young people worked with through events (for example, assemblies, workshops)

201 parents and carers supported through one-to-one support and small group work

18,102 professionals reached by these services

633,570 young people estimated as reached through systems change work

Services in this priority area work to tackle exploitation; provide return home interviews and support to children who go missing; or support children experiencing substance use, child sexual abuse, domestic abuse, or who are on the ‘edge of care’.



## What do we mean by risk?

When we talk about being at risk, we're referring to factors and situations that might threaten a child's safety. Across the UK, thousands of children are at risk of or already impacted by dangers like criminal and sexual exploitation, abuse, and neglect.<sup>18</sup> The Children's Society works to protect every childhood – both by providing services that help keep children safe, and by working to change systems and policies so that they protect young people more effectively.

## What do we know about the risks children are facing?

Right now, the threats to children's safety are growing. Last year, more than 400,000 children were identified as being in need in England, the highest number since 2018,<sup>19</sup> and research estimates around 500,000 children are sexually abused each year in England and Wales.<sup>20</sup>

More than 1 in 4 children live in poverty,<sup>21</sup> and the cost of living crisis is putting even more young people and their families at risk<sup>22</sup> – this, in turn, increases a young person's risk of harm from exploitation, abuse, or neglect.<sup>23</sup> Some groups of young people are facing additional pressures too. Care experienced children, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), minoritised communities, young refugees and migrants (often separated and unaccompanied), and those living in poverty are particularly at greater risk of exploitation.<sup>24</sup>

## What are the impacts of these risks?

Every young person has the right to safety. Experiencing child abuse and neglect can have significant negative long-term impacts, including higher rates of mental and substance use disorders in adulthood.<sup>25</sup> It's vital that children get the right support at the right time.

## How does our work impact the risks children are facing?

Our services offer young people targeted one-to-one support and group work activities, tailored to their individual needs. We help them to understand how to cope with what has happened, how to seek help, and ways that future risks can be reduced or prevented.

Alongside this, our political advocacy and influencing work is helping to challenge and improve the systems designed to protect young people. In 2022/23, as part of our work to influence the IRCSC, we joined together with six other children's charities to organise the #ItsOurCare day of action, which included care-experienced young people visiting parliament to share their lived experience.<sup>26</sup>

We have been calling for the IRCSC's final publication to reflect the issues faced by teenagers. This includes the need for long-term relationship-based support and help for adolescents experiencing complex needs, as well as better support during transitions to adulthood, for children in care, and for those on the edge of care.

We were pleased that our calls for change were heard. A focus on family help, extra-familial harm, and responses to teenagers were all included in the independent review and the Government's response to it, signalling a welcome shift in approach across policymakers.<sup>27</sup> We remain concerned that the new proposed strategy is not appropriately funded and is not moving at pace. We initiated a joint statement with other charities when the review was published and continue to seek to influence the government on this so that its recommendations are considered.

### 2.4.1. Protecting children from exploitation

We work to tackle exploitation at every stage. Our early intervention work with young people takes action to try and stop exploitation before it happens. Our prevention work fosters improved strategic responses from professionals and agencies when they're working with young people who have been or are at risk of being exploited. We also work to disrupt exploitation and raise awareness within communities, and our services are here for young people who have been exploited, providing tailored high intensity support.



#### Early intervention

Our **Climb** service provides early intervention support to young people at risk of harm from exploitation, and knife crime. It is commissioned by the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner and covers Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire, and Telford and Wrekin.



In 2022/23, project workers and volunteers provided tailored support to 261 young people aged 10 to 17, helping them to understand the risks from harm around them and get involved in positive, diversionary activities like sports, arts, or drama activities, vocational courses, or social clubs. These divert young people away from other things, helping to make it less likely that they will be harmed or exploited.

An internal evaluation<sup>28</sup> investigated the impact of the service on the 392 young people who had been supported since the service started in April 2020 until August 2022. These young people had better school attendance (recorded for 180 young people) and less involvement with the criminal justice system (recorded for 124 young people). Further outcomes data were available for 258 young people. Of these, 92% reported they felt better about at least one of: drugs and alcohol; wellbeing; safety; structure and education; behaviour and citizenship; and family. Nearly two-thirds (62%) reported increases

in three or more of these areas. Wellbeing showed the highest average increase.

*"When I first met the project worker, I didn't care about myself, I cared more about others. That improved after. It's given me a boost."*

**Young person**

Young people spoken to as part of the evaluation reported feeling more confident and listened to by the Climb staff. Partners and staff reported that the team also supports families and works to drive systemic change, participating in multi-agency work with local authorities and statutory services, training professionals, and collaborating with our national Disrupting Exploitation (DEx) programme to produce a school resource pack.<sup>29</sup> We are thrilled that Climb secured funding in 2022 to operate for a further two years and that a new family worker post will be introduced.

*"[The service manager] has been absolutely fundamental in helping [us] achieve some of our goals."*

**Partner**





## Promoting participation



Meanwhile, in North Yorkshire and York, **Hand in Hand** works with children and young people who are at risk of or who are being sexually or criminally exploited, as well as those that have been reported as missing from home or care on multiple occasions. In 2022/23, Hand in Hand worked directly with 39 young people. Out of the 21 young people for whom data are available, every young person experienced improved outcomes, including greater understanding of safety and improved wellbeing and physical health. An additional 128 young people attended events run by the service.

Hand in Hand also supported a group of young people to participate in other activities to direct The Children's Society's wider work, including:

**April  
2022**

engaging in our strategic project to develop an organisation theory of change.

**May to  
August 2022**

developing promotional material to grow Hand in Hand's reach.

**July  
2022**

sharing their views on education, poverty, safety, and more with Just for Kids Law and the Children's Rights Alliance for England to inform the UNCRC's five-yearly report.

**September  
2022**

presenting at a Good Childhood Report launch event, focusing on appearance and school.

**December  
2022**

involvement in recruitment of new staff for Hand in Hand, following interview training.

**March  
2023**

designing social media posts giving advice to other young people on how to handle common issues.

**To recognise their incredible contributions, we presented these young people with a Star Award at our Over the Rainbow event in July 2022.**



### #LookCloser to prevent exploitation



Our **Prevention** programme aims to transform the world around each child, encouraging members of the public, businesses, and professionals to play their part in keeping children safe and disrupting the ways in which exploiters operate. We bring together networks of stakeholders from a range of sectors across England and Wales to drive innovative practice, identify emerging issues, and upskill professionals.

This year, an external evaluation conducted by Habitus Collective<sup>30</sup> found that the programme nurtures leadership across the sector, extends the specialist expertise of prevention officers, and uses a relational approach to supports stakeholders to become system change makers. This helps stakeholders respond more effectively to exploitation at local and national levels.

The evaluation found that between September 2022 and February 2023, the programme engaged over 5,700 stakeholders. Of the 320 stakeholders who completed our feedback survey in this time period, 92% reported a change to their practice because of their work with the programme.

The programme also delivers the **#LookCloser** campaign in partnership with national policing. This engages professionals, the police, businesses, and the public through national learning sessions and wider campaigning. In 2022/23, 4,231 professionals, parents, and carers attended sessions and our #LookCloser campaign site had over 16,000 visits. The evaluation found that 93% of learning session participants said that their knowledge and understanding had improved. This is based on responses from 596 out of 1,449 attendees of the October 2022 #LookCloser programme of learning (41% response rate).

“[The Prevention programme team] are much further ahead of a lot of people in terms of raising the profile of exploitation. They work collaboratively to tackle exploitation.”

**Partner**





### A new way to support young people



There is a link between substance use and other risks young people face, like abuse or violence. For example, 23% of young people who entered drug and alcohol treatment services in England during 2021/22 had been affected by domestic abuse and 5% had faced child sexual exploitation.<sup>31</sup> We also know that we should be focusing on supporting substance users with treatment and helping to stop them from entering the criminal justice system.<sup>32</sup>

That's why since June 2022, our **Essex Young People's Drug and Alcohol Service (EYPDAS)** has been collaborating with Essex Police and their youth justice team to pilot an early intervention approach that aims to direct young people away from the use of substances and wider associated risks of harm.

This project gives young people who have come into contact with the police due to having been found with a small amount of cannabis for personal use an opportunity to engage with EYPDAS as an alternative to charge and conviction. By offering early intervention, education, and links to other services, we're helping young people access vital support. We trained 130 police officers on how to refer young people into this pathway and worked to address the stigma associated with people who use drugs or alcohol.

So far, we have supported 17 young people. For the 12 young people for whom we have captured outcome data, 12 experienced improvements in at least one of the key outcome areas examined: mental and emotional health, safety, hopes and dreams, having my say, where I live, education, family or carers, friends, and physical health. The project also helps parents and carers via family support groups.

“Having you there has made a world of difference to me to be able to discuss any issues and truly feel supported.”

**Parent**





### Making school work for children with special educational needs and disabilities



In July 2022, we submitted a response to the DfE's **SEND review consultation** on the SEND and alternative provision green paper, making sure we represented children's intersectional experiences. We highlighted the link between SEND, school exclusions, and the risk of exploitation, as well as the impact of having no recourse to public funds. The Government's response in March 2023<sup>33</sup> emphasised early help, reducing exclusions, and co-production with children and families – all of which were core to our response.

Our DEx programme, which works in Greater Manchester, Birmingham, and London, is undertaking systems change work to address the link between school exclusions and

exploitation. As part of this, in November 2022, we published a report on youth voice, SEND, and exclusions,<sup>34</sup> amplifying the experiences and recommendations of 22 young people with SEND in North London who had experienced school exclusions. 710 people have since read the report, while 66 parents, carers, and professionals attended our first two webinars, in which we shared the findings and sign-posted further support. All of the 16 parents who responded to our feedback survey said they understand what support is available to them.

*“As the safeguarding governor, I will definitely challenge the school on their exclusion policies and what support they provide for parents.”*

**Webinar attendee**



### Working in partnership to influence national responses

The **Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) support programme** was commissioned by the DfE in 2019 and was delivered by The Children's Society in a consortium with Research in Practice and the University of Bedfordshire. In the fourth year of the programme, we developed our multi-agency practice principles. These are rooted in the collective expertise of children, young people, parents, carers, and professionals, as well as extensive research and consultation. The principles focus on cultivating an environment that is conducive to thoughtful action and continuous learning – where every child feels respected and valued. The principles emphasise the need for adaptability and advocate for a strengths-based, holistic approach.<sup>35</sup>

More than 750 professionals and 240 children, young people, parents, and carers from across England took part in consultation sessions, offered feedback, and supported the development of the principles. It was a privilege to hear and learn from so many people who had been affected by child exploitation and extra-familial harm and we are pleased to say that the principles are now non-statutory guidance. They have cross-government support from the Home Office, DHSC, and the Ministry of Justice and have the potential to make a real difference for young people. We look forward to supporting organisations to consider adopting these principles in their work.





### Looking ahead

Child criminal exploitation, when a child is groomed and exploited into criminal activity, is not currently defined in legislation. Too often, children who are forced into crime are treated as offenders rather than as victims of exploitation at a time when they desperately need support.

We have been working individually and as part of a coalition of children's services to influence the **Victims and Prisoners Bill**, pushing for the statutory definition of child criminal exploitation to be included in the bill. We will continue this work as the bill goes through Parliament.

### Katie's story

When Katie started secondary school, it was a really exciting time. Her friendship group changed and got bigger, and she started using different social media channels and visiting new websites to keep in touch with them. But she didn't realise that some of the things she was seeing and the people she was talking to were putting her in danger. It was only when the police came to talk to her that her family understood what was happening.

The police put Katie in touch with The Children's Society and she met Sophia, one of our project workers. Sophia talked to Katie about what she was feeling and what had happened. And she told Katie about a group where she could meet other young people in her community.

*"The Children's Society puts hope back into children."*

### Katie

There, Katie found a new confidence. With The Children's Society support, she was able to enjoy new experiences and opportunities, taking on challenges she never thought she'd be capable of. Now, she's looking forward to her future.





## 2.4.2. Improving support for children who go missing from home or care

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**2,549 return home** interviews have been conducted with **630 children and young people** across our services in 2022/23. Many young people who go missing from home experience multiple missing episodes and therefore have multiple return home interviews.

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Every year, thousands of children and young people across the UK go missing or run away from home or care. Some young people go missing as a result of coercion and control;<sup>36</sup> for others, going missing is a response to being unhappy in their care placements or feeling unsafe at home.<sup>37</sup> When they go missing, they can quickly find themselves in incredibly dangerous situations and even after they return to home or care, they frequently go missing again. We work with young people and their families to help them find positive alternatives.

We also work alongside our partners at Missing People to provide the joint secretariat for the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on missing children and adults. This seeks to raise awareness of the issues faced by children and adults who go missing and their families. Here, and across other partnerships, we work collaboratively to improve local authority, multi-agency, and national responses, making sure that the support children receive is appropriate, timely, and effective.



### Here to listen, here to help

In August 2022, we launched our new **Safeguarding Children at Risk – Protection and Action** (SCARPA) service in Bradford, funded by Bradford City Council. This helps young people who go missing from home or care by offering them a return home interview. These can help a young person access vital support, reducing the risk that they will go missing again.

Since launch, the service has completed 458 return home interviews for 117 young people, providing additional one-to-one support for 93 of these young people. Outcomes data were available for 43 out of 93 of these young people (46%). Of these, 41 said their interview had helped them learn more about their personal safety. 42 out of 43 found their interview helpful.



### No child left behind



In partnership with the NWG Network, we developed the **benchmarking tool for missing and exploited children**,<sup>38</sup> based on our own research into the experiences of children who go missing.<sup>39</sup> This tool helps local safeguarding partnerships and similar multi-agency groups assess their responses to missing children holistically, providing a framework for discussing how things can be done differently by working together. Most importantly, it centres children's experiences.

Since its February 2021 launch, 61 local authorities in England have interacted with the tool. They have used it to improve police call handlers' scripts, develop training for schools, improve referral pathways, develop better systems for sharing information, and more.

Additionally, since the publication of our 2017 report *The Knowledge Gap*,<sup>40</sup> we have listened to and collaborated

with young people to influence the Welsh Government to improve their responses to children who go missing. According to our most recent figures, 3,500 children went missing almost 12,000 times in 2019/20 in Wales.<sup>41</sup>

Thanks in large part to our lobbying efforts, in December 2022, the Welsh Government announced that it would commission its own research into current arrangements for when children and young people go missing. We contributed to this research in February 2023, sharing young people's views that return home interviews should be offered to all children who have gone missing in Wales. In its recommendations (published May 2023), the Welsh Parliament's Children, Young People and Education Committee expressed its support for our call for more consistent provision across Wales and recommended that the Welsh Government respond to concerns that we have raised.<sup>42</sup>

## 2.5. Child poverty

### In 2022/23:

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**24 services** that work to address child poverty

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**1,340 children and young people** supported through one-to-one and small group work

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**1,017 children and young people** worked with through events (for example, assemblies, workshops)

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**206 parents and carers** supported through one-to-one and small group work

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**739 professionals** reached by these services

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**25,865 young people** estimated as reached through systems change work

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Services in this priority area include those that support refugee and migrant young people; provide advocacy and independent visiting services; offer family support; provide housing and crisis support; or support young carers. Note that the number of young people supported reflects those who were supported by services primarily tackling child poverty, not the total number of young people we support who are living in poverty. We are working on a project concerned with estimating the number of young people supported by our services who are living in poverty, which will inform our future work.

### What is child poverty?

When a child grows up with limited or no access to the essential resources they need to survive and live a healthy, happy life, this is child poverty. In 2022, essentials like transport, food, electricity, and basic household items all became more expensive and this trend has continued. The cost of living crisis has put thousands of families at risk of being pushed into poverty and created huge additional pressures for families that were already struggling. In May to June 2022, 7 million low-income households across the UK were reported to be going without at least one essential (such as a warm home, enough food, clothing, or basic toiletries).<sup>43</sup>

### What do we know about child poverty?

According to the latest figures, more than 1 in 4 children in the UK are living in poverty.<sup>44</sup> And some young people and their families are more at risk than others – poverty is driven by and drives inequalities. Children living in lone-parent families, for example, are more likely to face poverty, as are those from minoritised communities and children living in larger families.<sup>45</sup> And our experience contradicts the claim that work provides a route out of poverty for many families. In 2021/22, 71% of children growing up in poverty in the UK (after housing costs) lived in a household where at least one person is in employment.<sup>46</sup>

More than 5,000 unaccompanied children applied for asylum in the UK in 2022/23, arriving alone and without support.<sup>47</sup> As of the end of 2021, at least 224,576 children under age 18 are expected to have no recourse to public funds (NRPF) in the UK based on their visa status, meaning that they can't access most state-funded benefits.<sup>48</sup> It is likely, too, that all these figures significantly underrepresent the reality. As well as this, growing up in poverty can drive future inequalities, as outlined below.

