Our impact

The Children's Society annual impact report and financial statements

2025-26

The Children's Society

“

That support gave me hope, helped me grow as a person, and showed me that my future could be brighter than I ever imagined. Young person The Children’s Society has supported

“

Having someone to speak to in those specific moments where I’d been feeling like ‘I’m done’ - it really mattered. Young person The Children’s Society has supported

“

It felt empowering to just be myself around other people, be who I wanted to be and show people who I am. It felt amazing. It felt like I was free for the first time. Young person The Children’s Society has supported

Contents

Young trustees' introduction

Welcome to The Children's Society's 2025-26 annual impact report.

As young trustees, we understand life can be tough for young people – we all have our own experiences of this. No one knows young people better than young people, so for the past 12 months, we've been supporting the organisation to have the best impact for as many other young people as possible.

We each bring different skills and between us, we've been involved in different ways over the past year.

We've helped make **big decisions in board meetings**, like how some of the unrestricted funding should be spent. You can't make decisions without talking to the people you're making them for. We don't just nod our heads – we speak up, and what we say holds weight; we've been heard in a way we never have before.

We've also been involved in **interviewing staff**, which shows how robust this organisation's application process is – The Children's Society do their due diligence to find the right people. It makes sense to have our perspectives on things like interview panels. We notice different things to the adults, like how candidates engage with young people or if they simplify things too much for us.

Being involved with The Children's Society has had an impact on us personally too.

Between us, **we've gained a sense of purpose**, an interest in policy and in how services work, and self-knowledge about our passions and goals (which for one of us has led to studying psychology at university). We've gained an understanding of how the interview process works, which we'll take into our own futures. And **we've gained experience and skills** that we can apply in future job interviews, like ensuring we're answering interview questions in a way we expect others to!

The Children's Society has confidence in us, and that's given us confidence.

While we've all been busy this year, we've also learnt that making an impact does not have to come at a personal cost. And even though change can take time, it's ultimately worth every effort.

Thank you for reading what we have to say and now we will hand over to our Chief Executive Mark Russell and our Chair Bishop Libby.

Sadia, Jordyn, J'mara, James

> **Joining the young trustees has ... made me a lot more confident talking to people who have positions of power... I expected these big fancy board meetings where it's... strict and uptight and we're just there to listen. Actually, everyone is really lovely and calm... I could just be myself.** Young trustee

> **The Children's Society has changed my life for the better.** Young person The Children's Society has supported

Chair and Chief Executive's introduction

As the heart of The Children's Society, it's right that the first word in our annual impact report belongs to our young trustees. Thank you, Sadia, Jordyn, J'mara and James for your brilliant introduction – it's a privilege to follow you.

And they're right: life is too hard for too many young people. Our latest Good Childhood Report, published last autumn, laid bare once again the challenges facing children's wellbeing in the UK. Too many are unhappy with their lives and are suffering needlessly. The Children's Society is not prepared to let this happen. We are determined to overturn the long decline in children's wellbeing, so they are happier and more hopeful. As Nelson Mandela said, nothing says more about a country than how it takes care of its children.

Over the last year, The Children's Society team has had an incredible impact. Through our services, we've reached over 73,000 young people, supporting their wellbeing and mental health, helping keep them safe from harm, and standing alongside them through difficult times. We've also helped ensure over 400,000 children receive a free school meal, and that half a million children are lifted out of poverty through the removal of the two-child limit. We remain committed to securing lasting change, so every young person can have the best start in life.

We are deeply grateful to our staff, volunteers, trustees and committee members for all they bring to our work. And to every single individual and community that supports us with their time, money or voice. So many generous people, companies, trusts, and faith communities power what we do. We are especially grateful for our long partnership with the Church of England, and the generosity of parishes across the country.

This year, The Children's Society turns 145.

Our founder, Edward Rudolf, was driven by anger that life was too hard for too many children, and by hope that one person could make a difference. Today, we carry that same restless anger at the challenges young people face, but also that same hope that things can change – because The Children's Society is driving that change. And we could not be prouder, especially of the many ways highlighted throughout this report, that young people themselves have helped shape what we have achieved.

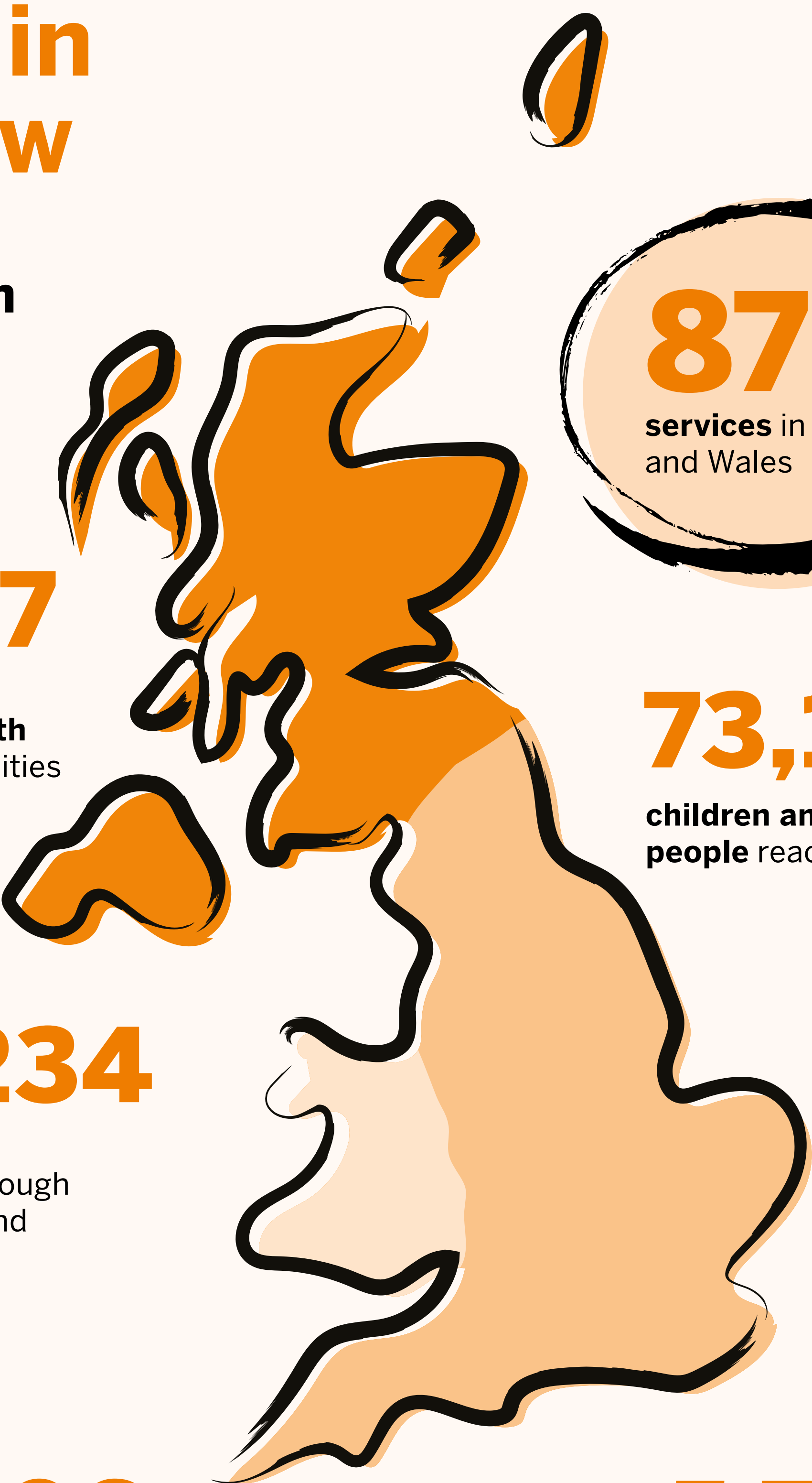
Mark Russell OBE
Chief Executive

+Libby Derby

Rt Revd Libby Lane
Chair of Trustees

Year in review

Our reach



87

services in England and Wales

4,157

young people involved in **youth voice** opportunities

73,186

children and young people reached

10,234

young people supported through **one-to-one** and **group work**

18,606

professionals reached

5,749

parents and carers reached

Our impact

90%
of children and young people improved **wellbeing, safety, or skills and experiences**

86%
said their **situation was better**

98%
felt listened to by us

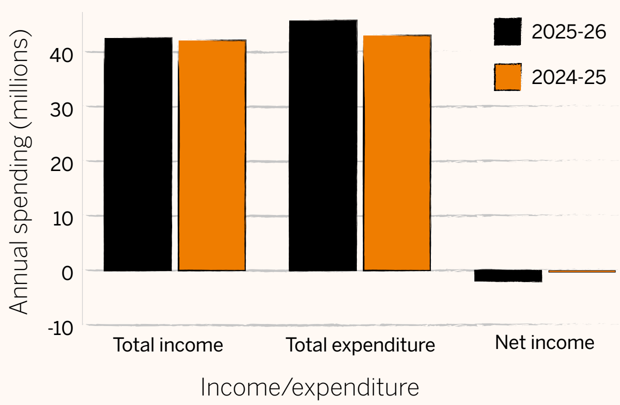
Outcome data based on 2,785 children and young people.

Feedback data based on 1,449 responses from children and young people.

Our finances

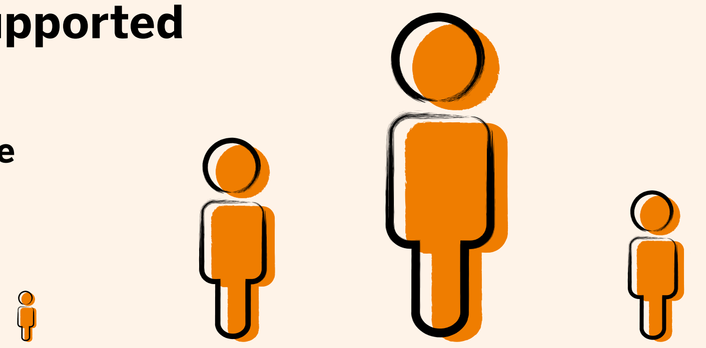
	2025-26	2024-25
	£000	£000
Total income	42,505	42,080
Total expenditure	(45,724)	(42,981)
Net income	(3,219)	(901)
Total funds	**41,845**	**45,064**
Funds represented by		
Unrestricted	25,903	30,120
Restricted	1,491	1,619
Endowments	14,451	13,325

Financial performance 2025-26 and 2024-25



The children and young people we supported

Age



0-5	6-11	12-17	18-24
135	2,460	6,142	1,493

*Age was unknown for 4 children and young people

Gender

5,417	Female
4,562	Male
8	Intersex
39	Non-binary
208	Unknown

Ethnicity

1,082	Asian/Asian British
701	Black/Black British
693	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups
296	Other ethnic groups
6,996	White, British
466	Not Stated/Unknown

Our influence

552 direct engagements and correspondence with **policymakers**

4,896 **pieces of media coverage**, increasing public awareness on key issues

Our framework for delivering impact

Vision
A society built for all children

Goal
Overturn the damaging decline in children's wellbeing, setting a path for long-lasting growth

Aim
Fewer children and young people struggling with low wellbeing

Strategic Objectives
- Grow impact
- Grow capabilities
- Grow income

Values
Supportive, Trusted, Brave, Ambitious

Core principles
Listening to young people
Testing and learning

Focus areas
Emotional health and wellbeing
Risk, vulnerability, abuse and harm
Childhood poverty

Ways of working

Direct support
for children and young people, with increased focus on **early support** so that young people can develop strengths and thrive

Underpinned by our Quality Assurance Framework, which enables consistent, high-quality support

Changing systems

Influencing professional practice and local systems
Influencing national policy

Shaping public attitudes

Producing robust evidence to highlight the need for our work
Gaining media coverage to tell the stories of the young people we work with

Our impact

How we listened to young people in 2025-26

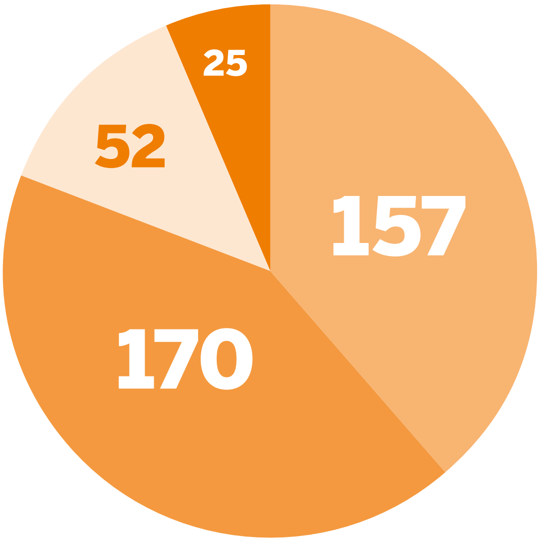
Young people are at the heart of all we do, and the reason we're here. When they talk, we listen.