### What are the impacts of child poverty?

Living in poverty can put young people at increased risk of a range of issues. It increases the risk of mental health problems and can be both a causal factor and a consequence of mental ill health.<sup>49</sup> Save the Children states that a third of children living in poverty will fall behind with their education; even at the age of five, children in England living in lower income households show significant differences in achievement at school when compared with those from better off households.<sup>50</sup> Minoritised communities may be at particular risk as they often face additional challenges alongside the pressures caused by poverty.<sup>51</sup> And health outcomes in the UK are affected too.<sup>52</sup>

### How do we support young people who are dealing with poverty?

Often, we meet children at our services who are seeking support with a particular issue and whose challenges are compounded by living in poverty. None of our areas of work exist in a vacuum, and our responses recognise this.

While most of our services do not specifically offer the kinds of support typically associated with poverty relief, like food parcels or fuel vouchers, the help that we provide frequently helps young people to deal with the physical and psychological challenges associated with living in poverty. We are currently running a research pilot to explore how poverty is a factor within our services and understand how we can better respond to it.

Our Give Hope platform ([givehope.uk](https://givehope.uk)) allows our supporters to donate funds for specific items that young people need like supermarket vouchers, hygiene packs, or education supplies. Our services identify who needs this support and make it happen. Some of these funds are also allocated in partnership with Team Gold, a group of young people who have previously used our services. This year, Team Gold awarded £6,448 in 'golden tickets' to 82 young people who are working with our services, enabling them to access essentials like food parcels and wellbeing support like sports memberships.

Our political advocacy and influencing work has made a significant difference too. For example, our #ProtectEveryChildhood campaign and work with other charities contributed to an uprating of benefits in line with inflation. This has supported families to stay afloat, impacting as many as 11.3 million children in families in England, Scotland, and Wales receiving benefits.<sup>53</sup> We also work specifically to address the challenges faced by refugee and migrant children and young people and their families.

### 2.5.1. Supporting families through the cost of living crisis

In 2022/23, the cost of living crisis pushed families to the brink. Incomes and means of financial support aren't keeping pace with the cost of living, and the pressure on families, parents, carers, and the services that support them has been extreme. Already, more than 1 in 4 children in the UK are living in poverty<sup>54</sup> and it is vital that we act to protect them.



#### Protecting every childhood

Launched in late 2022, our cross-cutting **#ProtectEveryChildhood** campaign aimed to support families who were struggling by influencing social norms and attitudes, as well as policies, processes, and networks.



We polled 2,000 parents and carers in the UK to understand the impact of the cost of living crisis on their financial security and how this was affecting their children. Based on our findings, we called on the Government to uprate benefits in line with inflation and help families avoid a real terms cut in income. With many families already struggling to afford the essentials, a lower uprating would have threatened to push thousands of families into poverty across the UK,<sup>55</sup> devastating young people's wellbeing.



*"I have sacrificed everything.  
I've given up college. My family  
can't survive unless I get a job, they  
need the money for us to survive."*

**Young carer**

We worked with other charities, including the Trussell Trust, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Save the Children, Child Poverty Action Group, Action for Children, and StepChange, to highlight the impact a limited increase would have had, and mobilised our supporters to raise the issue with their MPs. Collectively, they took 1,178 actions, emailing 590 MPs (which is over 90% of all MPs) and calling on Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to keep his promise via Twitter. Together, we secured benefits being uprated in line with inflation, helping 11.3 million children in families in England, Scotland, and Wales whose benefits will now be uprated.<sup>56</sup>

Our lobbying also secured an increase by inflation to the benefits cap for one year. Our efforts mean that nearly 114,000 families in England, Scotland, and Wales<sup>57</sup> whose benefits were frozen under this cap can now also benefit from the uprating of benefits, and even more families were saved from reaching this cap in the first place.





## Improving support for families

Between April 2022 and March 2023, we coordinated a group of charities for the **Strengthen the Safety Net campaign**, aiming to bolster local welfare assistance by making the Household Support Fund permanent.



We engaged with politicians and officials by publishing joint briefings and meeting with key officials from the Department for Work and Pensions. And we drew on insights from our **Coordinated Crisis Support programme**<sup>58</sup> (which worked in Tower Hamlets, Norfolk, Swansea, and Oldham) to make the case for changes to the Household Support Fund guidance, giving local authorities more scope to target need and offer wraparound support. Thanks to our supporters' efforts, 412 councillors signed a letter to the chancellor asking him to invest in and strengthen the Household Support Fund.

Our work led to the Household Support Fund being extended for a further year, securing an additional £1.5 billion for families in England facing crisis. Removing ring-fencing for pensioners has freed up £140 million to be potentially spent on young people. If all of this was spent on young people, as many as 2.3 million additional families could benefit.<sup>59</sup>

We are continuing to push for permanent funding, but are proud to have helped to secure more than £3 billion in funding for families since the beginning of the pandemic.



### Naomi's story

Naomi has been living on her own since she was 16. Until recently, she had always had enough but as the cost of living crisis worsened, everything changed. She felt suffocated with the stress, panicking about how she was going to survive each month. She simply didn't have enough to cover the basics.

That's when she turned to her support worker, Tina, at The Children's Society for help. Naomi felt embarrassed about needing to ask for support and it took a lot of courage to admit she was struggling. But Tina reassured her. She told Naomi about Give Hope, a pot of money that young people can apply to for things they need. Naomi applied for a supermarket gift voucher and used it to feed herself for a month.

*"The Children's Society has always been there for me. They have been the one constant in my life."*

**Naomi**

For Naomi, asking for help was difficult but how Tina spoke to her really influenced what the experience was like – the bad feelings Naomi was having about herself disappeared. There was less weight on her shoulders. Naomi feels grateful that her problem was resolved, but she wants others to know that change is needed, now. No one should be forced to choose between keeping warm and keeping a roof over their head.



## 2.5.2. Advocating for refugee and migrant children

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**233 children and young people** supported through one-to-one support and small group work in our refugee and migrant services.

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When young refugees arrive in the UK, they can face huge challenges. After long, often harrowing journeys to an unfamiliar country, they are faced with a complex and potentially retraumatising immigration process. Sometimes, they arrive alone, without knowing the language or how things work, and it can be difficult for them to access the essentials like food or housing. Through services like Helping Further (explored below), as well as our EU Settlement Scheme programme and Appropriate Adult provision, we offer a range of support to children and families.



### Support for children and their families



**Helping Further** is funded by Islamic Relief and works in the West Midlands. We offer legal advice and advocacy, helping families to secure their immigration status and other rights and to access housing, healthcare, opportunities to socialise, and financial support. In 2022/23, our immigration advice drop-ins helped 934 people from 274 families – twice the number of people anticipated, showing the real need for work in this area.

We also supported 37 families experiencing destitution this year, including their 87 young dependents, helping them to access public funds and receive waivers from immigration visa fees. Shockingly, the immigration visa application process can cost at least £7,054 for a family of three.<sup>60</sup> We also observe families being charged more than £1,000 in legal fees. The families we work with often have essential expenditure of more than £2,000 per month, and many are forced into debt to cover these fees and basic expenses. For a family that faces all these costs, we estimate that our work can stop them going nearly £20,000 further into debt over six months.

We have also continued to work to change systems, partnering with voluntary organisations like Brushstrokes, Praxis, and The Unity Project, and sharing knowledge about the immigration and asylum processes. Alongside this, our six-year partnership with Wahegru Foundation helped us to provide Christmas gifts this year for more than 20 families who have been supported by Helping Further, as well as more families across our other services in the Midlands.



### Boosting access to the essentials

We have seen success in our efforts to make sure that children and young people with no recourse to public funds receive **free school meals**. Our campaigning in the early days of the pandemic led to these children temporarily being eligible for free school meals – but we knew that wasn't enough. So, 18,000 of our supporters wrote to the then Education Secretary in August 2021 calling for access to free school meals to be made permanent for this group, and we continued to lobby for this until it was confirmed in April 2022 – a significant campaigning win which we estimate will benefit around 224,500 children who have no recourse to public funds in the UK.<sup>61</sup> Since this change was confirmed, in 2022/23, we have been making sure that this is implemented properly, writing to local authorities and schools and running a session for 84 schools on how to identify eligible children and young people.



### Empowering young people to create change



The **Youth-led Commission on Separated Children** (YLCSC) is a group of young people who all arrived in the UK as minors and were supported by The Children's Society. Now, they use their experiences of the asylum and social care systems to fight for improved support for unaccompanied young asylum seekers and refugees – in particular, they're campaigning for every unaccompanied young person to receive a legal guardian to help them understand their rights and navigate the immigration process.

In June 2022, the YLCSC members helped to create our Society newsletter,<sup>62</sup> to mark refugee week. The newsletter is shared with 142,000 supporters and the YLCSC's articles focused on sharing their experiences and what they believe needs to change. They also took part in a podcast about systems change created by The Children's Society, which was shared with 15,000 of the charity's supporters.<sup>63</sup>

*"The immigration system makes it hard for young people to heal. The Children's Society knows that we need time to process what has happened to us."*

**YLCSC member**

A big win this year has been the Home Office incorporating and piloting the YLCSC's suggestions for how to improve young people's asylum interviews. Refreshed training has now been provided to the Home Office's business-embedded trainers and they are working internally to map out a delivery plan. These changes will represent a big change in how children are supported.

In June 2022, the YLCSC put their case for guardianship support to the Children's Commissioner for England, followed by the Supporting Refugee and Asylum Seekers Conference in January 2023, the UNCRC in February, and the Commission for the Integration of Refugees in March. Thanks to this influencing in 2022/23, the UNCRC has since included the call for independent guardians in their recommendations to the UK Government, a fantastic result for the YLCSC's tireless campaigning.<sup>64</sup>



### Looking forward

Since July 2021, the Home Office has placed unaccompanied children seeking asylum in hotels rather than directly into local authority care, putting them outside the UK's child protection and welfare frameworks. We have warned repeatedly that these children face significant risks – our chief executive met directly with a Home Office minister to express our concerns.

In January 2023, news broke that more than 200 young asylum seekers had been reported as missing from Home Office hotel placements. We acted as advocates during age assessments for 22 unaccompanied young asylum seekers who had been placed in hotels, joined a public statement and sector letter, wrote a parliamentary briefing, and more. In 2023/24, we will continue to push to make sure that children seeking asylum receive the protections they need.

We also continued to work on the Nationality and Borders Bill, which was passed in late April 2022. During the final stages, we called for a specific amendment that would protect child victims of modern slavery and exploitation more effectively, rallying more than 1,400 of our supporters to write to their MPs. While the amendment did not pass in its entirety, we did succeed in getting the Government to exclude children from the negative impacts of one of the bill's provisions. After the bill was passed, we continued to engage with the Home Office and updated our practitioners. In March 2023, the Government tabled the Illegal Migration Bill, and we will continue to work with our partners in 2023/24 to make sure young people's voices are heard and their rights protected at all stages.



### Musa's story

Musa arrived in the UK when he was 17, alone and frightened. He had been forced to leave his home country quickly and had nothing but his identity papers with him. Not knowing what to do, he went to the police station and social services were called. They supported him to claim asylum, appointed a social worker for him, and found Musa a place to stay in a local hostel. He enrolled in his local college and was starting to build a new life – but poor legal advice meant that his application for asylum failed.

Musa's hostel told him about a youth club run by one of The Children's Society's refugee and migrant support services. There, he met one of our project workers, who supported him to find the right legal representation. He made friends, too, and found a network of support. Within months, he had been granted the right to remain in the UK.

Today, Musa is a qualified barrister and plans to specialise in immigration law. He wants to go to work every day knowing that he can help people, and he's also part of a campaigning group that is calling for independent guardians, who will provide consistent support for unaccompanied children that arrive in the UK.



*"It's because of  
The Children's Society  
that I am here today."*

Musa

# 3. Our future plans

We have big plans for the next two years, as we continue to step up the fight for a society that works for all children and reverse the damaging decline in children's wellbeing. This year, we developed our theory of change, allowing us to align our resources effectively with our vision and objectives. We are currently working on our impact measurement framework, with the goal of better capturing, understanding, and reporting on our impact – as well as using this to inform our future work. We are working continuously to evolve our approach to impact so that it is as effective as possible and know that this is a multi-year journey, as is our path towards our goal. We are committed to remaining flexible and agile, so that we can respond to changing external contexts and meet children's needs at every stage.

Our objective	Intended outcomes
We will work with children and young people (and others who support them) to create meaningful, innovative ways to respond to the early signs of low wellbeing.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is an active, growing network of external strategic partners, speaking as one and driving change in response to the decline in children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.</li> <li>2. We have co-designed an open access, early intervention wellbeing service with young people, and will be launching the pilot in Newham in 2023, with a view to scaling the service nationally in the coming years.</li> <li>3. A national government children's strategy (including a measure of children and young people's wellbeing) is in place.</li> <li>4. We have improved accessibility for ongoing emotional wellbeing support to improve long-term wellbeing in children and young people, aligned with our anti-racist practice aspirations.</li> </ol>

<p>We will actively challenge and change ineffective systems that fail to protect children from abuse and harm.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We have a balance of risk services aligned to and measured through our impact framework.</li> <li>2. We will continue to collaborate to influence the implementation of all the recommendations for child victims of child sexual abuse identified in IICSA's report.</li> <li>3. Through a youth-informed approach, we will have influenced the direction of the outcomes of the Care Review.</li> <li>4. A comprehensive network of key strategic partners is in place to establish an effective and integrated response to protect young people from abuse and harm.</li> <li>5. The Children's Society identifies, encourages, and consolidates good practice across the sector, facilitated through our networks.</li> </ol>
<p>We will fight to reduce child poverty, influencing policy and decision makers to make change happen.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Our poverty work is youth-influenced and research- and evidence-based.</li> <li>2. We have nurtured and strengthened strategic partnerships to bring about long-term change.</li> <li>3. We are a model employer to support any our people who may be experiencing hardship.</li> <li>4. We have impacted poverty through advocacy and improved access to services and support.</li> <li>5. We have strengthened awareness to professionals of policy change to reduce poverty in their communities.</li> </ol>
<p>We will inspire and grow the community of people, uniting to achieve our shared vision.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The voices and needs of children are being prioritised in key policy changes.</li> <li>2. Young people are heard and valued through positive social conversations.</li> <li>3. Positive consideration of The Children's Society has grown.</li> <li>4. More supporters are taking more action through The Children's Society.</li> <li>5. The Children's Society is operating a surplus budget as our income grows exponentially year-on-year.</li> </ol>

<p>We will transform into one united TeamTCS where we each feel equipped, valued, and supported.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The Children's Society's theory of change and impact framework are active, with all activities aligned to deliver against our impact priorities.</li><li>2. We have delivered positive impact against our people experience framework and are creating the right conditions for all people to feel included and to thrive.</li><li>3. We have financial stability and a long-term plan for growth and sustainability.</li><li>4. We have the right skills in the right roles at the right time to be able to deliver our strategy.</li><li>5. All practice across the organisation is safe and delivered to a high standard.</li></ol>
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## Our key performance indicators

We use a selection of key performance indicators to track our progress against our strategic objectives. This table presents our progress this year in comparison to our targets for 2022/23, as well as our past performance in 2021/22. We have used these metrics alongside our future goals and known commitments to set targets for 2023/24.

**Figure 8.** Actual and target key performance indicators for years 2021 to 2024.

Impact plan KPIs*	2021/22 actual	2022/2023 target	2022/2023 actual	2023/24 target
<b>Our work with young people</b>				
Directly impacted young people**	55,494	57,500	63,779	51,274
Systems reach†	738,220	565,250	863,555	259,210
No. of policy impacts††	9,057,570	400,000	14,081,576	400,000
No. of young people providing insight in young participation activities^	3,596	3,500	3,410	3,500
<b>Growing our supporter base</b>				
Number of active supporters	127,000	142,400	135,580	130,000
Brand consideration^^	n/a	45%	17.8%	19%
In-year billing of restricted income (£,000s)	£11,853	£11,100	£12,613	£12,500
Gross unrestricted income (£,000s)	27,195	£27,100	£26,982	£28,801

\* We have used metrics of indirect reach to guide our strategy, but we recognise they are estimates that are based on assumptions and approximations. We will be reviewing and improving upon these metrics as part of our project to develop an impact measurement framework.

\*\* This refers to the number of young people directly supported by our services, through one-to-one support, small group work or through events like assemblies or workshops. Commissioned contracts require fewer events in the coming year, leading to a reduction in the number of directly impacted young people on 2022-23. Our extended target is 57,427 young people impacted.

† This refers to the number of young people we estimate will be impacted by our systems change work, which is calculated as the number of professionals we worked with multiplied by 35, which we estimate to be an approximate average number of young people that professionals across different sectors meet through their work. Our target is a conservative reach figure based on expected activity. However, additional invites to events and/ or involvement in as yet unscheduled campaigns could increase this figure significantly.