Youth voice is woven into our one-to-one work, research and evaluation, policy and influencing, and our organisational governance. We also provide proactive, dedicated ways for young people to express themselves.

4,157

were involved in youth voice opportunities

250 were known to us, **3,907** were from external organisations



404 dedicated youth voice opportunities[1]

157 **opportunities** like staff interviews and workshops

170 **service-led participation groups**, such as service improvements

52 **functional groups** including our young trustees

25 **thematic participation groups**, such as about policy and advocacy

At The Children's Society, young people's experiences and views are used to directly shape and change the actions we take.[2]

Youth voice satisfaction survey

82% felt they were making a difference

100% said taking part helped them feel more confident

94% said taking part helped them feel better in themselves

Professionals from other organisations also gave feedback on our youth voice work.[3]

65% agreed **young people's voices and experiences influence the direction and actions The Children's Society takes**

80% agreed **The Children's Society had increased how much children and young people are listened to**

> **I love the way my help can influence change across The Children's Society. I feel very listened to and valued ... My input is noticed and explained how it helped.** Young person involved in youth voice activity

Our youth voice charter guides how we enable, equip, and support young people to influence our work. Our youth voice work involves:

Young people **expressing** their views – thoughts, feelings and perspectives on issues that affect them

Us **listening actively** – often the first time young people have experienced this

Influencing change together – through young people's words and ideas, including within our own organisation

> **I am helped and encouraged to take part and ensure my voice is heard... The Children's Society is a charity that truly cares about young people.** Young person involved in youth voice activity

How we supported young people in 2025-26

87

services in England and Wales

73,186

children and young people reached between 8 and 25 years old.

10,234

supported through one-to-one and small group work

62,952

reached through events such as school assemblies and workshops

Our direct services

We ran **87** services across England and Wales, creating meaningful change in young people's lives.

These included drop-in support for emotional wellbeing, targeted individual and group sessions around exploitation, domestic abuse and serious youth violence, school-based support for mental health, and youth centres providing safe spaces for activities, friendship, and trusted adult relationships.

Children and young people

Through our Impact Measurement Framework, we record **outcomes**[4] like wellbeing, safety, and skills and experience gained by children and young people during their time with us, and gather their feedback on our support.[5]

90% improved in at least one outcome

75% improved in their **wellbeing**

79% improved in their **sense of safety**

Our Impact Measurement Framework uses **Goal Based Outcomes**[6] to measure progress.

- **82%** made meaningful progress towards their goals.
- **73%** improved on a **wellbeing**-related goal.
- **93%** improved on a **safety**-related goal.
- **73%** improved on a **skills and experience**-related goal.

Young people's satisfaction and experience

- **97%** were **satisfied** with the support they received.
- **86%** said we made their **situation** better.
- **93%** felt able to **express their thoughts** with us.

98% felt listened to by us.

About the data

Sample sizes vary because not every child or young person receives the same type of support, has the same type of goal, or completes every measure.

Outcomes data: 2,785 children and young people

Wellbeing outcomes: **2,032**
Safety outcomes: **1,149**

Goal Based Outcomes data: 1,853 children and young people

Wellbeing goal: **992**
Safety goal: **470**
Skills and experience goal: **146**

Satisfaction survey: 1,449 children and young people

Parents and carers

Supporting young people also means supporting those around them.

5,749

parents and carers worked with

1,699

supported through one-to-one or group work

4,050

reached through events, such as community awareness-raising sessions

In November 2025, two of The Children's Society's services were winners at the prestigious Children and Young People Now Awards.

- **Halton Resolve –** supporting children and young people affected by domestic abuse.
- **West Midlands Steer Clear –** supporting young people at risk of knife crime and serious youth violence.

"

Don't lose hope and don't give up. Young person The Children's Society has supported

If I hadn't got support from The Children's Society, I feel like I wouldn't be where I am today.
Young person The Children's Society has supported

57,255

children and young people supported by our emotional health and wellbeing services

5,822
through one-to-one or small group work

51,433
reached through events

4,632

parents and carers worked with through our emotional health and wellbeing services

1,251
through one-to-one or small group work

3,381
reached through events

Our emotional health and wellbeing services

Last year, **31** of our services supported children and young people with their emotional health and wellbeing. They came for a variety of reasons, including anxiety, emotional regulation, anger, school issues, low mood, and family difficulties.

Young people often reported improvements in their emotional wellbeing through their work with us:

90%

showed **improvement in at least one key outcome**

Based on 1,729 children and young people with outcome data in our emotional health and wellbeing services

81%

showed **improvement in their wellbeing**

Based on 1,333 children and young people with wellbeing-related outcome data in our emotional health and wellbeing services

Behind these figures is wide-ranging support delivered in a variety of settings – our own hubs, schools, community centres, GP surgeries, and partner organisations. Last year we strengthened our focus on **early, accessible support**, including through our Time for young people hubs and our Space to grow services.

16,049

young people supported through our Space to grow and Time for young people services

1,406
through one-to-one or small group work

14,643
through events

Spotlight: Space to grow and Time for young people

91% showed an improvement in at least one key outcome

97% felt **satisfied** with the support they received

100% felt **listened to** by us

Feedback data based on 210 responses

1,770

parents and carers supported through our Time for young people and Space to grow services

40
through one-to-one or small group work

1,730
through events

Together, our Space to grow and Time for young people services support children and young people aged 8 to 18 (and up to 25 if they are a care leaver or have a disability) in school and community settings across multiple regions.

> **It's calmed me down a lot, it makes me feel very safe, my [practitioner] was very understanding and listened to everything I had to say.**
> Young person

Space to grow

Space to grow provides early support for children aged 8 to 13 experiencing challenges with their emotional health. Services delivered by The Children's Society operated in Newham (London), Newcastle, Nottingham, Chelmsford, Leeds, Coventry and Warwickshire, Torbay, Manchester, Newport, and Wrexham, with our partners running services in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Belfast.

Space to grow focuses on children less well served by traditional services, for example; children from the global majority, young carers, LGBTQ+ children, children at risk of disengaging with education, and those with special educational needs (SEN).

Support includes one-to-one and group sessions, creative approaches like art-based wellbeing clubs and work with parents, carers and school staff – all with the aim of increasing children and young people's resilience and sense of hope for the future, helping them to feel safe, listened to, valued and supported.

Delivered by The Children's Society | Delivered by Children First Protecting Scotland's Children | Delivered by MACS Supporting Children & Young People

Supported by BBC Children in Need | Supported by The Health Foundation | Supported by Impact on Urban Health

Space to grow is a nationwide partnership between The Children's Society in England and Wales, Children First in Scotland, and MACS in Northern Ireland. It is funded by BBC Children in Need, The Health Foundation, and Impact on Urban Health, with match funding from The Children's Society's impact fund (our designated fund for investment in areas that will enhance our strategic ambition).

Time for young people

Time for young people operated in Newham (London), Leeds, Gateshead, Torbay, and Coventry and Warwickshire. At the heart of the approach is **accessibility** and **choice**. No referrals, appointments, or waiting lists: just support delivered in community settings and schools so young people can access help with their wellbeing when they need it.

Support includes drop-in and structured one-to-one sessions, group work, workshops, community outreach, and support for parent and carers.

While the core **approach is consistent, delivery is shaped locally**, with variations in intensity, setting, and additional provision such as sensory and decompression spaces.

For many, it's their first time feeling heard, understood, and supported.

"I felt really listened to and supported. Having someone to talk to helped me understand my feelings better, and I usually felt calmer and more positive by the end of the session.
Young person

Celebrating one year of Time for young people, Newham (October 2025)

Youth voice in action

Last year, our Time for young people service in Leeds worked with Youth Watch, a group of young volunteers ensuring children and young people's views of health and social care services are listened to. Young people attended staff meetings, sessions and workshops to provide feedback on our hubs.

Young people said:	The Children's Society did:
"Prioritise safety when thinking about access to our physical spaces	Two out of five venues have changed, giving young people a more open route to access. External signage has been improved and lighting added to increase sense of safety after dark
"Have welcome signs in multiple languages	Welcome signage now includes multiple languages. We plan to do the same for social media posts
"Avoid a clinical feel in the hubs	Rooms are set up in a young-people-friendly way, with fidget toys, colouring books, and board games
"Consider including young people in recruitment panels	Young people are actively involved in recruitment across a range of roles, from project staff to senior positions such as trustees. By asking questions, leading activities, and sharing their views with the appointing panel, they play a meaningful role in final decisions

Yasmin's story

When studying for her first-year college exams, Yasmin felt a lot of pressure from different angles. She began feeling anxious, which escalated into panic attacks. Eventually, she reached a point where she "just couldn't get out of bed".

She spoke to her parents, who helped her go to her GP. There, she discussed support options and chose an emotional wellbeing service run by The Children's Society.

"I don't feel like I really would have got help if The Children's Society hadn't been there because it was between them and this other option that was over the phone, and I feel like that wouldn't have really helped me."

At first, Yasmin felt nervous about attending. But meeting Asia, a wellbeing practitioner, helped her feel more at ease.

"I felt a bit awkward at first. But then I met Asia, and I thought she was cool, so I knew that we were going to have good conversations because she gave me that vibe, that she would just understand me."

Through weekly sessions, Yasmin had a consistent space to talk about what she was going through. Over time, as she began to open up, Asia helped her to develop practical ways of managing her emotions, including journalling.

"I was feeling better because it was a place that I could go and just drop it all and then when I left, I had nothing else on my chest to go home with."

The support helped her build confidence and coping strategies that she continues to use today. She has since completed her first year of college and feels much more able to manage her wellbeing.

"When I come to The Children's Society, even though I don't really know anybody personally, I still feel comfortable enough to open up and speak to them. The support has taught me to just talk to people. I'm a lot more confident and comfortable with myself now."

Yasmin now looks ahead with greater confidence, continuing to use the tools she developed through the tailored support she received.

15,931

children and young people supported through our risk and vulnerability services

4,412
through one-to-one or small group work

11,519
reached through events

1,117

parents and carers worked with through our risk and vulnerability services

448
through one-to-one or small group work

669
reached through events

Our risk and vulnerability services

When young people have not received support early enough, we're there, providing a safety net.

Last year, **56** of our services supported children and young people experiencing or at risk of harm such as abuse, exploitation or neglect.

89%

improved in **at least one key outcome**

Based on 1,056 children and young people with outcome data in our risk and vulnerability services

83%

improved **in their sense of safety**

Based on 653 children and young people with safety-related outcome

Through intensive individual and group work, and community and school-based events, these services helped young people process challenges and stay safe. We provided support to thousands of young people across the country, including through our Children At Risk of Exploitation (CARE) Together service in Essex.

Spotlight: CARE Together

172 children and young people supported through one-to-one or small group work

79% showed improvement in their outcome measures

Based on 107 children and young people who completed an outcomes tool

CARE Together supports young people identified as at risk of, or previously having been a victim of, child sexual exploitation. The service focuses on improving young people's **safety**, increasing **awareness of risk**, and supporting **emotional wellbeing** and mental health. Support helps young people understand and respond to sexual exploitation – including issues of grooming, relationships, online risks and safety planning. It also helps build confidence and self-esteem.

Our practitioners built trusted relationships with young people and worked closely with statutory partners to strengthen safeguarding and responses to emerging risks. Recognising the wider impact of sexual exploitation on families, the service is also open to parents and carers.

What this means for young people: The young people we worked with were given a safe, confidential space where their needs were centred, where they could talk openly about their experiences and process them. This helped young people build confidence and strengthen their ability to **recognise and respond to risks of child sexual exploitation.**

Youth voice in action

Young people supported by the service had their voices heard through other services we run in the region. A group of 14 young people were supported to run a learning event for professionals from schools, the police, and children's social care. Young people took to the stage to share their stories and spoke in workshops, helping professionals better understand their experiences. Their contributions had a powerful impact on those who attended.