†† This measure may be replaced once the impact framework is finalised and in place.

^ For 2022/23, this metric is a total of all attendees across 376 youth participation activities. Some young people may have participated in multiple events, and therefore it is possible that some individual young people are counted twice.

^^ Brand consideration looks at how many of those people who are aware of an organisation would consider donating to an organisation.



## 4. Financial review

The financial year ending 31 March 2023 represents the first full year performance which has been free from the direct impacts of Covid-19 and the organisation has been able to see how the business model performs in a post Covid-19 world. The war in Ukraine, the rate of inflation, and the cost of living crisis brought new challenges to navigate, as well as difficult market conditions for investments. Despite this, retail performed very well, as did legacy income. This helped total income increase to £43.4 million (2022: £36.7 million). Expenditure also increased but was contained within budget despite cost rises to £40.0 million (2022: £37.9 million).

This represents a net operating gain of £3.4 million (2022: £1.2 million deficit) before any finance costs or other gains and losses. This was a great achievement, as the net operating surplus was able to sufficiently cover the investment losses, allowing a net surplus of £2.6 million (2022: £1.04 million).

### 4.1. Income

The Children's Society has continued to benefit from the generosity of individuals, businesses, and charitable bodies. Details of the amounts received in grants are shown in note 24 to the accounts; corporate sponsors of The Children's Society are listed in our 'thank you' list at the end of this report.

Legacy income doubled this year with £10.8 million (2022: £5.3 million), representing an increase of £5.5 million (2022: increase £0.98 million). These donations are acts of generosity from supporters and we are still experiencing some delays with the probate office. We continue to appreciate the potential for legacy income to fluctuate but remain confident that it will remain a solid source of income over the near future.

Retail sales generated £11.3 million in the year, and just under £12 million when we include the related gift aid attributed to retail sales. This is a £1.34 million increase from prior year (2022: £9.9 million). This was a direct result of our retail network's continued efforts to build on the full year of trading in the previous year. Our retail shops can only run with the help of committed volunteers who are led by professional management. Together, they provide a local link in over 100 towns and cities across England and Wales. The number of The Children's Society retail shops was 104 shops (2022: 102).

This year, our income from our unique Christingle events generated £0.73 million (2022: £0.54 million) while our dedicated house box groups gave us £0.98m from their collections (2022: £1.2 million). Other donations which include gift aid increased to £6.6m

(2022: £6.3 million). Although the donations remain lower compared to a few years ago, our supporter base remains committed and strong in continuing to support The Children's Society into the future.

Government grants this year were nil (2022: £0.2 million). Last year represented the final grants in relation to the furlough scheme.

Income from charitable activities was slightly higher than last year, bringing in £12.85 million (2022: £12.7 million). This income is used to continue to deliver critical services to young people using a variety of approaches. These include digital resources and using youth voice to help advocate and push for changes in governmental and societal systems. Contract funding is provided by national and local government, police and crime commissioners, and the NHS. Our grant income has continued to benefit from the long-standing relationship with the Big Lottery Fund as we have continued with our national programme to disrupt child exploitation and improving our digital capabilities in our practice base. We continue to adopt virtual and online interactions with young people in our practice work alongside traditional methods as part of a blended offer that we continuously aim to improve.

### 4.2. Expenditure

Our biggest item of expenditure is staff costs. These were £24.98 million (2022: £24.1 million). Our payroll costs have increased from last year by £0.8 million or 3.4%, in direct correlation with our increase in the average number of full-time equivalent staff employed throughout the year. More details can be seen in

note 10 in the accounts. We also made a one-off payment of £500 in January 2023 to every employee on payroll to assist them through the winter and peak of inflation.

We continue to invest in our supporter engagement, community fundraising and the direct costs of fundraising slightly increased by £0.2 million to £4.9 million (2022: £4.7 million). This expenditure allows us to attract new supporters and provide new innovative fundraising solutions to our existing supporter base. The direct cost of the retail network increased to £9.04 million (2022: £8.57 million), which was a combination of inflationary costs and an increase in retail activity in line with the increase in income. Retail was able to produce a £2.3 million contribution towards the organisation's activities before allocating support costs and excluding gift aid donations, representing a 20.2% gross margin (2022: £1.42 million, 14% gross margin).

The direct cost of providing support to young people decreased from last year by £0.66 million to £11.6 million (2022: £12.3 million). Direct costs of changing governmental and societal systems reduced by £0.1 million to £5.1 million (2021: £5.2 million).

Support and governance costs are higher than the prior year at £9.36m (2022: £7.1 million). Within support costs, we have continued to invest in our organisational design, as well as our information systems. This will support greater organisational effectiveness and agility to help us deliver our strategy and 2030 goal.

### 4.3. Fixed assets

During the year we have continued to invest in appropriate technology across the whole organisation. We undertook a review of asset classification and introduced an intangible assets category for software developments.

### 4.4. Investments

At 31 March 2023, The Children's Society held £39.5 million of investments (2022: £41.7 million) comprising general and endowment funds invested in a well-diversified range of short to long-term investments, as well as investment land and buildings. The investment market strategy is to mitigate risk by diversifying the portfolio across several investment managers, who themselves are investing in a diverse range of assets. A significant proportion of these are intentionally inversely correlated in their risk profile. Last year was a difficult year in the markets for most investments and this led to a loss of £0.8 million (2022: £2.3 million gain). We were also able to complete the sale of one of our investment properties for £1.411 million. This was part of our deliberate strategy to reduce the number of properties directly owned by the organisation, as opposed to being held in diversified collective investments.

## 4.5. Cash and working capital

We continue to manage our working capital effectively, ensuring that we pay suppliers within the terms agreed and collecting debts on a timely basis. The Children's Society's funded work is paid for mainly by local and national government agencies and therefore represents a low credit risk.

Our operational activities increased our use of cash with a negative generation of £0.49 million (2022: £1.28 million positive generation). The main reason for this negative cash generation even though the organisation made a surplus was down to an increase in debtors, decrease in creditors, investment loss, and a decrease in our liability provision. We also continue to hold some highly liquid investments should our cashflow patterns change suddenly.

## 4.6. Reserves

### Unrestricted funds

The trustees consider that the organisation's unrestricted general reserves are appropriate for the challenging external environment and for our aspirations to grow significantly. At the 31 March 2023, the Group's general funds were £21.3 million which equates to approximately six months expenditure.

These reserves will support the investment needed as the organisation gears up for a period of growth over the coming years, cover the planned budget deficit for the current year, and – most importantly – provide resilience and continuity of services to children and young people in the face of any unexpected shocks.

Trustees have considered and stress tested a series of scenarios focused around the following risks:

- annual variability in unrestricted income (excluding legacies)
- legacy income fluctuations
- inflationary impacts
- structural deficits and re-aligning our cost base to short- and medium-term income expectations
- reshaping costs
- adjusting strategy whilst experiencing income decline
- maintaining sufficient working capital headroom
- reputational damage
- defined benefit pension scheme funding liability.

These stress tests confirm that our unrestricted general funds at 31 March 2023 sit in the middle of our target range, which reflects the uncertainties inherent in the external environment, together with the imperative to support continued momentum as we aspire to reverse the damaging decline in young people's wellbeing.

## Designated funds

At the year end, The Children's Society holds two designated funds. During the year, we held a designated property fund, a strategy fund, and an impact fund.

The designated funds have increased to £13.02 million (2022: £10.7 million). The property fund reflects the current net book value of the tangible and intangible fixed assets. These assets are to be used to help the organisation achieves its mission and 2030 goal.

The balance of the designated strategy fund has been transferred into the unrestricted general fund.

The impact fund was created last year to enhance our strategic ambition by funding innovative pilots and projects for which traditional forms of funding are unavailable. In the current year, with Charity Commission approval, we transferred £4.5 million of historic gains from two of our endowments into the impact fund. These funds will be used to deliver sustainable impact for young people in line with the original purpose of the endowments. The balance of the impact fund at the end of the year was £7.9 million (2022: £3.5 million).

## Pension reserve

The pension reserve reflects the long-term liability of The Children's Society to meet the deficit in its final salary pension schemes, calculated in accordance with FRS 102, and does not take account of a surplus on any scheme. As permitted by the Charity SORP, this commitment is shown as a separate, negative reserve, equal in value to the net pension deficit of £0.02 million.

## Restricted funds

Restricted funds represent the unspent amounts arising from donations and grants where the activity funded is more specific than the general purposes of The Children's Society. At 31 March 2023, the value of these funds was £1.3 million (2022: £0.9 million).

## Endowment funds

Endowment funds represent the value of assets donated to The Children's Society from which the income may be spent while the underlying capital is maintained. The funds are invested in a portfolio of investments whose value at 31 March 2023 was £12.5 million (2022: £17.5 million). As part of our financial strategy, we are unlocking funds from the endowment portfolio, with Charity Commission approval, to support investments in impact for young people.



# 5. Governance structure and management

## 5.1 Legal status and objectives

The Church of England Children's Society (The Children's Society) is a company limited by guarantee and a charity registered in England and Wales. Our organisation was established in 1881 and incorporated in 1893. It is governed by its articles of association, which set out our principal objective – to care for and support children and young people in need across the country, whether material, physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, or otherwise.

## 5.2 Public benefit

The trustees have a duty to report on how our organisation's charitable objective has been carried out for the public benefit and to follow the guidance from the Charity Commission on the provision of public benefit requirement under the Charities Act 2011. This duty is fulfilled by the content of this report.

The children and young people we work with are struggling with the challenges affecting their mental and physical wellbeing, often in multiple areas of their life. Their needs are urgent. They face huge risks to their safety and wellbeing, and the resources they need to flourish may be compromised or even absent.

For this reason, we prioritise our work according to these young people's needs, so that we can have the maximum positive impact and bring about lasting change for them.

Understanding and measuring our impact is vitally important in making sure we achieve our vision of a society built for all children. Our annual Good Childhood Report helps us measure our progress towards our goal: to overturn the damaging decline in children's wellbeing by 2030.

## 5.3 Governance and management

### 5.3.1. Young trustees

Our young trustees are young people from across the country who have previously accessed our direct services through one-to-one support, group work, or participation groups. Although they do not hold the legal status formally assigned to other trustees, they otherwise have equal status on the board in terms of discussions and decisions. As well as attending board meetings, young trustees also support the organisation in other ways, depending on their interests, and make a significant contribution to The Children's Society's work.

The young trustees meet regularly as a group. To prepare for board meetings, they invite members of the executive and senior leadership teams to have focused discussions with them. This year, the involvement included contributing to crucial organisational developments like our theory of change, impact measurement framework, equality, diversity, and inclusion projects, and work on apprenticeships.

The young trustees continue to be involved in recruitment for key senior leadership roles, including this year the chair of the board of trustees, our executive director of Youth Impact, head of safeguarding and quality practice, and national director of youth practice. They have created content for and edited our February Society newsletter,<sup>65</sup> offering a window into their work as young trustees. This was distributed to 144,000 of our supporters.

Our young trustees have continually been involved in amplifying their messages through blogs, podcasts, and public speaking, including at Good Childhood Report events in Chester, London, and Birmingham. Their voices are central to what we do and they influence work across the organisation at all levels.

### 5.3.2. **Section 172 (1) Statement**

All charitable companies have a responsibility to act in accordance with Section 172 of the UK Companies Act 2006 ('the duty to promote the success of a company').

The board of trustees confirm that during the year under review, they have acted in the way that they consider, in good faith, has complied with their duties in Section 172 of the Companies Act 2006 by promoting the charity's success in achieving its charitable purpose.

The board of trustees considers the matters set out in Section 172(1) (a) to (f) of the 2006 Act in all its discussions and decision-making, which includes:

### **The likely long-term consequences of decisions**

Over the past year, the trustees have taken key decisions to support the achievement of our charitable objectives and to help achieve our ambitious goal to have overturned the damaging decline in children's wellbeing by 2030. Further detail around how we achieved our objectives can be found on page 18 and on our future plans on page 55.

### **The interests of our employees, our business relationships and conduct, and acting fairly**

Trustees have regard to the interests of our employees and volunteers and the need to foster business relationships with key stakeholders, service users, beneficiaries, funders, and the wider community. During the year:

- Our employees were kept up to date with regular updates provided by the CEO and executive leadership team, as well as trustees attending and presenting at live sessions.
- We conducted the first joint employee and volunteer culture and experience survey, Your Voice.
- We produced a pay gap report and pay and grading review.

Further information can be found on pages 18 and 70.

### **Our impact on the community and the environment**

Trustees and the executive leadership team are committed to conducting the charity in a responsible, sustainable way to protect both people and planet. Further information can be found on page 74.

### **The desirability to maintain a reputation for high standards of business conduct**

Trustees acknowledge their responsibility for setting and monitoring the values, strategy, vision, and reputation of the charity. Further information can be found within our mission, vision, and values section on page 14 and our future plans on page 55.

#### **5.3.3. The board of trustees**

The board of trustees are the charity's trustees and the legal directors of the company. Members of the board of trustees serve a four-year term, after which they are eligible for a further four-year term. In exceptional circumstances, a trustee may serve an additional year to make sure that appropriate succession is in place.

The board is responsible for the governance and strategic direction of the organisation, making sure the charity upholds its ethos and values and delivers its objectives. The trustees delegate operational management to the executive leadership team, which is accountable to the board for its stewardship of the charity. The chief executive and executive leadership team attend board and committee meetings.

We appoint trustees through a transparent and rigorous recruitment and selection process. Young trustees participate in this, and their assessments are an integral part of the decision making. Hearing and engaging with young people's voices is at the heart of our governance. This year, we recruited one new trustee, the chair of the board. We

also recruited one new independent committee member to sit on one of our board committees.

We provide a comprehensive induction programme for new appointees, tailored to their areas of expertise. This includes meeting the executive leadership team, completing mandatory training (including on safeguarding), engaging with staff and volunteers, and visiting frontline services and our shops. More information on engagement with staff and volunteers can be found in section 5.7 below, and on engagement with other stakeholders in section 5.8.

Our trustees have a wide range of skills, knowledge, and experience – essential to good governance. We keep the balance of expertise under review, including during the recruitment process. Collectively, the board must demonstrate responsible leadership and judgement. We have a dedicated safeguarding trustee who holds extensive experience and knowledge in relation to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

We expect our trustees, committee members, chief executive, and executive leadership team to behave with the utmost integrity and professionalism, consistently demonstrating their commitment to the goals and values of The Children's Society. All our trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no rewards or benefits from The Children's Society.

The board met both physically and virtually during the year, including four formal meetings, two board strategy and development days, and several ad hoc meetings to keep trustees informed. They are also expected to

complete regular training on matters like safeguarding, data protection, and cyber security. Trustees who served during the year are listed on page 113, together with information about their membership of committees and meeting attendance.

## 5.4 Delegation and committees

The board maintains a written schedule of matters reserved for the board of trustees and committees, which clearly defines specific areas for delegation. The terms of reference for each committee are reviewed annually and they report back to the board on a regular basis.

The Finance and Investment Committee is responsible for the charity's financial strategy and performance, making sure its resources are properly and appropriately applied to its key objectives. It oversees the charity's investments, managing them so that they underpin the charity's strategic objectives. The committee is responsible for safeguarding the charity's assets and making sure we have sufficient reserves.

The Organisational Development Committee is responsible for overseeing all matters concerned with effective governance of The Children's Society. The committee supports the chief executive in building and sustaining a successful leadership team and guides and monitors the effectiveness of people policies.

The Risk, Audit, and Compliance Committee is responsible for giving the board assurances on the effectiveness of the internal controls, the adequacy of our risk management processes, and the internal control

environment. It also receives external audit annual reporting. It considers any significant issues that arise and monitors and reviews safeguarding and health and safety. This includes the implementation of and compliance with policies. The committee also oversees all systems, controls, and processes, making sure that we're able to meet our objectives.

## 5.5 Modern slavery

Modern slavery is a significant global human rights issue. It includes human trafficking, sexual exploitation, forced and bonded labour, domestic servitude, and child labour. We are committed to acting ethically and with integrity in all of our relationships by taking every reasonable opportunity to act within our direct operations and wider sphere of influence to make sure that slavery and human trafficking does not take place in the charity's operations.

Modern slavery can be hard to spot and is often hidden in plain sight. We recognise that there are risks of modern slavery in our supply chains for all types of goods and services. This risk is low due to our relatively small-scale supply chains and the controls and systems we have in place. However, a risk does remain, and the policies and procedures outlined below help us mitigate this. We are satisfied that we are compliant with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

We work to tackle exploitation, abuse, and trafficking faced by young people. In this work, we know we will encounter situations of modern slavery. Our policies and procedures, including procurement, whistleblowing, and recruitment, are critical in delivering a robust, safe, and ethical response.