"What stood out most [from the learning event] was the centrality of young people's voices throughout the day. Hearing directly from young people with such honesty, courage, and pride in their journeys was incredibly moving … Their appreciation for [The Children's Society] workers who had supported them spoke volumes about the quality and consistency of care being offered.
Professional event attendee, community sector

Mabel's story

Sipping a hot chocolate, Mabel, 19, talks of her love of cooking. "The best meal I ever cooked was pork chops, it was delicious. I also made some brownies for my GCSEs." She is warm, open, clear. Direct. Because of her experiences, Mabel doesn't like anything to be misunderstood.

When she was 12, Mabel was targeted online by a man posing as someone her age. Chatting on social media with someone she thought was her peer felt good at first – she had a friend and a sense of acceptance. But as the conversation began to shift, Mabel felt uncomfortable and became unsure about what was happening and how to respond.

The man exploited this uncertainty, and his behaviour escalated into grooming; he tried to coerce Mabel to send intimate pictures of herself, leaving her distressed. "At the time I was feeling upset and lost. I was very confused," she says.

As concerns grew, her school and family became involved, and the police were contacted to support the response.

Only after being referred to a specialist exploitation practitioner at The Children's Society did Mabel begin to process what she had experienced. Through weekly sessions with Rebecca, Mabel learned about grooming, exploitation, and healthy relationships.

"The Children's Society has changed my life for the good ... It's changed my life for the best and honestly, I'm living my life ... I am not confused anymore; I know exactly what the signs are."

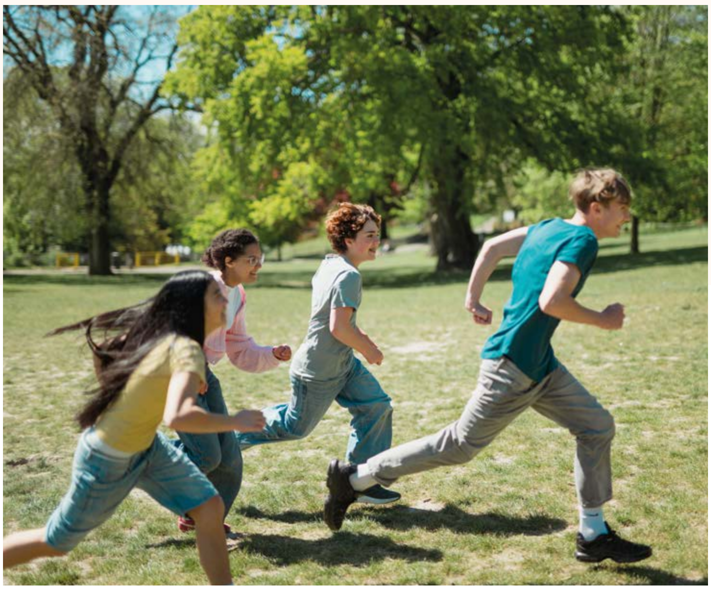
Mabel describes how our support helped her make sense of her complex experiences. "When Rebecca came in, she simplified that for me." The consistency and clarity of the sessions helped her feel safe, able to engage, and process what had happened.

"I was comfortable around her. She gave me the sense that she understood."

We also supported Mabel to develop practical skills to stay safe online and she now responds confidently to unwanted contact.

"I immediately block them, I don't even bother looking at their account."

Mabel is now looking ahead to starting a cooking course and hopes to become a chef. And she supports others by sharing her experiences.



Our work with professionals and partner organisations

Working directly with children and young people, as well as parents and carers, is at the heart of what The Children's Society does. To make an even bigger difference, the systems surrounding young people need to be more effective and supportive. Which is why, across our services, we work with professionals in other organisations, providing training and resources for staff in local authorities, schools, police forces, the NHS, third sector organisations, and businesses, so they can better address risk and vulnerability, and support young people's wellbeing.

18,606

professionals reached through things like training and events

1,239

awareness-raising events delivered to professionals

This year, we conducted research with professionals who work with our services[7] to explore the impact we're making from their perspective.

78%

improved knowledge and understanding of issues facing children and young people, or ideas for how they, their organisation or other professionals offer support

72%

improved how they or their organisation works with or for children and young people

Feedback data based on 46 responses

> **The Children's Society is the best resource we have for helping young girls at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation in establishing trust between 'professionals' and children where situations have led to this trust being damaged.** Professional survey respondent

> **The value that [The Children's Society narrative work] brings us... I make that front and centre for every kind of strategic piece of work I do or any kind of training that I do so that I'm bringing everybody into the room and thinking about the child.** Professional interview respondent

Spotlight: Prevention programme

Commissioned by the Home Office since 2019, our Prevention programme continued to drive improvements in the prevention and disruption of child sexual abuse and exploitation, child criminal exploitation, and modern slavery across England and Wales

> **I was actually blown away by how much I learned ... This is the best training I have attended in some time.**
> Prevention training participant

Supporting partners across the police, statutory services and Government, the Prevention programme focused on identifying and preventing child exploitation, reducing victim-blaming language, improving multi-agency responses and strengthening safeguarding within the Home Office Fraud Strategy 2026-29[8]

- Delivered our award-winning **#LookCloser** awareness campaign
- Developed a missing children **benchmarking tool**
- Created **national guidance** on disrupting exploitation
- Supported seven **police forces** on working with hotels
- Delivered training nationally for **hotel staff**

The programme reached **9,747** professionals through training sessions and events

99% had **improved awareness** of child exploitation

88% intend to make a **change to their practice**

Feedback data based on 1,833 responses

A further **45,409** professionals accessed resources or read our audience-specific newsletters on child exploitation

An annual partner survey was established to learn about longer-term outcomes

85% reported being **better able to advocate for improved support for children** and young people

70% reported **improvements in their ability to work with other agencies** to prevent child exploitation

Feedback data based on 103 responses

Youth voice in action

Our Prevention programme consulted with **159** young people to amplify their voices on issues around exploitation, with findings published in a **Youth Voice Report read by over 1,500 people**.[9] Their insights shaped our training materials and were reflected in meetings with professionals, for example in the banking sector and policing. As a result, the Government's Fraud Strategy highlights the importance of safeguarding children from financial exploitation and includes a story from a young person supported by us.

“**You made me feel as if I was fully listened to.** Young person who participated in a Prevention programme consultation

“**We were all listened to with so much respect and could truly feel our voices were heard.** Young person who participated in a Prevention programme consultation

Our national policy influencing

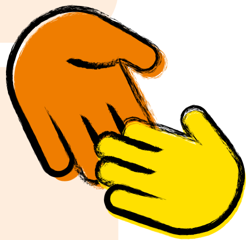
National policy and systems shape young people's lives. We work to improve those affecting their mental health and wellbeing, their safety, and the impact of poverty on them.

Emotional health and wellbeing

- We helped secure the extension of the **Shared Outcomes Fund**, boosting £7 million in funding for community-based early support, alongside partners in the **Fund the Hubs coalition**.[10]
- We influenced the **National Youth Strategy**, including through an open letter backed by 2,500 supporters, helping to secure a **Trusted Adult** commitment for 500,000 young people.
- We continued collective calls on the importance of **Mental Health Support Teams**, contributing to a Government commitment to expand coverage to 100% by 2029-30.[11]

Risk and vulnerability

- Landmark **legislative changes relating to Child Criminal Exploitation** (CCE) were achieved, making CCE a standalone offence and ensuring a statutory definition is included in guidance accompanying the Crime and Policing Act.
- We secured a specific focus on child sexual abuse and exploitation in the **Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy**, after policymakers heeded our calls.
- The Government's new **Fraud Strategy** directly draws on and references our work building awareness on financial exploitation.



Childhood poverty

- In December 2025, the Government published its Child Poverty Strategy – something The Children's Society and sector partners have long called for.
  - We helped secure the monumental **removal of the two-child limit**, lifting an estimated 450,000 children out of poverty by the end of this Parliament.[12]
  - We contributed to securing the expansion of eligibility for **Free School Meals**.

Alongside these, our ongoing work to shift the dial towards early support – including through our partnership working with the Children's Services Funding Alliance – culminated in positive shifts in funding, including:

- £270 million from Government for early support through the new **Children's Social Care Prevention Grant**[13]
- £600 million from Government for the most deprived councils via the **Recovery Grant**.[14]

This past year was the first time we systematically recorded our national influencing activity. Our data shows that we achieved our policy impact through:

25
mentions of The Children's Society in Parliamentary debates

27
engagements with professionals, such as events sharing our work

110
direct engagements with relevant policymakers, such as service visits

141
coalition and partnership engagements, such as coordinating influencing work with sector partners

442
correspondences with relevant policymakers, such as exchanges about our briefings

12,023
campaign actions taken by our supporters

Youth voice in action

In April 2025, we supported 14 young people from our partners, the Oasis Community Learning, to take part in the Parliamentary launch of our joint report on child poverty, A Chance at Childhood. The young people were integral to producing the report, attending workshops about experiences and perceptions of poverty and the barriers faced in low-income households. They spoke passionately to parliamentarians about the impacts of poverty, making compelling arguments for eradicating it.

The Children's Society Oasis end child poverty

> **We are calling on you to act - to invest in real solutions.**
> Young person

> **Poverty is not just a statistic. It is a child going to bed cold. It is a student falling asleep in class because they had to work after school. It is a teenager giving up on their education because survival is more urgent than ambition.**
> Young person

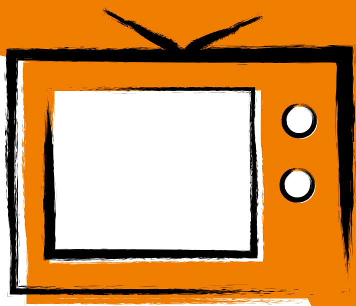
These young people contributed to systemic change; their voices were heard by those at the heart of Government, including those creating and delivering the Child Poverty Strategy

Our media and communications

Through our media and communications work, we raise public awareness of the challenges facing children and young people, and of The Children's Society's work

Through strategic press engagement, we brought important issues to national attention, amplifying young people's voices as much as possible

4,896 pieces of media coverage across TV, radio, print and online reported on the work we do[15]



Our key messages were picked up across media outlets and reached a wide potential audience, helping to shape the media landscape in a way that puts children and young people's wellbeing at its centre

Spotlight:

Netflix's 'Adolescence'

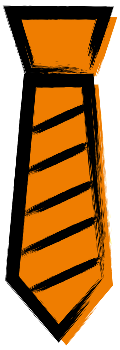
294

pieces of media coverage across national and regional media from our participation in a Downing Street discussion, where we talked about issues raised by the Netflix drama 'Adolescence'. Through this, we contributed to the public conversation around **teenager's mental health and wellbeing**

Spotlight:

School uniform costs

Over 484



pieces of media coverage across national and regional media from our **school uniform costs** media campaign. In June last year, we polled 3,000 parents and carers to understand how school uniform costs affected their families. This drove media outlets to report additional views from parents and carers, further contributing the public discourse around **financial strain for families with children**

Youth voice in action

The media attention to school uniform costs is the result of a long campaign by The Children's Society. Dating back to 2014, it started when a group of young people told us – through our Child Poverty Commission – that not being able to afford the right uniform led to detentions and feelings of shame, embarrassment and isolation. It's testament to the young people who shared their experiences more than 10 years ago that their voices have continued to echo through the media over the past year.

Our impact on the environment and wider social world

At The Children's Society, we create so much positive change. In the course of this work, we inevitably impact the environment and wider social world. Taking our responsibilities seriously, we work to minimise our environmental footprint, and to conduct our business in ways that are good for everyone.