In line with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, we published our Modern Slavery Statement for this financial year ([childrenssociety.org.uk/organisational-policies](https://childrenssociety.org.uk/organisational-policies)). This includes examples of modern slavery that we encounter in the work that we do.

5.6 Principal risks and uncertainties

The trustees are responsible for ensuring that the charity maintains comprehensive risk management systems and that appropriate actions are taken to manage and mitigate risks. The Risk, Audit, and Compliance Committee monitors and reviews these risk management arrangements and reports to the board of trustees on their ongoing effectiveness.

Our formal risk management strategy provides a robust framework for developing the corporate risk

register and managing risk across the charity. The Children’s Society has an established system of internal controls governing all its operations. These are designed to provide a reasonable level of assurance against the risk of error, fraud, and inappropriate or ineffective use of organisational resources.

The outsourced internal audit function reviews the corporate risk register to make sure audits are correctly focused. They evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of our checks and controls and report to our trustees via the Risk, Audit, and Compliance Committee.

We pay particular attention to mitigating safeguarding risks – protecting children and young people is central to all we do. This and other principal risks identified within the corporate risk register are:

Principal risk	Examples of mitigating actions include:
A child or adult at risk comes to serious harm as the result of poor safeguarding practice by a staff member, student on placement, or volunteer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ review of safeguarding training as part of review of Youth Impact domain learning and development offer</li><li>■ ongoing development and refinement of safeguarding dashboard, including information on volunteers</li><li>■ implementation of organisation-wide safeguarding risk register</li><li>■ safeguarding volunteer audit (Youth Impact domain focus).</li></ul>
The cost of living crisis, exacerbated by the effects of the pandemic, Brexit, and the war in Ukraine, increases child poverty and restricts our ability to generate funds and resource our charity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ monitoring the external environment and its impact on young people and supporters</li><li>■ monitoring the effectiveness of our support approaches, adapting as needed to optimise support.</li></ul>



The Children's Society is unable to sufficiently grow income from its new strategic approach to address the decline from historic fundraising activities.

- executive leadership team and trustee task and finish group to develop 2030 growth and investment plan
- income modelling and pipeline approach, incorporating full portfolio (unrestricted and restricted income) and strategic funding plans (including service plans and geographical priorities)
- recruiting major appeal director and securing appeal consultancy.

Our organisation resilience and stability is at risk, particularly as we respond to an ever-changing landscape (strategically and operationally), which impacts our ability to attract and retain talent, skills, and capability.

- people experience framework in place that looks at entire employee experience journey and focuses on retention
- use of MI and data to drive insight and progress and manage risk effectively
- evaluation of induction process
- review of attraction and recruitment approaches and impact on candidate experience
- capability and development needs for leadership team to be developed
- strategic workforce planning for the organisation
- review of flexible working arrangements and impact on organisational capacity and utilisation
- analysis of turnover to identify reasons for leaving and actions to be taken to mitigate this.
- review total reward package.

External labour market and inability to effectively recruit impacts restricted and unrestricted income funding drawdown, as well as operational and reputational risk.

- domain recruitment reviews and analysis
- implementation of pay and grading review
- employee value proposition and careers site update to promote The Children's Society as a great place to work
- workforce planning for all teams at The Children's Society
- succession planning in place for all teams at The Children's Society
- review of hiring process and systems.

## 5.7 Our people

### 5.7.1. Equity, diversity, and inclusion

This year we have continued to make progress in our equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) goals, including::

- releasing our first diversity and gender pay gap report, sharing information on intersectionality
- offering anti-racism training through our provider, Solve, which has been completed by more than 500 employees and which we continue to evolve (for example, by introducing new training on moving towards conscious inclusion)
- sharing an anti-racist practice statement of intent,<sup>66</sup> setting out the commitment of the Youth Impact domain to progress and champion anti-racist practice in all that we do
- releasing new policies and reviewing existing ones where necessary, like our dignity at work policy.

We were delighted to be awarded the bronze Tide award for our work within EDI across The Children's Society.

### 5.7.2. Growing TeamTCS

We have a responsibility to support our team to learn and grow and remain committed to providing TeamTCS with opportunities for development. To this end, this year we conducted our first joint employee and volunteer culture and experience survey. Called Your Voice, the survey measured engagement and progress against our people experience framework. 75% of employees and 18% of volunteers took part in the survey, with engagement levels of 82% and 89% respectively, and we

received two externally recognised awards for our engagement results.

We have improved our internal communications offering, introducing line manager briefing sessions to share essential information and improving technology and accessibility in our TCS Live broadcasts. Our regular Spotlight sessions offer further opportunity for TeamTCS to grow together.

We have continued to strengthen our learning and development offering for staff. This has included launching our management development programme (Compass), continuous improvement learning, conscious inclusion training, a learning and development course catalogue (SteppingStones), and a performance management cycle aligned to our strategic objectives. Across the year, we have delivered a total of 168 learning and development courses (52 unique courses), with 2,330 people attending training in person, 57 courses accessed via Learning Zone, and 774 individually accessed courses (Learning Zone).

We advertised 441 vacancies across the year, hiring 308 new members of TeamTCS. 219 people left the organisation. We have recruited 22 new apprentices from within the organisation across four standards: operations manager, level 5; retail manager, level 4; HR consultant partner, level 5; and associate project manager, level 4. 14 apprentices graduated from our scheme, continuing in their roles.

Our investment in apprenticeships helps us to bridge skills gaps and develop future talent, providing specific skills and knowledge in areas of expertise needed by the organisation (for example, project

management and fundraising). It also creates career pathways for team members, enabling future promotion and progression.

Growing and sustaining our organisation to make sure we can continue to be here for children and young people is one of our main strategic deliverables, and it is vital that we provide the right conditions for every member of TeamTCS to feel included, grow, and thrive.

### 5.7.3. **Volunteers**

In 2022/23, volunteering activity continued to pick up after the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions. Around 4,000 people volunteered with us, including 300 new volunteers, and over 1,800 retail volunteers helped to raise £12 million for children and young people. More than 1,000 house box coordinators and over 800 committee members also raised vital funds, and speakers and ambassadors across the country delivered talks and presentations, helping people to understand the importance of our work and vision.

We have made good progress in embedding our people experience framework across our volunteering activity. This work will continue into 2023/24 as we develop and embed our volunteer plan, building on the efforts made this year to get the basics right. We have done this by supporting volunteer managers through the migration of volunteer data to our Dynamics software. Consistent record keeping allows us to make sure our volunteers have the support, training, and guidance they need to thrive in their roles and stay safe. Our Beehive system allows us to make sure that record keeping, compliance activity, and quality

assurance processes are happening in relation to Youth Impact volunteers in particular.

Through our Your Voice survey, we have been able to hear the voice of our volunteers. 18% of volunteers completed the survey, with an engagement score of 89%, and we were pleased by the results. 98% of volunteers who responded said they enjoyed volunteering at The Children's Society, and 95% that their contribution is valued and respected. 94% feel they can bring their true self to their role and 87% said their ideas and opinions are listened to – 33% higher than the sector benchmark. Based on the survey results, we plan to take action in 2023/24 by: reviewing our learning and development offer for volunteers; improving our communications to volunteers about what is happening at The Children's Society; and improving volunteer wellbeing. We also hope to improve participation rates for our volunteers.

We have worked towards inspiring leadership too by refreshing the guidance available on the volunteer managers hub and establishing a volunteer managers knowledge group. This allows a forum to share updates and signpost to guidance and provides a platform for peer discussion and problem solving. Our management development programme allows volunteer managers to develop their core leadership skills as well.

Through Volunteers Week celebrations in June and local recognition, we have aimed to make sure that our volunteers feel valued as part of TeamTCS, and we are looking forward to completing a full review of our recognition and wellbeing schemes over the next year.

### 5.7.4. **Remuneration**

We remain committed to providing fair, equitable pay for our employees and benchmark our pay structure against other charities for this reason. The Living Wage Foundation's principles underpin our pay structure and trustees oversee the pay, pensions, and benefits of the chief executive and the executive leadership team.

This year, we began an organisation-wide review of all pay structures, responding to the new economic landscape we find ourselves in post-pandemic and the challenges this poses for all charitable organisations. This included an external review of executive pay and benefits to make sure that we remain competitive and retain key talent – as a result, a corrective pay award was made to all members of our executive leadership team, equivalent to pay rises for other staff, in recognition that the executive team led by example during a time of cost pressure and had not received any pay increase for three years. We will update our executive pay principles and policy in conjunction with the organisation-wide review and associated implementation, which will continue in 2023/24.

The annual pay review was awarded in April 2022. This saw an increase to our benchmarked pay grades of 2% and an additional individual award of 3% for all eligible employees. As at 31 March 2023, our chief executive's annual salary was £131,160. In recognition of this year's financial challenges and the pressures of increased living costs, we have worked to support our lowest paid earners and provide enhancements to salaries, including:

- providing an early application of the living wage recommendations, uplifting pay rates in November 2022, instead of the usual application in April each year
- providing an additional cost of living payment of £500 in January 2023 to all employees
- enhancing our financial wellbeing support with webinars and surveys to make sure our support remains relevant and effective.

### 5.8. **Supporter engagement and fundraising**

The last year has been challenging for all of us, and we are so grateful to our supporters for their continued generosity and commitment despite these circumstances. They allow us to be here for young people and work for change, and every contribution they make has real impact.

Our voluntary income comes from a wide range of sources. Individuals give regular or one-off cash contributions. Groups raise funds by taking part in challenge events locally, online, and abroad. Some people donate to and buy things from our shops, while others make gifts in their wills. We also partner with professional funders, commissioners, companies, trusts, and foundations.

These are just a few examples of the amazing support we receive from people across the UK. Every interaction we have with our supporters is guided by our Supporter Promise to:

- keep our supporters up to date in ways that work for them
- always treat people respectfully and sensitively
- meet or exceed fundraising and data protection standards.

We comply with the voluntary Fundraising Regulator regulation scheme and align our fundraising policies and practices with the fundraising code of conduct. We also follow all related legislation and marketing regulations. The majority of our fundraising activity is led by employees and volunteers, though we have also worked with partner agencies to deliver fundraising appeals and other projects. We monitor any fundraising undertaken on our behalf, and our external partners must comply with the Fundraising Regulator's regulation scheme and our Supporter Promise.

Offering a positive experience for everyone who fundraises for us, works with us, or supports us is of paramount importance. Our approach, policies, and standards aim to protect vulnerable people and other members of the public from inappropriate behaviour and we continuously learn from what we do, always with an eye to improvement.

In 2022/23, we logged 155 complaints across Social Impact, Retail, and Youth Impact and Services. This is 3% decrease on the previous year. 145 (93%) of these complaints were resolved within 10 working days, with the remainder resolved between 12 and 46 working days after the complaint was received. Complaints outside our service level agreement of 10 days tended to be challenging complaints that required several communications between our organisation and the complainant. 100% of complaints were resolved locally by the staff member or team that received the complaint. One complaint received came to us via the Fundraising Regulator – we responded to this appropriately, with

the regulator acknowledging that no further action was required.

85% of complaints received were upheld, a 6% increase on the previous year. Most upheld complaints related to some sort of error from the charity or from a member of staff or volunteer – for example, administrative or human errors.

We are thankful to everyone who chose to stand alongside children and young people this year and will continue to commit to delivering the best possible supporter experience.

## 5.9. General Data Protection Regulation

We remain fully committed to protecting our stakeholders' data and to following the requirements of the Data Protection Act. Our information governance group meets monthly and provides oversight. This group considers how we handle information relating to children and young people, our supporters, our employees, and our volunteers to make sure we are always honest and open about how we handle personal data and take appropriate measures to keep it safe and secure. The group also engages with any project in the organisation involving personal data, like the implementation of new systems.

Since the General Data Protection Regulation became effective, we have continued to focus on information governance and are committed to further strengthening our position in this area wherever appropriate. We can also confirm that there are no significant data breaches or concerns within the year.



## 6. Protecting the environment

The Children's Society recognises the importance of environmental issues to young people, and we take seriously our role in reducing our carbon impact. We are committed to conducting ourselves in a responsible, sustainable way to protect both people and planet. With the full support of trustees and management, we are on a journey to reduce our environmental impact and maintain high operational standards across all our activities.

### Our operational activities

All our retail stock, with the exception of greetings cards, is donated. With turnover this year of £12 million, we are able to say that just under one third of our income is environmentally friendly, in that it is reused, recycled, and/or upcycled. We do all that we can to stop goods being sent to rag merchants or landfill by circulating stock between shops and having discount stores for any items which are deemed to be end of line.

Inevitably, some of the product we receive cannot be sold through any of our stores. We have a small number of rag merchants who collect from us and pay by weight. Where possible, we use merchants who have or are working towards a TRUST award, which demonstrates that they are minimising their environmental impact. Our recycling of rag has saved 980 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> this year.

Our retail operations are run with the intention of reducing their carbon footprint. Actions include:

- introducing bags for life made from sugar beet
- switching to energy efficient light bulbs
- changing our pricing guns
- recycling or purchasing secondhand shop fittings as we open new stores.

In addition to our retail initiatives, we have:

- continued to promote the awareness and facilitation of a renewable energy contract for the organisation as a whole
- continued to offer a bike loan scheme
- continued to recycle ink and toner cartridges
- continued to encourage less travel and prioritise online meetings where appropriate
- renegotiated our car fleet contract, with 12 of 15 vehicles now replaced by either electric or hybrid vehicles to reduce our carbon footprint and organisational costs
- worked with our IT partner, Coforge, to minimise energy usage and to collect and recycle redundant IT equipment
- posted regularly on Yammer about local initiatives and ideas
- monitored and promoted the dedicated SharePoint site on environmental topics.

## Carbon and energy reporting

The year ending 31 March 2023 is our third year of renewable energy for both gas and electricity. This covers 98% of our estate, with the energy provider in a smaller number of our properties being chosen by the landlord. We recognise that this does not reduce our energy usage per se.

Our usage of energy across our property portfolio is as follows:

	<b>2022/23</b>
Electricity (kWh)	1,424,093
Gas (kWh)	117,902
Equivalent CO <sub>2</sub> e (tonnes)	275.4

We use public transport where possible, but for some activities colleagues use either a fleet car (of which there are 15) or their own vehicle. When contracts for the fleet vehicles expired, we changed them to electric or hybrid vehicles. Our use of vehicles accounted for 170.4 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e.

The retail car fleet is almost completely now made up of full battery electric, self-charging, or plug-in hybrid vehicles. By November 2023, there will no cars powered only by an internal combustion engine in the fleet.

Over the term of the four-year leases, the move to electric vehicles will cut CO<sub>2</sub> from 116 tonnes to 17 tonnes, representing reduction of 85% against the equivalent petrol car.

In addition, as part of the migration to electrical vehicles, retail work with Mina, who provide a simple EV charging solution, meaning carbon emissions and intensity per driver, when using home and public charge networks, can be monitored. This means a change in driver behaviour can also be encouraged, thereby promoting the use of renewable energy wherever possible.

Battery range and operating costs on commercial vehicles are not at the stage of advancement we're seeing with cars, but it's envisaged that retail will be in a position to start migrating to electric commercial vehicles in the next two to three years.

### **Looking to the future, we will develop our net zero plan further. This will include:**

- making sure that all our activities comply with or exceed regulatory requirements or codes of practice where available
- monitoring our carbon dioxide emissions and acting to reduce them where possible
- continuing to comply with the Energy Saving Opportunities Scheme (ESOS)
- engaging with our employees, young people, and our volunteers to manage our environmental impact and encourage them to complement our activities with their own efforts
- monitoring and improving our performance in relation to the waste hierarchy, continuing to recycle waste wherever possible, provide bins for all items, and encourage local recycling initiatives
- reducing energy and water consumption where possible by using LED lighting, energy-efficient lighting systems, and responsibly sourced furniture and office equipment
- selecting an energy supplier with renewable energy accreditation as our nominated supplier where possible
- encouraging employees to use alternative transport methods by providing season ticket and bike loans
- continuing to adopt an agile workspace environment to facilitate virtual meetings, giving options not to travel at all or to reduce travel, with associated cost efficiencies and an impact on our carbon footprint
- reviewing our property portfolio requirements to allow us to maximise working from home opportunities
- monitoring our investments and those of the pension funds in line with ESG principles.

# 7. Statement of responsibilities

## **Statement of trustees' responsibilities in respect of the trustees' impact summary, annual report, and financial statements**

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' impact summary, annual report, and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations. Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law they are required to prepare the financial statements in accordance with UK Accounting Standards and applicable law (UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102, the financial reporting standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

Under company law, the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the excess of income over expenditure for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue its activities.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They have general responsibility for taking such steps as are reasonably open to them to safeguard the assets of the charitable company and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the UK governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.