Measures to reduce our environmental impact

In all our buildings

We continued to **recycle ink and toner cartridges**

Working with our IT partner, Coforge, we collected and **recycled redundant IT equipment**

Renewable energy for gas and electricity was used in **98%** of our estate[16]

In our shops

We rotated stock and worked with TRUST[17] accredited recycling merchants to **divert 1,225 tonnes of unsold items away from landfill**

Bags for life made from compostable sugar beet helped to reduce agricultural waste and lower carbon footprint

Energy-efficient light bulbs were used in **86%** of our retail outlets alongside use of **recycled price taggers** and **second-hand shop fittings** in new stores

For travel

We continued to encourage the use of **public transport** wherever possible

A **bike loan scheme** remained available to staff, encouraging emissions-free transport where feasible and safe

Where car use was required, staff used their own or one of 12 fleet cars, which were migrated towards **electric or hybrid vehicles**, reducing CO2 emissions

In our supply chains

We continued to encourage suppliers and contractors to provide us with their **sustainability statements and policies**, which we scrutinise for evidence of good sustainability practices

Our wider social impact

Alongside the children and young people at the centre of our work, we also sought to engage positively with everyone we connected with over the past year.

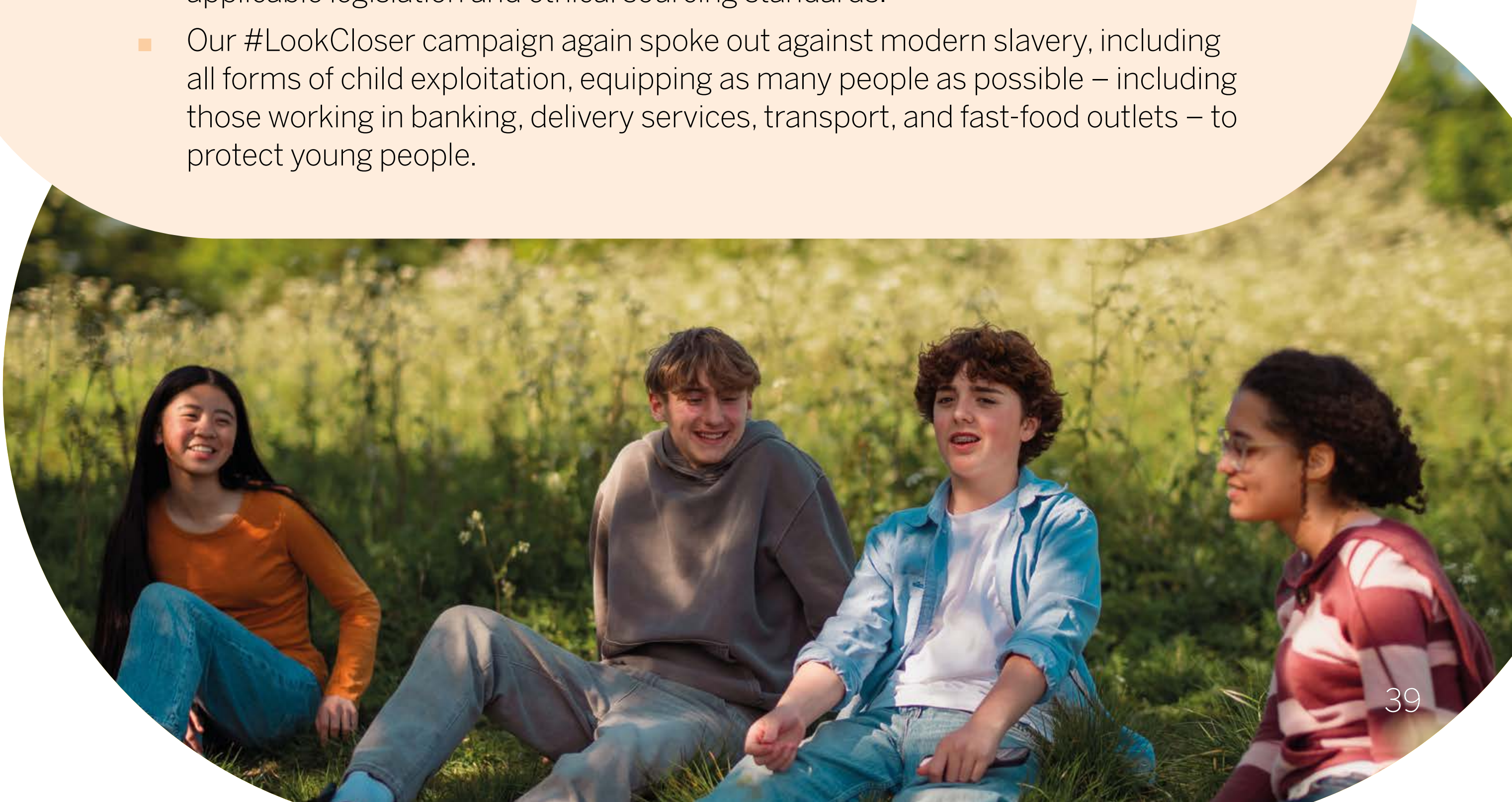
We did this by equipping our staff and volunteers with knowledge and skills to take into the world beyond their day-to-day roles, as well as through our supply chain.

Embedding safeguarding in all we do

- Suppliers were required to complete third-party supplier safeguarding risk assessments.
- Organisation-wide safeguarding policies, procedures, and mandatory training clearly defined responsibilities for staff, volunteers and wider trustees, both within their roles and more broadly as citizens.
- Oversight from our Risk, Audit, and Compliance Committee, specialist safeguarding trustees, and the production of our annual safeguarding report ensures safeguarding in central in our governance.

Opposing modern slavery

- Working closely with our procurement partner, BuyingStation, who support due diligence, onboarding checks, contract management, and ongoing oversight of suppliers, we mitigated risk of modern slavery taking place in our supply chains.
- We continued to require suppliers and contractors to identify, manage and report risks within their own operations and wider supply chains, in line with applicable legislation and ethical sourcing standards.
- Our #LookCloser campaign again spoke out against modern slavery, including all forms of child exploitation, equipping as many people as possible – including those working in banking, delivery services, transport, and fast-food outlets – to protect young people.



Opposing racism

Our work to drive forward anti-racism across our services continued last year. We recognise the deep systemic racism that exists across our society, and are committed to taking action and ownership of what we can do individually and collectively.

We regularly review service data to ensure services are accessible to everyone in the wider communities they operate in, and we consider feedback from an inclusivity perspective.