Diana Noble  
**Chair of board of trustees**

Date: 27 July 2023

# 8. Independent auditors' report

## Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Church of England Children's Society for the year ended 31 March 2023, which comprise the group statement of financial activities, the group and parent balance sheets, the group cash flow statements, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom accounting standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard (FRC) applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and of the parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of the group's and parent charitable company's net movement in funds, including the income and expenditure, for the year then ended
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

## Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's ethical standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

## Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate. Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the group's or the parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue. Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

## Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in this report and the chair's introduction. Our opinion on the financial



statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report the fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

### **Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006**

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in this report (which includes the strategic report and the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law) for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements
- the strategic report and the directors' report included have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

### **Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and the parent charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in this annual report (which incorporates the strategic report and the directors' report).

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the parent charitable company
- the parent charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies' regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the trustees' report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

### **Responsibilities of trustees for the financial statements**

As explained more fully in the trustees' statement of responsibilities, set out on page 77, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the group's and the parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the group or the parent charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

### Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) will always detect a material misstatement where it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

Based on our understanding of the group and the environment in which it operates, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to the regulatory requirements of the Charity Commission, and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the preparation of the financial statements, such as the Companies Act 2006, the Charities Act 2011, and the Statement of Recommended Practice for Charities (SORP).

We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override controls) and determined the principal risks were related to potential posting of inappropriate journal entries and management bias in certain areas of management estimate. Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:

- inspecting correspondence with regulators and tax authorities
- discussions with management, including consideration of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws, regulation, and fraud
- evaluating management's controls designed to prevent and detect irregularities
- review of minutes of meetings to identify expected material amounts of voluntary income
- identifying and testing journals, using data analytics to focus testing on higher risk entries
- challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in their critical account estimates.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: **[frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities)**. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

### **Use of our report**

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



### **Adam Halsey (Senior Statutory Auditor)**

For and on behalf of Haysmacintyre LLP  
Statutory Auditor

10 Queen Street Place  
London EC4R 1AG

Date: **13 September 2023**

## 9. Financial statements



**The Church of England Children's Society**  
**Consolidated statement of financial activities**  
**Year ended 31 March 2023**

		Unrest- ricted funds	Rest- ricted funds	Endow- ment funds	Total funds	Unrest- ricted funds	Rest- ricted funds	Endow- ment funds	Total funds
	Note	2023 £000	2023 £000	2023 £000	2023 £000	2022 £000	2022 £000	2022 £000	2022 £000
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>									
Donations and legacies	2	19,112	–	68	19,180	13,553	–	–	13,553
Charitable activities	3	8,774	4,072	–	12,846	8,696	3,986	–	12,682
Trading income	4	11,330	–	–	11,330	9,987	–	–	9,987
Investments	5	30	–	7	37	18	–	7	25
Other income	6	5	–	–	5	406	–	–	406
<b>Total income and endowments</b>		<b>39,251</b>	<b>4,072</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>43,398</b>	<b>32,661</b>	<b>3,986</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>36,653</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>									
Raising funds	7	17,383	–	–	17,383	15,650	–	–	15,650
Charitable activities	8	18,965	3,653	–	22,618	18,598	3,615	–	22,213
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>36,348</b>	<b>3,653</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>40,001</b>	<b>34,248</b>	<b>3,615</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>37,863</b>
Finance costs	11	–	–	–	–	(13)	–	–	(13)
Net gains/(losses) on investments	14	(318)	–	(496)	(814)	1,029	–	1,308	2,337
<b>Net income</b>		<b>2,585</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>(421)</b>	<b>2,583</b>	<b>(545)</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>1,315</b>	<b>1,140</b>
<b>Other recognised gains/ (losses):</b>									
Gains on revaluation of fixed assets	13	21	–	–	21	59	–	–	59
Actuarial (losses)/gains on defined benefit pension schemes	11	–	–	–	–	(158)	–	–	(158)
Transfers between funds	20	4,500	–	(4,500)	–	–	–	–	–
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>7,106</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>(4,921)</b>	<b>2,604</b>	<b>(645)</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>1,315</b>	<b>1,041</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>									
Funds brought forward		27,195	910	17,454	45,559	27,840	539	16,139	44,518
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>34,301</b>	<b>1,330</b>	<b>12,533</b>	<b>48,164</b>	<b>27,195</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>17,454</b>	<b>44,518</b>
<b>Summary of total income and expenditure</b>									
Total income		38,954	4,072	(421)	42,605	33,747	3,986	1,315	39,048
Total expenditure		(36,348)	(3,653)	–	(40,001)	(34,392)	(3,615)	–	(38,007)
<b>Net income</b>		<b>2,606</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>(421)</b>	<b>2,604</b>	<b>(645)</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>1,315</b>	<b>1,041</b>



**The Church of England Children's Society  
Group and Society balance sheets  
As at 31 March 2023**

	Note	Group		Society	
		2023 £000	2022 £000	2023 £000	2022 £000
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Intangible fixed assets	12	2,630	-	2,630	-
Tangible fixed assets	13	2,509	5,054	2,509	5,054
Investments	14	39,514	41,725	39,514	41,725
<b>Total fixed assets</b>		<b>44,653</b>	<b>46,779</b>	<b>44,653</b>	<b>46,779</b>
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	15	8,932	5,068	8,193	5,043
Cash		2,623	2,774	1,743	2,662
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>11,555</b>	<b>7,842</b>	<b>9,936</b>	<b>7,705</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	(7,140)	(7,637)	(6,769)	(7,759)
<b>Net current assets/(liabilities)</b>		<b>4,415</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>3,167</b>	<b>(54)</b>
Provisions for liabilities	17	(885)	(1,395)	(885)	(1,395)
<b>Net assets excluding pension deficit</b>		<b>48,183</b>	<b>45,589</b>	<b>46,935</b>	<b>45,330</b>
Pension deficit	11	(19)	(29)	(19)	(29)
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>48,164</b>	<b>45,560</b>	<b>46,916</b>	<b>45,301</b>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
General funds	20	21,297	16,526	20,049	16,267
Designated funds	20	13,023	10,698	13,023	10,698
Pension reserve	20	(19)	(29)	(19)	(29)
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>		<b>34,301</b>	<b>27,195</b>	<b>33,053</b>	<b>26,936</b>
<b>Restricted funds</b>	20	<b>1,330</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>1,330</b>	<b>910</b>
<b>Endowment funds</b>	20	<b>12,533</b>	<b>17,454</b>	<b>12,533</b>	<b>17,454</b>
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>48,164</b>	<b>45,559</b>	<b>46,916</b>	<b>45,301</b>

The notes on pages 87 to 111 form part of these financial statements. The financial statements were approved and authorised by the board of trustees on 27 July 2023 and signed on their behalf by:

*Chris Gillies*

**Chris Gillies**  
Honorary Treasurer

The result of the parent charity for the year was a net income of £1,946,638 (2022: net income of £563,000). Funds for the Group and Society include a revaluation reserve of £827,806 (2022: £2,190,000).

**The Church of England Children's Society  
Group and Society cash flow statements  
Year ended 31 March 2023**

	<b>Group</b>		<b>Society</b>	
	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	Note <b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Net cash generated by operating activities</b>	<b>A (492)</b>	<b>1,279</b>	<b>(268)</b>	<b>1,154</b>
<b>Cash flows from investment activities</b>				
Investment income received	37	25	37	25
Purchase of investments	(14)	(13)	(14)	(13)
Proceeds from the sale of investments	1,411	–	–	–
Purchase of tangible and intangible fixed assets	(1,076)	(1,631)	(1,076)	(1,631)
Proceeds from the sale of fixed assets	(20)	399	(20)	399
<b>Net cash provided/(consumed) by investment activities</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>(1,220)</b>	<b>(1,074)</b>	<b>(1,220)</b>
<b>Increase/(decrease) in cash</b>	<b>(155)</b>	<b>(59)</b>	<b>(1,342)</b>	<b>(67)</b>
Cash at the start of the period	2,774	2,833	2,662	2,729
<b>Cash at the end of the period</b>	<b>2,620</b>	<b>2,774</b>	<b>1,320</b>	<b>2,662</b>

## Notes to the cash flow statements

### A. Reconciliation of net income to cash generated by operating activities

	Group		Society	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Net income as reported in the statement of financial activities</b>	<b>2,583</b>	<b>1,140</b>	<b>1,926</b>	<b>635</b>
Adjustments for:				
Net investment income receivable	(37)	(25)	(37)	(25)
Net interest cost on defined benefit pension liability	–	13	–	13
Depreciation and amortisation charges	1,023	1,151	1,023	1,151
Impairment charges and other adjustments	453	–	(533)	–
(Gains)/losses on the sale of fixed assets	1,507	(399)	1,507	(399)
Losses/(gains) on investments and assets	(814)	(2,337)	(814)	(2,337)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(3,864)	(41)	(3,150)	(299)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	(497)	1,795	(421)	2,288
Intercompany creditor	–	–	568	144
Increase/(decrease) in provisions for liabilities	(511)	154		154
<b>Net cash provided by operations before pension contributions</b>	<b>(156)</b>	<b>1,451</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>1,325</b>
Pension contributions	(336)	(172)	(336)	(172)
<b>Net cash generated by operating activities</b>	<b>(492)</b>	<b>1,279</b>	<b>(268)</b>	<b>1,153</b>

## Notes to the financial statements

### Year ended 31 March 2023

#### 1. Accounting policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of these financial statements are as set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

##### a. General information

The Society is registered in England and Wales as a company limited by guarantee with registration number 40004. It is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission with registration number 221124.

The registered office of the Society is:

Whitecross Studios

50 Banner Street

London EC1Y 8ST

##### b. Statement of compliance

These consolidated and separate financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis, under the historical cost convention, as modified by the recognition of certain assets measured at fair value.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice for Charities (SORP 2015) (Second Edition, effective 1 January 2019) and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and

Republic of Ireland ('FRS 102'). The Society is a public-benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

They also conform to the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006. No separate Statement of Financial Activities ('SOFA') has been presented for the Charity alone as permitted by the Charities SORP.

##### c. Basis of consolidation

The results of each of the Society's subsidiary undertakings listed in note 21 have been consolidated into these financial statements, on a line-by-line basis. Uniform group accounting policies have been applied and transactions and balances between the undertakings are eliminated on consolidation.

##### d. Going concern

The accounting policies of The Children's Society include the preparation of the accounts on the assumption that the Society will be a going concern for the 18-month period from the date of signing of the accounts. We have extended the view from 12 months due to the uncertain environment within the sector and the economy in general.

##### e. Subsidiaries and joint ventures

Entities related to the Society are treated as subsidiaries when the Society is able to control the entity. Subsidiaries that have been part of the group in the year are shown in note 22.

**Notes to the financial statements  
(continued)**

**Year ended 31 March 2023**

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

The Society and two other charities own one-third each of the share capital in a separate entity, CharITyshare Limited, registered in England and Wales with company number 5260609. CharITyshare was wound up on 26 July 2023.

**f. Income from donations, grants and legacies**

Income from donations, grants and legacies is recognised when the Society is entitled to the income, when receipt is probable and the amount can be reliably estimated.

Gift Aid receivable is recognised at the same time as the related donations.

When donations are received other than in money, for instance as a donation of property or investments, the donation is recorded at the fair value of the items donated at the date of donation, with the relevant asset recorded at the same initial value.

If there is a requirement to repay a grant received as a result of not meeting the conditions of the grant, a liability is recognised for the repayment and recorded as a reduction in income in the period.

**g. Income from contracts**

Income from contracts for the delivery of services is recognised on a straight-line basis over the period of time that the contract covers. Where the contract has a set value of expenditure to be met as well as covering a period of time, cumulative

income is recognised in proportion to the cumulative value of expenditure. The amount of income recognised in a given reporting period is calculated as the difference between the cumulative income at the beginning and the end of the reporting period.

**h. Donated goods**

Valuation of donated goods for resale at the time of receipt is not practicable, due to the high volume of low value items received and the absence of detailed stock control systems. Instead, the value of the donated items is recognised as income when they are sold and their value is thus determined.

**i. Gifts in kind**

The Society receives goods and services that are provided free of charge. When these replace expenditure that the Society would have made if not provided free of charge and the value can be measured reliably, the value of the goods or services received is recognised as donated income at the value that the Society would have paid a third-party supplier. The expenditure or asset arising is recognised at the same value in the appropriate section of the financial statements.



## Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Year ended 31 March 2023

### 1. Accounting policies (continued)

#### j. Volunteers

The Society benefits from volunteer support in its retail network, fundraising groups, work with children and young people, and administration. If volunteers were not available, their roles would not be provided by salaried staff as it would be financially impractical. There is no ready market comparator for the roles they undertake and it is not possible to reliably measure the financial value of our volunteers.

The financial value of the donated services and the related contributed activity are, therefore, not recognised in the financial statements.

#### k. Accounting for expenditure

Costs are recognised when the Society has an obligation, whether contractual, legal or constructive, to transfer funds to another person or entity. Costs are recorded at the total of the amount due plus any unrecoverable VAT associated with the cost.

Costs are recorded according to the type of expenditure incurred and the charitable, income generation or support purpose to which they are put. Support and governance costs are allocated to the activities of the Society using the following bases:

Cost group	Allocation basis
HR and organisational development	Headcount
Property services	Number of properties managed
Information systems	Number of users serviced
Financial processing and management	Headcount
Senior Management	Headcount
Governance	Headcount

#### l. Leases

The cost of the minimum payments under an operating lease is recognised evenly over the non-cancellable period of the lease. To meet this policy, break points are assumed to be taken when calculating lease costs.

#### m. Employee benefits

##### Short-term employee benefits

Short-term employee benefits, typically salaries, paid holiday and contributions to money-purchase pension schemes, are recorded as the employees earn entitlement to the benefits through their service.

##### Long-term employee benefits

###### *Single employer defined benefit pension schemes*

Scheme assets are measured at market value. Scheme liabilities are measured using the projected unit credit method and discounted at the current rate of high-quality corporate bonds with an equivalent term and the same currency as the liabilities. Current service costs are recognised as the scheme members earn entitlement to benefits. Past service costs are recognised immediately in

**Notes to the financial statements  
(continued)**

**Year ended 31 March 2023**

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

expenditure if the benefits have vested. The administration charges of the scheme are also included in expenditure as they fall due.

An interest cost arising from the unwinding of the discount on the scheme liabilities and an expected return from assets using the same discount rate are recognised in income and expenditure as a net income or cost.

Changes in the valuation of the scheme liabilities and assets caused by changing assumptions in the valuation of the liabilities and difference between expected and actual return on assets are recorded as actuarial gains and losses in the SOFA under 'Other recognised gains and losses'.

*Multi-employer defined benefit pension schemes*

Where the scheme is in deficit and where the company has agreed to a deficit funding arrangement, the company recognises a liability for this obligation. The amount recognised is the net present value of the deficit reduction contributions payable under the agreement that relates to the deficit. The present value is calculated using the discount rate, which is the equivalent single discount rate. When used to discount the future recovery plan contributions due, this would give the same results as using a full AA corporate bond yield curve to discount the same recovery plan contributions. The unwinding of the discount is recognised as a finance cost.

**n. Taxation**

The Society is a registered charity and, as such, is exempt from taxation of its income provided the income is applied for charitable purposes. Both subsidiary entities are subject to corporation tax. Taxable profits earned by the subsidiaries are distributed under the Gift Aid scheme to the Society so that taxable profits are eliminated, to the extent that the profits are available for distribution.

**o. Accounting for funds**

Monies received and expended are recorded as part of unrestricted general funds unless they meet the criteria to be recorded in one of the funds described below.

Income received that is required (whether by the donor, by written agreement or by the request made by the Society) to be used more narrowly than for the general purposes of the Society is recorded in a restricted fund. These funds are identified and held separately from the other funds of the Society. The trustees may also set aside monies in a fund designated for a specific purpose. A fund of this kind remains part of the unrestricted funds of the Society, but not available for use for general purposes.

Expenditure to meet the purposes of a fund is recorded against the fund. The remaining balances of funds are carried forward for future use. The Charities SORP permits and The Children's Society uses a negative fund to represent the value of the

## Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Year ended 31 March 2023

### 1. Accounting policies (continued)

the pension deficit as separate from other funds.

#### p. Intangible fixed assets

Intangible assets are capitalised where the useful life is longer than one year. Where an intangible asset is software, it is included at purchase cost or at total cost of development, recognising the use of internal resources. Software is amortised, using the straight-line method and allowing for a residual value. The period of amortisation is six years with a residual value of 5%. The residual value takes account of technological advances which impact on the value or life cycle of the software. The assets are reviewed annually to assess whether the carrying value is impaired. The carrying value is cost less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses.

#### q. Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are physical and software assets controlled by the Society that are used in the delivery of charitable or support activities. Tangible fixed assets are recorded when they have an aggregate cost of at least £2,500. They are recorded initially at cost including the costs of bringing them to location and state in which they can be used for their intended purpose. The cost of the assets is depreciated evenly over their expected useful life with the Society to the expected residual value at the end of its useful life. Depreciation is charged from the point that the asset is ready for use.

Initial depreciation rates are based on the following expected lives of assets:

Asset type	Initial expected life	Initial expected residual value
Freehold land	Infinite	Cost
Freehold buildings	50 years	Nil
Leasehold land and buildings including improvements	Lease life (application of policy to first break of lease)	Nil
Vehicles	4 years	Nil
Other Assets	4 years	Nil

After purchase, freehold land and buildings are carried at their open market value. Valuations are carried out on a rolling three-year programme by a chartered surveyor. Where market value is above carrying value, this amount is first applied as reversal of depreciation then as an increase in cost. Surpluses arising are transferred to a revaluation reserve as required by the Companies Act. Where the market value is below carrying value, deficits arising are first treated as reversals of valuation then as additional depreciation. To the extent that the revaluation reserve has not been realised through depreciation, deficits arising are charged against the revaluation reserve.

#### r. Investments

Investments are recorded at cost when purchased. Where the market value of an investment can be determined by reference to an

**Notes to the financial statements  
(continued)**

**Year ended 31 March 2023**

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

an external market or a professional valuation, the investment is carried at its open-market value. Investment property is property held by the Society for the purposes of generating income and/or capital growth. These buildings are not used by the Society for its purposes. Investment property is recorded initially at cost and remeasured each year at its open-market value. Gains and losses on remeasurement are reported in income and expenditure.

**s. Current assets**

Trade debtors are recorded at the amount invoiced in accordance with the agreement to which they relate, less any impairment of the asset. Costs incurred that relate to future periods are carried as prepayments within current assets.

Income that has met the conditions to be recognised either as a result of being earned under an agreement or being a future donation or legacy, able to be recognised as set out above, is recorded within accrued income. Cash at bank and in hand represents the value of all cash and bank holdings that are available for immediate use.

Where fixed assets have been put on sale and are expected to be sold within the next financial year, their cost or valuation and accumulated depreciation are removed from fixed assets and the asset recorded as an asset held for sale. Assets held for sale are carried at the lower of cost or valuation less accumulated

depreciation at the date of being placed on sale or the net amount recoverable from the sale, less associated costs.

**t. Impairment of assets**

When external events relating to markets or technology or internal events relating to the plans and activities of the Society indicate that the value of an asset may be impaired, an impairment review is conducted. The review determines whether the recoverable value of the asset is above or below its carrying value, using external open-market values or other accepted valuation techniques.

If the recoverable amount of the asset is below its carrying value, the difference is written off. To the extent that the reduction in value represents the reversal of undepreciated revaluation surpluses, the reduction is treated as a reversal of the revaluation. Any further reduction is recorded as an impairment of the asset in depreciation.

**u. Liabilities and provisions**

Liabilities are recognised when the Society has a legal or contractual obligation to transfer resources to another party to settle that obligation. Liabilities are recorded at the best estimate of the amount that will be required to settle the obligation. When the timing, value, or both is uncertain, a provision is recognised at the best estimate of the amount to be paid.

## Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Year ended 31 March 2023

### 1. Accounting policies (continued)

#### v. Financial instruments

The Society applies the provisions of sections 11 and 12 of FRS 102 in full.

Financial instruments are recorded initially at their transaction costs. Financial instruments held at fair value through profit and loss are subsequently measured and reported at their fair value. Changes in fair value from remeasurement are recorded in income and expenditure.

Financial instruments that are debt or financial liabilities are subsequently measured and reported at their amortised cost using the effective interest method. Remeasurement gains and losses are reported in income and expenditure.

#### w. Assets held on behalf of other charities

The Society from time to time holds assets on behalf of other charities. When such assets held are held separately from those belonging to the Society, they are not recorded in the financial statements. When the assets are combined with other assets of the Society, for example in pooled investments, the portion of the value of the assets held on behalf of the other charity is recorded as a liability. Income, expenditure, and gains and losses related to the portion of the assets held on behalf of the other charity are not reported in the statement of financial activities.

#### x. Uncertainties and judgements

The principal judgements made in the preparation of the financial statements have been in relation to:

- the assumptions underlying the valuation of the pension scheme deficit disclosed in note 11, which have been prepared with advice from a qualified actuary
- the allocation of costs to activities, as described above
- the expected future cost of making good dilapidations to and removing fixtures and fittings from properties held on operating leases.

The most important uncertainties that the Society faces in the preparation of the financial statements are:

- the uncertainty around high inflation, cost of living, and rising interest rates
- whether investments can be realised at market value stated
- whether the assumptions on asset return and future cost of the defined benefit pension scheme are borne out
- continued funding from government organisations
- continued receipt of material values of legacies in future
- the future need to invest for growth, particularly unrestricted income.



## Notes to the financial statements (continued)

### Year ended 31 March 2023

#### 2. Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £000	Restricted funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2023 £000	Unrestricted funds 2022 £000	Restricted funds 2022 £000	Total funds 2022 £000
Donations						
Christingle	727	–	727	536	–	536
House boxes	976	–	976	1,192	–	1,192
Other donations	6,569	68	6,637	6,330	–	6,330
Legacies	10,840	–	10,840	5,305	–	5,305
Government grant income	–	–	–	190	–	190
<b>Total income from donations and legacies</b>	<b>19,112</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>19,180</b>	<b>13,553</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>13,553</b>

#### 3. Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £000	Restricted funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2023 £000	Unrestricted funds 2022 £000	Restricted funds 2022 £000	Total funds 2022 £000
Providing direct support to children and young people	8,492	1,644	10,136	8,392	1,720	10,112
Changing governmental and societal systems	282	2,428	2,710	304	2,266	2,570
<b>Total income from charitable activities</b>	<b>8,774</b>	<b>4,072</b>	<b>12,846</b>	<b>8,696</b>	<b>3,986</b>	<b>12,682</b>

#### 4. Income from trading activities

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £000	Restricted funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2023 £000	Unrestricted funds 2022 £000	Restricted funds 2022 £000	Total funds 2022 £000
Income from retail activities	11,202	–	11,202	9,841	–	9,841
Card sales	126	–	126	141	–	141
Event entry fees	2	–	2	5	–	5
<b>Total income from trading activities</b>	<b>11,330</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>11,330</b>	<b>9,987</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>9,987</b>

#### 5. Income from investments

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £000	Endowment funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2023 £000	Unrestricted funds 2022 £000	Endowment funds 2022 £000	Total funds 2022 £000
Income from financial investments	20	7	27	10	7	17
Income from investment properties	10	–	10	8	–	8
<b>Total investment income</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>25</b>

## Notes to the financial statements (continued)

### Year ended 31 March 2023

#### 6. Other incomes

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £000	Restricted funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2023 £000	Unrestricted funds 2022 £000	Restricted funds 2022 £000	Total funds 2022 £000
(Losses)/gains on disposal of fixed assets	(3)	–	(3)	399	–	399
Sundry income	8	–	8	7	–	7
<b>Total income from other sources</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>406</b>

#### 7. Expenditure on raising funds

	Direct costs 2023 £000	Support costs 2023 £000	Total costs 2023 £000	Direct costs 2022 £000	Support costs 2022 £000	Total costs 2022 £000
Direct fundraising	4,866	1,413	6,279	4,687	790	5,477
Costs of retail operations	9,039	2,065	11,104	8,568	1,605	10,173
<b>Total expenditure on raising funds</b>	<b>13,905</b>	<b>3,478</b>	<b>17,383</b>	<b>13,255</b>	<b>2,395</b>	<b>15,650</b>

#### 8. Expenditure on charitable activities

	Direct costs 2023 £000	Support costs 2023 £000	Total costs 2023 £000	Direct costs 2022 £000	Support costs 2022 £000	Total costs 2022 £000
Providing direct support to children and young people	11,633	4,809	16,442	12,296	3,658	15,953
Changing governmental and societal systems	5,100	1,076	6,176	5,183	1,076	6,260
<b>Total expenditure on charitable activities</b>	<b>16,733</b>	<b>5,885</b>	<b>22,618</b>	<b>17,479</b>	<b>4,734</b>	<b>22,213</b>

#### Net income is arrived at after charging:

	2023 £000	2022 £000
Amortisation of intangible fixed assets	535	–
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	488	1,035
Rentals payable under operating leases	2,593	2,700
Auditor's remuneration		
Audit of the Group's financial statements	54	42
Other fees payable to the auditor	–	2

## Notes to the financial statements (continued)

### Year ended 31 March 2023

#### 9. Support costs and their allocation to activities

2023	Direct services £000	Changing systems £000	Donations and legacies £000	Retail £000	Total £000
HR and organisational development	1,401	317	416	506	2,640
Property services	55	–	–	346	401
Information systems	1,628	369	484	589	3,070
Financial processing and management	1,143	259	339	413	2,154
Senior management	342	78	102	124	646
Governance	240	54	71	87	452
<b>Total support costs</b>	<b>4,809</b>	<b>1,077</b>	<b>1,412</b>	<b>2,065</b>	<b>9,363</b>

The allocation basis for support costs is set out in note 1.

2022	Direct services £000	Changing systems £000	Donations and legacies £000	Retail £000	Total £000
HR and organisational development	942	282	207	309	1,741
Property services	68	–	–	425	493
Information systems	1,240	372	273	408	2,292
Financial processing and management	886	266	195	291	1,638
Senior management	333	100	73	109	615
Governance	189	57	42	61	349
<b>Total support costs</b>	<b>3,658</b>	<b>1,077</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>1,604</b>	<b>7,128</b>

#### Governance costs are made up of:

	2023 £000	2022 £000
External audit	54	44
Internal audit	89	59
Trustee board administration	118	67
Trustee recruitment	20	12
Trustee expenses	–	–
Trustee meetings	6	1
Professional fees	3	7
Senior leadership team	163	147
<b>Total governance costs</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>337</b>

#### Group and Society

Average monthly number of full-time equivalent staff employed in:	2023	2022
Providing direct support to children and young people	245	265
Changing governmental and societal systems	60	61
Direct fundraising	73	64
Retail operations	178	166
Support services	94	73
<b>Total</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>629</b>

## Notes to the financial statements (continued)

### Year ended 31 March 2023

#### 10. Trustees and staff

Average monthly number of staff employed in:	<b>2023</b>	2022
Providing direct support to children and young people	305	293
Changing governmental and societal systems	64	120
Direct fundraising	75	77
Retail operations	227	198
Support services	96	80
<b>Total</b>	<b>767</b>	<b>768</b>
Costs of staff	<b>2023</b>	2022
<i>Group and Society</i>	<b>£000</b>	£000
Wages and salaries	21,263	20,732
Social security	2,007	1,838
Pensions	1,323	1,032
Redundancy and compensation for loss of office	116	291
Agency staffing	272	274
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,981</b>	<b>24,167</b>

The total amount paid in the year for redundancy and compensation for loss of office was £116,391 (2022: £406,723). The amount accrued for future redundancy payments at the balance sheet date was nil (2022: nil).

#### Higher paid staff

The number of employees with remuneration in excess of £60,000 including redundancy and compensation for loss of office but excluding pension contributions is analysed into the following bands:

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>Number</b>	Number
Between £60,001 and £70,000	10	11
Between £70,001 and £80,000	–	3
Between £80,001 and £90,000	–	–
Between £90,001 and £100,000	2	2
Between £100,001 and £110,000	2	2
Between £110,001 and £120,000	–	1
Between £120,001 and £130,000	1	–

The Society paid pension contributions into a money purchase scheme of £66,180 (2022: £82,073) for 15 (2022: 19) of the higher paid staff.

#### Key management personnel

The key management personnel serving in the year comprise the chief executive officer, the executive director – Youth Impact (interim for part of the year), the executive director – Enabling Resources, the executive director – Social Impact, and executive director – Diversity and Talent. The total remuneration paid to key management personnel was £618,159 (2022: £612,502). During the course of the year to 31 March 2023, the chief executive received salary payments of £125,580

## Notes to the financial statements (continued)

### Year ended 31 March 2023

#### 10. Trustees and staff (continued)

(2022: £120,000). In addition, the company paid pension contributions of £5,979 (2022: £4,800) into a defined contribution scheme. As at 31 March 2023, the chief executive's salary had risen to £131,160.

No members of the trustee board received, or were entitled to receive, any remuneration. Where expenses were claimed, reimbursement was made. In the year, travelling expenses of £58 (2022: £103) were reimbursed to 1 trustee (2022: 1). Trustee indemnity insurance was purchased at a cost of £8,400 (2021: £6,500).

#### 11. Pensions

The Children's Society operates three pension schemes, a defined contributions scheme, a defined benefits scheme and a multi-employer mixed defined benefit and money purchase scheme for additional voluntary contributions within The Pensions Trust growth plan ('the growth plan').

The defined contribution scheme is managed by Scottish Widows. The scheme is compliant with the pension reform rules for automatic enrolment. Contributions by the employee are matched by the employer up to a limit of 8% of salary and a salary sacrifice option is offered. The cost of employer contributions due as a result of service in the year was £949,580 (2022: £951,715).

The defined benefits scheme is externally funded and is contracted-in to the state second-tier of pension provision. Retirement benefits within this scheme are based on employees' final remuneration and length of service. The scheme was closed to new members in June 2003 and is managed by The Pensions Trust and is covered in note 11(a).

'The growth plan' is a multi-employer scheme which provides benefits to some 638 non-associated participating employers. The scheme is a defined benefit scheme in the UK but is not possible for us to obtain sufficient information to enable us to account for the scheme as a defined benefit scheme. Therefore we account for the scheme as a defined contribution scheme. The scheme is subject to the funding legislation outlined in the Pensions Act 2004 which came into force on 30 December 2005. This, together with documents issued by the Pensions Regulator and the Financial Reporting Council, set out the framework for funding defined benefit occupational pension schemes in the UK. The scheme is classified as a 'last-man standing arrangement'. Therefore we are potentially liable for other participating employers' obligations if those employers are unable to meet their share of the scheme deficit following withdrawal from the scheme. Participating employers are legally required to meet their share of the scheme deficit on an annuity purchase basis on withdrawal from the scheme. This is covered in more detail in note 11(b).



**Notes to the financial statements (continued)****Year ended 31 March 2023****11. Pensions (continued)****11(a). Defined benefit scheme**

An actuarial valuation was completed as at 30 September 2021 and the results of this have been updated to 31 March 2023 by a qualified actuary, independent of the scheme's sponsoring employer. The major assumptions used by the actuary are shown below. The most recently completed actuarial valuation showed a surplus of £1,837,000 as at 30 September 2021.

Trustees will adopt an investment strategy that minimises as far as possible the level of investment risk while supporting the technical provisions discount rate. This reduces the employer's risk of having to pay any future deficit contributions. The expected return from growth assets is 4.5% p.a. above the nominal gilt curve. The expected return from the matching assets is 1.4% p.a. above the nominal gilt curve and returns for gilts/liability driven investments are assumed to be in line with market gilt yields. The ultimate target return is 0.85% p.a. above the gilt curve.

In addition to and in accordance with the actuarial valuation, the employer has agreed with the trustee that it will pay 17.5% p.a. of pensionable earnings (previously 17.5% p.a.), in respect of the cost of accruing benefits for members who are not participating in the salary sacrifice arrangement and 27.5% p.a. of pensionable earnings (previously 27.5% p.a.) for members participating in the salary sacrifice arrangement, and will pay £187,800 per annum to meet scheme expenses and levies to the pension protection fund. Member contributions are payable in addition at the rate of 10.0% p.a. of pensionable earnings for members who are not participating in the salary sacrifice arrangement.

We have been notified by the pension scheme trustee that there may be a potential issue surrounding changes made to the scheme rules between 1995 and 2006, over which the trustee is seeking clarification from the courts. The matter is unlikely to be resolved before 2024 at the earliest, and as such it is not possible to determine with any accuracy what the impact might be of any direction the court may, or may not, give. Many factors will impact the future valuation of the pension scheme, none of which can be accurately predicted at the present time. No adjustment has therefore been made to the amounts included in the financial statements in respect of this potential issue. The assumptions used by the actuary are the best estimates chosen each year from a range of possible actuarial assumptions which, due to the timescale covered, may not necessarily be borne out in practice.

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
Rate of increase in salaries	0.00%	0.00%
Rate of increase in pensions in payment	2.78%	3.11%
Discount rate	4.75%	2.78%
Inflation assumption	3.20%	3.61%
Rate of increase for deferred pensions	3.20%	3.61%

The rate of increase in salaries is assumed at 0% as pensionable salaries for active members were frozen as at 31 December 2013.

# Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Year ended 31 March 2023

## 11(a). Defined benefit scheme (continued)

Life expectancy included in the valuation of the scheme is calculated using the S3PXA (All Pensioners – Pension Amounts) tables with a best estimate scheme-specific scaling factor of 110% (2022: 106%). The base tables have been projected using the S2PXA projection model with a long-term improvement rate 1.5% for males and of 1.25% for females.

The resulting average life expectancies in years (age at death) were:

Pensioners retiring:	2023		2022	
	Females	Males	Females	Males
Now	24.1 (89.1)	21.7 (86.7)	24.3 (89.3)	21.9 (86.9)
In 20 years	25.6 (90.6)	23.3 (88.3)	25.7 (90.7)	23.5 (88.5)

## Assets and liabilities of the scheme

	2023	2022
	£000	£000
Bonds	86,448	114,696
Equities	149	6,334
Property	11,909	16,437
Cash	1,743	1,143
Other	18,862	29,630
<b>Scheme assets</b>	<b>119,111</b>	<b>168,240</b>
<b>Present value of scheme liabilities</b>	<b>(115,727)</b>	<b>(149,280)</b>
Surplus/(Deficit) in the scheme - pension liability	3,384	18,960
Effect of asset ceiling	(3,090)	(18,407)
Eliminate FRS102 scheme surplus	(294)	(553)
Present value of growth plan provision (note 11(b))	(19)	(29)
<b>Net pension liability</b>	<b>(19)</b>	<b>(29)</b>

## Profit and loss impact

	2023	2022
	£000	£000
Current service cost	126	134
Past service cost	–	–
Expenses	238	187
Interest on obligation	4,593	3,465
Expected return on scheme assets	(4,608)	(3,478)
<b>Total</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>308</b>

**Notes to the financial statements (continued)**  
**Year ended 31 March 2023**  
**11(a). Defined benefit scheme (continued)**

**Movement in defined benefit obligation**

	<b>2023</b> <b>£000</b>	<b>2022</b> <b>£000</b>
Opening defined benefit obligation	149,280	157,901
Current service cost	126	134
Past service cost	–	–
Interest cost	4,082	3,261
Contributions by employees	12	13
Actuarial loss/(gain)	(32,678)	(6,579)
Benefits paid	(5,095)	(5,450)
<b>Closing defined benefit obligation</b>	<b>115,727</b>	<b>149,280</b>

**Change in fair value of the scheme assets**

	<b>2023</b> <b>£000</b>	<b>2022</b> <b>£000</b>
Opening value of the scheme assets	168,240	168,271
Expected return	4,608	3,478
Expenses	(238)	(187)
Actuarial (loss)/gain	(48,752)	1,776
Contributions by employer	336	339
Contributions by employees	12	13
Benefits paid	(5,095)	(5,450)
<b>Closing fair value of the scheme assets</b>	<b>119,111</b>	<b>168,240</b>

<b>Actual return on scheme assets</b>	<b>(44,144)</b>	<b>5,254</b>
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**Defined benefit costs recognised in other comprehensive income**

	<b>2023</b> <b>£000</b>	<b>2022</b> <b>£000</b>
Return on plan assets (excluding amounts included in net interest cost)	(48,752)	1,776
Experience gains and losses arising on the plan liabilities	(8,649)	(1,974)
Effects of changes in the demographic and financial assumptions underlying the present value of the plan liabilities	57,155	40
Payment to eliminate deficit	–	–
Effect of asset ceiling	–	–
Eliminate FRS102 scheme surplus	(294)	(553)
<b>Total amount recognised in other comprehensive income</b>	<b>(540)</b>	<b>(711)</b>

**Notes to the financial statements (continued)**  
**Year ended 31 March 2023**  
**11(a). Defined benefit scheme (continued)**

**Sensitivity analysis**

Changes in assumptions would have the following indicative effects on the liabilities of the scheme:

<i>Assumption change</i>	<i>Effect on liabilities</i>
Increase/decrease in discount rate by 0.1%	2% increase/decrease in liabilities
Increase/decrease inflation linked assumptions by 0.1% per annum	2% increase/decrease of inflation linked liabilities
Increase/decrease in life expectancy of 1 year	3-5% increase/decrease in liabilities

**11(b). The growth plan**

The Children's Society participates in The Pensions Trust growth plan, a multi-employer scheme which provides benefits to some 638 non-associated participating employers. The scheme is a defined benefit scheme in the UK. A full actuarial valuation of the scheme was carried out as at 30 September 2020. This valuation showed assets of £800.3 million, liabilities of £831.9 million and a deficit of £31.6 million. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the trustee has asked the participating employers to pay additional contributions to the scheme as follows:

**Deficit contributions (relating to all 638 employers)**

From 1 April 2022 to 31 January 2025: £3,312,000 per annum (payable monthly). The recovery plan contributions are allocated to each participating employer in line with their estimated share of the series 1 and series 2 scheme liabilities.

	<b>2023 £000</b>	<b>2022 £000</b>
<b>Present values of provision (only relating to The Children's Society)</b>	19	29
<b>Changes in provision</b>	<b>2023 £000</b>	<b>2022 £000</b>
Provision at start of period	29	150
Unwinding of the discount factor (interest expense)	1	1
Deficit contributions paid	(11)	(39)
Remeasurements - impact of any change in assumptions	–	(1)
Remeasurements - amendments to the contribution schedule	–	(82)
<b>Provision at end of period</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Profit and loss impact</b>		
Interest expense	1	1
Remeasurements – impact of any change in assumptions	(0)	(1)
Remeasurements – amendments to the contribution schedule	–	(82)
	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Assumptions</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
Discount rate	5.52%	2.35%

## Notes to the financial statements (continued)

### Year ended 31 March 2023

#### 12. Intangible fixed assets

	Software £000	Total £000
<b>Group and Society</b>		
Cost or valuation		
At 1 April 2022	–	–
Transfer	2,446	2,446
Additions	961	961
Disposals	–	–
Revaluation	–	–
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>3,407</b>	<b>3,407</b>
Amortisation		
At 1 April 2022	–	–
Transfer	242	242
Amortisation charged	535	535
Released on disposal	–	–
Revaluation	–	–
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>777</b>	<b>777</b>
<b>Net book value</b>		
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>2,630</b>	<b>2,630</b>
At 31 March 2022	–	–

#### 13. Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold land and buildings £000	Leasehold land and buildings £000	Vehicles £000	Other Assets £000	Software £000	Total £000
<b>Group and Society</b>						
Cost or valuation						
At 1 April 2022	2,393	7,433	32	5,428	2,446	17,732
Transfer to intangible assets	–	–	–	–	(2,446)	(2,446)
Additions	42	2	–	71	–	115
Disposals	–	(20)	–	–	–	(20)
Revaluation	28	–	–	–	–	28
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>2,463</b>	<b>7,415</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>5,499</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>15,409</b>
Depreciation						
At 1 April 2022	884	6,143	32	5,378	242	12,679
Depreciation charged	34	407	–	47	–	488
Released on disposal	–	(17)	–	–	–	(17)
Transfer to intangible assets	–	–	–	–	(242)	(242)
Revaluation	(8)	–	–	–	–	(8)
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>6,533</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>5,425</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>12,900</b>
<b>Net book value</b>						
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>1,553</b>	<b>883</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>2,509</b>
At 31 March 2022	1,509	1,290	–	50	2,204	5,054

**Notes to the financial statements (continued)**  
**Year ended 31 March 2023**

**13. Tangible fixed assets (continued)**

Freehold land and buildings used by The Children's Society are revalued following the policy set out in note 1. Valuations are carried out by the Society's estates surveyor, Ian Birtwistle MRICS. The most recent valuations were carried out in 2022. If the properties (including those held for sale and in investments) had not been revalued, they would be reported in the accounts with a cost of £2,164,519 (2022: £2,510,977) and accumulated depreciation of £613,572 (2022: £675,753) leaving a net value of £1,550,947 (2022: £1,835,224).

**14. Investments**

Group and Society	Investment properties £000	Listed investments £000	Total £000
<b>At 1 April 2021</b>	1,596	37,779	39,375
Purchases	–	13	13
Transfer from fixed assets	–	–	–
Sales	–	–	–
Realised and unrealised gains – Society	–	2,337	2,337
<b>At 1 April 2022</b>	<b>1,596</b>	<b>40,129</b>	<b>41,725</b>
Purchases	–	14	14
Transfer from fixed assets	–	–	–
Sales	(1,411)	–	(1,411)
Realised and unrealised gains – Society	(30)	(784)	(814)
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>39,359</b>	<b>39,514</b>

**15. Debtors**

	Group		Society	
	2023 £000	2022 £000	2023 £000	2022 £000
Trade debtors	1,560	983	873	968
Prepayments and accrued income	7,377	3,915	7,325	3,907
Taxation debtors	–	45	–	45
Other debtors	(5)	125	(5)	123
Amounts due from subsidiary	–	–	–	–
<b>Total debtors</b>	<b>8,932</b>	<b>5,068</b>	<b>8,193</b>	<b>5,043</b>



## Notes to the financial statements (continued)

### Year ended 31 March 2023

#### 16. Creditors: amounts due within one year

	Group		Society	
	2023 £000	2022 £000	2023 £000	2022 £000
Trade creditors	350	420	350	420
Accruals	2,626	1,926	2,626	1,926
Deferred income	3,448	4,112	2,509	3,291
Taxation and social security	524	454	524	454
Other creditors	192	725	192	725
Amounts due to subsidiary	–	–	568	943
<b>Total creditors: amounts due within one year</b>	<b>7,140</b>	<b>7,637</b>	<b>6,769</b>	<b>7,759</b>

Deferred income arises as a result of payment or billing in advance for activities that are to be delivered in the future.

	Group		Society	
	2023 £000	2022 £000	2023 £000	2022 £000
Deferred income at the start of the year	4,112	3,261	3,291	2,275
Deferred income brought forward released in the year	(1,456)	(823)	(668)	(591)
Income deferred from the year	792	1,674	114	1,607
<b>Deferred income at the end of the year</b>	<b>3,448</b>	<b>4,112</b>	<b>2,737</b>	<b>3,291</b>

#### 17. Provisions for liabilities

Group and Society

	Property dilapidations £000	Total provisions £000
At 1 April 2022	1,776	1,776
Charged in the year	–	–
Used in the year	–	–
Released unused	(401)	(401)
<b>Total provisions</b>	<b>1,375</b>	<b>1,375</b>

## Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Year ended 31 March 2023

### 17. Provision for liabilities (continued)

	Property dilapidations £000	Total provisions £000
Amounts due within one year	490	490
Amounts due after more than one year	885	885
<b>Total provisions</b>	<b>1,375</b>	<b>1,375</b>

Under the terms of operating leases for properties, the Society is required to make good any dilapidation in the condition of properties and to remove fixtures and fittings added to the building during the course of the lease. The amounts and timing of the amounts due are not certain, as leases may be curtailed or extended and the cost of works is not known until they are carried out. The value of works required is estimated by suitably qualified and experienced chartered surveyors.

### 18. Commitments

At 31 March 2023, the Group and Society had nil (2022: £1.5 million) of authorised but not contracted capital commitments and nil (2022: £2.4 million) contracted capital commitments that had not been reflected in the financial statements.

Minimum payments under operating leases are:

2023	Land and buildings £000	Motor vehicles £000	Office equipment £000	Total £000
Amounts falling due:				
within one year	1,991	94	2	2,087
between two and five years	4,623	222	–	4,845
after more than five years	662	–	–	662
<b>Total operating lease commitments</b>	<b>7,276</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7,594</b>

2022	Land and buildings £000	Motor vehicles £000	Office equipment £000	Total £000
Amounts falling due:				
within one year	1,990	31	6	2,027
between two and five years	4,221	26	–	4,247
after more than five years	1,330	–	–	1,330
<b>Total operating lease commitments</b>	<b>7,541</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7,604</b>

## Notes to the financial statements (continued)

### Year ended 31 March 2023

#### 19. Contingent liabilities

In common with other charitable organisations, the Society receives legacies arising from wills where the executor has been unable to locate one or more beneficiaries. In these circumstances, the Society may provide an indemnity to the executor, under which any funds required to be paid to the missing beneficiary or beneficiaries are recovered from the Society. At the date of these accounts, the value of such indemnities was £347,794 (2022: £347,794).

#### 20. Funds

Group	Balance at 31 March 2022 £000	Income £000	Expend- iture £000	Other gains and (losses) £000	Transfers £000	Balance at 31 March 2023 £000
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>						
General funds	16,526	39,249	(35,147)	(247)	916	21,297
Designated funds						
Property fund	5,054	–	(1,023)	21	1,088	5,140
Strategy fund	2,144	–	(140)	–	(2,004)	–
Impact fund	3,500	2	(38)	(81)	4,500	7,883
Total designated funds	10,698	2	(1,201)	(60)	3,584	13,023
<b>Unrestricted funds before pension deficit liability</b>	<b>27,224</b>	<b>39,253</b>	<b>(36,348)</b>	<b>(308)</b>	<b>4,500</b>	<b>34,320</b>
Pension deficit fund	(29)	–	–	10	–	(19)
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>27,195</b>	<b>39,253</b>	<b>(36,348)</b>	<b>(298)</b>	<b>4,500</b>	<b>34,301</b>
<b>Restricted funds</b>						
The National Lottery Community Fund (formerly Big Lottery fund)	628	1,034	(916)	–	–	746
Other grants	282	3,039	(2,737)	–	–	584
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>4,073</b>	<b>(3,653)</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>1,330</b>
<b>Endowment funds</b>						
The Children's Society Fund	10,406	4	–	(298)	(3,704)	6,408
Charnwood House	1,764	1	–	(50)	–	1,714
Charnwood Forest	1,168	1	–	(33)	–	1,136
Hampshire Girls and Boys Trust	475	–	–	(14)	589	1,050
The Children's Society	606	–	–	(17)	(589)	–
The Spooner Trust	818	–	–	(23)	(796)	–
The George and Marion Slack Fund	1,348	1	–	(38)	–	1,310
The Croghan Fund	870	68	–	(23)	–	915
Total endowment funds	17,454	75	–	(496)	(4,500)	12,533
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>45,558</b>	<b>43,400</b>	<b>(40,001)</b>	<b>(794)</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>48,164</b>

# Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Year ended 31 March 2023

## 20. Funds (continued)

### Analysis of net assets by fund

	General funds £000	Designated funds £000	Pension deficit fund £000	Restricted funds £000	Endowment funds £000	Total £000
Intangible fixed assets	–	2,630	–	–	–	2,630
Tangible fixed assets	–	2,509	–	–	–	2,509
Investments	19,097	7,883	–	–	12,533	39,514
<b>Total fixed assets</b>	<b>19,097</b>	<b>13,023</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>12,533</b>	<b>44,653</b>
Cash	1,293	–	–	1,330	–	2,623
Other current assets	8,932	–	–	–	–	8,932
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>10,225</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>1,330</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>11,555</b>
Current liabilities	(7,140)	–	–	–	–	(7,140)
<b>Net current assets</b>	<b>3,085</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>1,330</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>4,415</b>
Provisions for liabilities	(885)	–	–	–	–	(885)
<b>Net assets excluding pension deficit</b>	<b>21,297</b>	<b>13,023</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>1,330</b>	<b>12,533</b>	<b>48,183</b>
Pension deficit	–	–	(19)	–	–	(19)
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>21,297</b>	<b>13,023</b>	<b>(19)</b>	<b>1,330</b>	<b>12,533</b>	<b>48,164</b>

Group	Balance at 31 March 2021 £000s	Income £000s	Expenditure £000s	Other gains and (losses) £000s	Transfers £000s	Balance at 31 March 2022 £000s
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>						
General funds	16,201	32,660	(33,097)	862	(100)	16,526
Designated funds						
Property fund	4,563	–	(1,151)	59	1,583	5,054
Strategy fund	7,227	–	–	–	(5,083)	2,144
Impact fund	–	–	–	–	3,500	3,500
<b>Total designated funds</b>	<b>11,790</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>(1,151)</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>10,698</b>
<b>Unrestricted funds before pension deficit liability</b>	<b>27,991</b>	<b>32,660</b>	<b>(34,248)</b>	<b>921</b>	<b>(100)</b>	<b>27,224</b>
<b>Pension deficit fund</b>	<b>(150)</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>(29)</b>
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>27,841</b>	<b>32,660</b>	<b>(34,248)</b>	<b>1,042</b>	<b>(100)</b>	<b>27,195</b>
<b>Restricted funds</b>						
Big Lottery fund	591	375	(338)	–	–	628
Other grants	(52)	3,612	(3,277)	–	–	283
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>3,986</b>	<b>(3,615)</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>910</b>
<b>Endowment funds</b>						
The Children's Society fund	9,678	4	–	724	–	10,406
Charnwood House	1,640	1	–	123	–	1,764
Charnwood Forest	1,086	1	–	81	–	1,168
Hampshire Girls and Boys Home	442	–	–	33	–	475
The Children's Society	564	–	–	42	–	606
The Spooner Trust	761	–	–	57	–	818
The George and Marion Slack fund	1,252	1	–	94	–	1,348
The Croghan fund	716	–	–	54	100	870
<b>Total endowment funds</b>	<b>16,139</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>1,208</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>17,454</b>
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>44,519</b>	<b>36,653</b>	<b>(37,863)</b>	<b>2,250</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>45,559</b>

**Notes to the financial statements (continued)****Year ended 31 March 2023****20. Funds (continued)****Description of funds**

General funds represent the other assets available for the general purposes of the Society. The transfer of £915,000 represents the balance of the strategy fund after deducting the final cost of phase 4 of the CRM development.

Designated property fund represents the carrying value including revaluations of land and buildings held for use in the activities of The Children's Society. The strategy fund represents amounts set aside by the trustees to help invest in operational projects that will improve current systems and infrastructure to help us achieve our 2030 goal, the balance of which has been transferred to general funds due to the fact that trustees feel the original purpose of the fund has been achieved and the balance can be used for a wider purpose, still helping the organisation to achieve its 2030 goal and beyond.

The impact fund has a purpose to help enhance our strategic ambition by funding innovative pilots and projects for which traditional forms of funding are unavailable. It benefitted from a £4.5 million transfer that came from The Children's Society endowment fund and The Spooner Trust. These transfers represent unrealised gains from the endowment fund over several years, with permission granted from the Charity Commission to use these funds for the purpose of the impact fund.

Restricted funds represent the remaining unspent amount of donations, grants, and legacies given to be used for specific purposes or in specific areas. Details of grants received are in note 24.

Endowment funds have additional restrictions on the use of capital. The Children's Society fund and The Spooner Trust are held to generate income to use for the purpose and mission of the charity and have been merged. The George and Marion Slack Fund is held to provide educational opportunities for disadvantaged children and young people. Charnwood House, Charnwood Forest, Hampshire Boys & Girls Trust, and The Children's Society are held to generate income to provide care and support to children and young people in specific places in England. The Children's Society was transferred into Hampshire Boys & Girls Trust. The Croghan Fund is to support young people in education.

## Notes to the financial statements (continued)

### Year ended 31 March 2023

## 21. Financial instruments

	Group		Society	
	2023 £000	2022 £000	2023 £000	2022 £000
<b>Financial assets measured at fair value through profit and loss</b>				
Financial investments	39,359	40,129	39,359	40,129
<b>Debt instruments measured at amortised cost</b>				
Trade debtors	1,560	983	873	968
Other debtors	(5)	125	(5)	123
Amounts due from subsidiaries	–	–	–	–
<b>Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost</b>				
Trade creditors	350	420	350	420
Accrued expenses	2,626	1,926	2,626	1,926
Other creditors	192	725	192	724
Amounts due to subsidiaries	–	–	568	943

## 22. Subsidiary undertakings

The Society owns the whole share capital of The Children's Society (Trading) Limited, registered in England and Wales, no. 885496, whose principal activity is to carry out commercial activities that generate funds in aid of the Society, and The Children's Society (Services) Limited, registered in England and Wales, no. 4545124, whose principal activity is to provide funded direct services for the beneficiaries of the Society.

Both companies have entered into an agreement to donate their taxable surplus each year to the Society under the corporate Gift Aid scheme.

A summary of the information disclosed in the companies' accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023 is:

	Services		Trading	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
<b>Summarised profit and loss account</b>				
Income	4,861	5,087	214	230
Expenditure	(4,245)	(4,568)	(173)	(130)
Profit for the year	616	519	41	100
Gift Aid distribution to The Children's Society	(616)	(519)	(41)	(100)
<b>Retained earnings</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>
<b>Summarised balance sheet</b>				
Current assets	1,478	1,018	139	100
Current liabilities	(1,478)	(1,018)	(139)	(100)
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>
Share capital	–	–	–	–
Retained reserves	–	–	–	–
Total reserves	–	–	–	–



## Notes to the financial statements (continued)

### Year ended 31 March 2023

#### 23. Related parties

Information on trustees' expenses is set out in note 9. The total amount of trustee donations made, without conditions, was £11,377 (2022: £25,298).

The Children's Society, Age UK, and the Alzheimer's Society have equal shares in a company called CharITyshare Limited, which previously provided a shared IT service to the three charities. This company ceased to trade on 30 June 2018. On 1 June 2020, Karen Spears and Matthew Haw of RSM Restructuring Advisory LLP were appointed as joint liquidators in a members voluntary liquidation, a solvent wind up. Liquidation was closed on 26 July 2023.

Transactions with subsidiary undertakings	2023		2022	
	£000 Services	£000 Trading	£000 Services	£000 Trading
<b>Balance sheet amounts</b>				
Amounts due to the parent undertaking	–	139	–	–
Amounts due from the parent undertaking	707	–	1,373	93
<b>Income</b>				
Donations from the parent undertaking	–	–	–	–
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Donations to the parent undertaking	616	41	519	100

#### 24. Grants received

The following grants have been received in the year.

	£000
<b>The National Lottery Community Fund (previously The Big Lottery)</b>	
<b>Reaching Communities Grants</b>	<b>1,098</b>
Disrupting Exploitation	949
HEARTS Yorkshire	149
<b>Grants from other charities and funders</b>	<b>585</b>
Home Office EUSS	169
Coordinated Crisis Support Other	70
BBC Children in Need - Safeguarding Children at Risk - Prevention and Action	35
Co-op My place	80
Co-op By your side	40
Co-op Building Connections	73
3I EHWB	118
<b>Other grants from charitable bodies in the year amount to:</b>	<b>1,788</b>
National Prevention Project CSE/A	710
Samworth Foundation	100
British Transport Police Prevention	92
Safe Zones	661
Other	225
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,471</b>

# 11. Corporate information

## **The Church of England Children's Society**

(A company limited by guarantee)  
Also known as The Children's Society

### **Registered office**

Whitecross Studios  
50 Banner Street  
London  
EC1Y 8ST  
Company registration no. 40004  
Charity registration no. 221124

### **Telephone**

020 7841 4400

### **Website**

[childrenssociety.org.uk](http://childrenssociety.org.uk)

### **Subsidiary companies**

The Children's Society (Services) Limited, company no. 4545124  
The Children's Society (Trading) Limited, company no. 885496  
The Children's Society is not a grant-making body.

### **Royal president**

HRH The Duchess of Gloucester GCVO

### **Presidents**

The Most Reverend and Right Hon the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury  
Justin Welby  
The Most Reverend and Right Hon the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury of York  
Stephen Cottrell

### **Vice-presidents**

Bishops of the Church of England

### Honorary vice-presidents

Mrs A Lush MBE  
Dr N de M Rudolf MA BM BCh FRSM

### Young trustees

Abby and Pepper  
Bilkis  
Cree  
James, started March 2023  
Laura  
Linh, up to October 2022  
Maryam  
Samia  
Taha

### Members of committees

Vincent Anane-Nimoh (b)  
Sara Boiten (c)  
Duncan Brown  
(appointed January 2023) (c)  
Simon Foster  
(left in January 2023) (a)  
Alison Hopkinson (a)  
Shivani Patel (b)  
Gavanjit Sian (a)  
Leon Ward (c)  
Vanessa Whitehead (c)

### Board of trustees

Diana Noble, Chair (appointed 22 July 2022)  
Janet Legrand, previous Chair (term completed in November 2022) (b)  
The Rt Rev'd Elizabeth Lane, Bishop of Derby, Vice-chair (c)  
Christopher Gillies, Honorary Treasurer (a) (b)  
Amelia Torode (c)  
David Ramsden (a)  
Deborah Harris-Ugbomah FCA (b)  
Diane Blausten (c)  
Florence Kroll (b)  
Helen Keppel-Compton (a)  
Jim Clifford OBE (b)  
Nasima Patel (b)  
Sam Monaghan (c)  
Sarah Payne CBE (a) (c)

### Company Secretary

Elizabeth Walker

a. Member of the Finance and Investment Committee  
b. Member of the Risk, Audit and Compliance Committee  
c. Member of the Organisational Development Committee

## Trustee board and committee attendance

Name	Trustee board	Finance and Investment Committee	Organisational Development Committee	Risk, Audit, and Compliance Committee	Trustee board away days
Trustee board members					
Janet Legrand KC (Hon), chair (ret. Nov 2022)	2/2		2/2	1/3	2/2
Diana Noble CBE, chair designate and chair (appt. Jul 2022)	3/3	2/2	3/3	2/2	1/1
Bishop Libby Lane, vice chair	3/4		2/4		0/2
Diane Blausten (sabbatical Jan to Jun 2022)	4/4		4/4		1/1
Jim Clifford	4/4			3/4	2/2
Chris Gillies	4/4	4/4		4/4	2/2
Deborah Harris Ugbomah FCA	4/4			4/4	0/2
Helen Keppel-Compton	2/4	2/4			2/2
Florence Kroll	4/4			3/4	2/2
Sam Monaghan (sabbatical May to Oct 2022)	3/3		2/3		0/0
Nasima Patel	2/4			3/4	2/2
Sarah Payne	3/4	2/4	3/4		2/2
David Ramsden	4/4	3/4			2/2
Amelia Torode	3/4		2/4		2/2

Name	Trustee board	Finance and Investment Committee	Organisational Development Committee	Risk, Audit, and Compliance Committee	Trustee board away days
Committee members					
Vincent Anane-Nimoh				3/4	
Sara Boiten			3/4		
Duncan Brown (appt. Jan 2023)			2/2		
Simon Foster (left Jan 2023)		3/3			
Alison Hopkinson		2/4			
Shivani Patel				3/4	
Gavanjit Sian		3/4			
Leon Ward			2/4		
Vanessa Whitehead			3/4		

**Chief Executive Officer**

Mark Russell

**Executive Director, Enabling Resources**

Elizabeth Walker

**Executive Director, Social Impact**

Joe Jenkins

**Executive Director, Youth Impact**

Nerys Anthony

**Executive Director, Diversity and Talent**

Michelle Clark

**External Auditor**

Haysmacintyre LLP, 10 Queen Street Place, London EC4R 1AG

**Bankers**

Barclays plc, 1 Churchill Place, London E14 5HP

# Thank you to our supporters

- Armed Forces
- BBC Children in Need
- Bupa UK Foundation
- Coinstar Ltd
- Helpcards Ltd
- Islamic Relief Worldwide
- Kennedys Law LLP
- Khaadi Corporation Limited
- Lankelly Chase
- Letterbox Redd Ltd
- Manchester Airport Group
- Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- National Lottery Community Fund
- Rubie's Masquerade UK
- Sport England
- The Aim Foundation
- The Co-op Foundation
- The Samworth Foundation
- The Worshipful Company of Plaisterers
- Wahegru Foundation





## Glossary

All Party Parliamentary Group	APPG
Carbon dioxide equivalent	CO <sub>2</sub> E
Department for Education	DfE
Department of Health and Social Care	DHSC
Disrupting Exploitation	DEx
Educational mental health practitioner	EMHP
Energy Saving Opportunities Scheme	ESOS
Equity, diversity, and inclusion	EDI
Essex Young People's Drug and Alcohol Service	EYPDAS
Health Education England	HEE
Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse	IICSA
Independent Review of Children's Social Care	IRCSC
Kilowatt hour	kWh
Mental health support team	MHST
Office for National Statistics	ONS
Safeguarding Children at Risk - Protection and Action	SCARPA
Tackling Child Exploitation support programme	TCE
United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child	UNCRC
Youth-Led Commission on Separated Children	YLCSC

## Endnotes

1. In 2022, 11% of children aged 10 to 17 completing our annual household survey scored below the midpoint on the 0 to 20 scale of our multi-item measure of overall life satisfaction, which is based on Huebner's Student Life Satisfaction Scale (The Children's Society. The Good Childhood Report 2022. 2022 [cited 2023 Jul 20. Available from: [childrenssociety.org.uk/good-childhood](https://childrenssociety.org.uk/good-childhood)).
2. Department for Work and Pensions. Households Below Average Income, Statistics on the number and percentage of people living in low income households for financial years 1994/95 to 2021/22, Table 4.3db. 2023 [cited 2023 Jun 20]. Available from: [gov.uk/government/collections/households-below-average-income-hbai--2](https://gov.uk/government/collections/households-below-average-income-hbai--2).
3. See our systems change resource pack for further information: [flipsnack.com/CA7CFEBBDC9/systems-change-resource-pack/full-view.html](https://flipsnack.com/CA7CFEBBDC9/systems-change-resource-pack/full-view.html).
4. Survey response rates are hard to calculate as they depend on many factors. A 2022 meta-analysis of peer-reviewed research in education-related fields indicated an average response rate of 44.1% for online surveys (see: Wu M, Zhao K, and Fils-Aime F. Response rates of online surveys in published research: A meta-analysis. Computers in Human Behavior Reports. 7. 2022. Available from: [sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2451958822000409#sec3](https://sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2451958822000409#sec3)). However, a leading survey provider indicates that response rates can be more like 20-30% across online surveys (see: Qualtrics. How to increase survey response rates [Internet]. [cited 2023 Jun 21]. Available from: [qualtrics.com/uk/experience-management/research/improve-survey-response/](https://qualtrics.com/uk/experience-management/research/improve-survey-response/)). We recognise our response rates to feedback surveys are generally low, so we have used 20% as a threshold for reporting here, but we are seeking to improve this response rate across our services.
5. These trends are based on analysis of responses to a question in the Understanding Society survey, asking children aged 10 to 15 how they feel about their life as a whole. See The Good Childhood Report 2022.
6. These findings are based on our 2022 survey of over 2,000 children aged 10 to 17. See The Good Childhood Report 2022.
7. YoungMinds. Mental Health Waiting Times Harming Young People [Internet]. [cited 2023 Jun 15]. Available from: [youngminds.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/press-releases/mental-health-waiting-times-harming-young-people/](https://youngminds.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/press-releases/mental-health-waiting-times-harming-young-people/).
8. For more information, see: Department for Education. Mental health and wellbeing support in schools and colleges [Internet]. 2022 [cited 2023 Jun 16]. Available from: [gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges](https://gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges).
9. A 2021 systemic review indicated that there is some evidence that dialectical behavioural therapy for adolescents (DBT-A) may be effective at reducing the repetition of self-harm. See: Witt KG, Hawton K, Hetrick SE, Taylor Salisbury TL, Townsend E, Hazell P. Interventions for self-harm in children and adolescents. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. 2021 Mar 7; 3(3). Available from: [pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33677832](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33677832).
10. See: Department for Health and Social Care. Mental health and wellbeing plan: discussion paper and call for evidence [Internet]. 2023 [cited 2023 Jun 16]. Available from: [gov.uk/government/consultations/mental-health-and-well-being-plan-discussion-paper-and-call-for-evidence](https://gov.uk/government/consultations/mental-health-and-well-being-plan-discussion-paper-and-call-for-evidence).

11. See: Department for Health and Social Care. Major conditions strategy: call for evidence [Internet]. 2023 [cited 2023 Jun 21]. Available from: **[gov.uk/government/consultations/major-conditions-strategy-call-for-evidence/major-conditions-strategy-call-for-evidence](https://gov.uk/government/consultations/major-conditions-strategy-call-for-evidence/major-conditions-strategy-call-for-evidence)**.
12. See, for example: UK Trauma Council. Complex trauma [Internet]. [cited 2023 Jun 21]. Available from: **[uktraumacouncil.org/trauma/complex-trauma](https://uktraumacouncil.org/trauma/complex-trauma)**.
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14. See: Office for National Statistics. Unpaid care by age, sex and deprivation, England and Wales [Internet]. 2021 [cited 2023 Jun 20]. Available from: **[ons.gov.uk/people-populationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/socialcare/articles/unpaidcarebyagesexanddeprivationenglandandwales/census2021](https://ons.gov.uk/people-populationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/socialcare/articles/unpaidcarebyagesexanddeprivationenglandandwales/census2021)**.
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In 2021/22, local authority children's services in England recorded concerns about child sexual abuse in 33,990 assessments of children, a 15% increase on the previous year (compared to a rise of only 3% in the total number of assessments). This is the highest level of identified concerns of child sexual abuse since 2014/15 when this information started to be collected (see CSA Centre. Child sexual abuse in 2021/22 – trends in official data [Internet]. 2022 [cited 2023 Jun 19]. Available from: **[csacentre.org.uk/documents/child-sexual-abuse-in-2021-22-trends-in-official-data/](https://csacentre.org.uk/documents/child-sexual-abuse-in-2021-22-trends-in-official-data/)**).

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While data on the links between child exploitation and poverty is limited, we know that the additional stresses and limitations on choices poverty creates can increase the dangers young people face. When families are struggling to pay for the essentials, many children take on these money worries, feeling pressured to supplement their parents' incomes, and criminals take advantage of this, promising quick cash, gifts, a place to stay, or lifts to and from school or work. Anecdotally, evidence from our direct practice suggests that these issues are increasing as more and more families face impossible financial decisions.

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