Last year, for all staff, we:

- provided open discussion spaces for local teams in response to community incidents of hate, racism or far right protests, and developed an awareness and wellbeing resource for managers and staff
- undertook a fifth year of ethnicity pay gap reporting, as part of our wider diversity pay gap reporting, in addition to measuring our progress towards an inclusive culture using the externally accredited TIDE[18] self assessment
- ran an externally facilitated cultural intelligence session as part of National Inclusion Week, highlighting its importance and offering practical ways for staff to apply it in day-to-day work and everyday interactions.

For staff in our young people's services, we:

- piloted an anti-racism survey to help understand awareness, confidence and focus on anti-racist practice in our services, with plans to fully embed it
- continued our 'Committed to Conversations' sessions – safe spaces for staff to come together and hear from others, including external speakers, and create conversation about different aspects of inclusion, with a focus on race inequalities. Topics of discussion last year included racism and safeguarding, and national flags and right-wing radicalisation.

To everyone out there, there's hope, there's going to be a change. Never give up. Young person The Children's Society has supported

On page 48, read about some of the steps taken over the past year to support The Children's Society volunteers and staff as they make a difference for children and young people

For more detail on our environmental and wider social impact, see pages 58 to 62

Our plans for impact in 2026-27

We're proud of our achievements over the past year. But we're ambitious for even greater impact in the year ahead.

Direct work

Next year, we'll continue our work to improve the lives of children and young people and move closer to achieving our goal.

Early support offers will be developed and scaled, including through our Time for young people and Space to grow services, helping more young people access wellbeing support at the earliest opportunity to avoid emotional difficulties escalating

Our **youth work offer will evolve**, building on the youth centre-based work we currently deliver in Gloucestershire and Bedfordshire. For many young people, having an open access youthwork space nearby is vitally important

Services for young people impacted by **child exploitation**, **domestic abuse** and **substance misuse** will support those experiencing or at risk of harm

Our annual **Young Carers Festival**, in partnership with the YMCA Fairthorne Group, will again bring together hundreds of young carers from across England

Research will keep our understanding of children and young peoples' lives and needs up to date. Learning from **evaluations** about the effectiveness and impact of our services and their economic value will remain central to our work.

Work with professionals

Alongside direct delivery, we're committed to developing our learning and development for professionals.

- In partnership with the **Carers Trust**, we'll continue delivering our **Young Carers in Schools award programme**.[19] The scheme will be extended across primary and secondary schools, assisting school staff through training, resources and support, to identify and respond to the needs of young carers in their school.
- Delivery of a comprehensive range of training through our **Prevention programme**[20] will continue.

Throughout our services, close working with multi-agency partners will continue, influencing professionals, businesses and community organisations to ensure effective, collaborative safeguarding responses and avoiding service duplication. And we will ensure that children and young people's voices are heard, helping to shape positive changes in professional practice across sectors.

Policy work

Over the coming year, we will keep **holding the Government to account for ensuring progress** on the strategies, policies and legislation relating to The Children's Society's key areas of focus.

We will also continue to **respond in agile ways to the fast-changing policy landscape**, reminding Government at every opportunity that the decisions they make and policies they create impact children and young people – now and in the future. We will continue to advocate for Government to place children and young people's wellbeing at the very heart of political thinking.

Youth voice in action

Our policy work will be firmly rooted in the views and experiences of young people. Specifically, we will consult with young people on:

their **experiences of support during school holidays**

their **perspectives on the accessibility of mental health services**, especially for underserved young people

teenager's **understandings and experiences of peer relationships**, behaviours and interpersonal violence

As part of our ongoing partnership with Oasis Community Learning, we'll build on our **Young Influencers programme**. Piloted last year, it's designed to give young people a say in political decisions that affect them and their peers. Through this programme, we'll continue to offer young people the chance to engage in campaign and influencing activities, and in the process develop their confidence, knowledge and skills.

And we will continue our **Good Childhood research programme**, publishing our state-of-the-nation **Good Childhood Report**, capturing the views of thousands of young people on their wellbeing, and refreshing our **Good Childhood Index**. Insights from this will inform our policy influencing on wellbeing.

Evidencing our impact

We've come a long way in measuring our impact. But we know there's more we can do, and we'll keep progressing our multi-year workplan for this.

Building on the strong foundation of our Impact Measurement Framework will help us understand more about the longer-term outcomes and impact of our work.

Working closely with staff across our organisation, as well as with young people and external partners, will make sure we can fully capture this impact. This means we can continue to learn from what we measure, making sure we put insight into action to maximise our future impact.

> **It's important to involve young people because it's big decisions about young people's lives.** Young trustee

Why our work is so important

The work done over the past year, and the work we will do in the year to come, is vital. As our young trustees noted in their introduction and as the descriptions of our work indicate, life can be extremely challenging for many children and young people. External research, official statistics, and our own research indicate this too.

Last year, we established our Young Lives Databank – a consolidated internal resource for us to track the latest data and trends that are relevant to our work. The evidence we have collated in this resource paints a concerning picture.

Emotional health and wellbeing

Children's happiness with their lives continued to decline across a range of areas, including family, friends, appearance, and school[21]

The number of **children and young people accessing mental health services has increased** by 5% in the last year, and 50% in the last five years[22]

46% of the children and young people waiting for support from mental health services across England were **waiting more than a year**, and **14%** were waiting more than two years[23]

Risk and vulnerability

At least **12,120** children and young people **were affected by sexual exploitation** in the year ending March 2025, as reported through children in need assessments completed by social care services.[24] This number does not account for those who may not be known to social care

Poverty

More than a quarter of children experienced relative poverty[25] in the year ending March 2026, with the rate being higher for children in lone-parent families, and higher still for children from the global majority[26]

The evidence is clear: children and young people are suffering, and the work we do remains crucial to their lives.

Our impact with and for young people is only possible because of the work we do across the organisation to strengthen our capabilities, grow our income and maintain strong governance. The next pages set out how we do that.

Enabling our impact

Growing the capabilities of volunteers and staff

Our people are central to everything we achieve. They make our impact possible and play a fundamental role in delivering our ambition to overturn the damaging decline in children's wellbeing. Therefore, it's vital we support them to enhance their capabilities.

Our human-centred People Experience Framework helps everyone who volunteers and works with us feel valued, supported, and able to thrive.

Our focus remains on continually building a culture where **diversity** is valued, **inclusion** is felt, and everyone has the **support** they need to make a difference.

2,821
active volunteers

861 staff
at year end

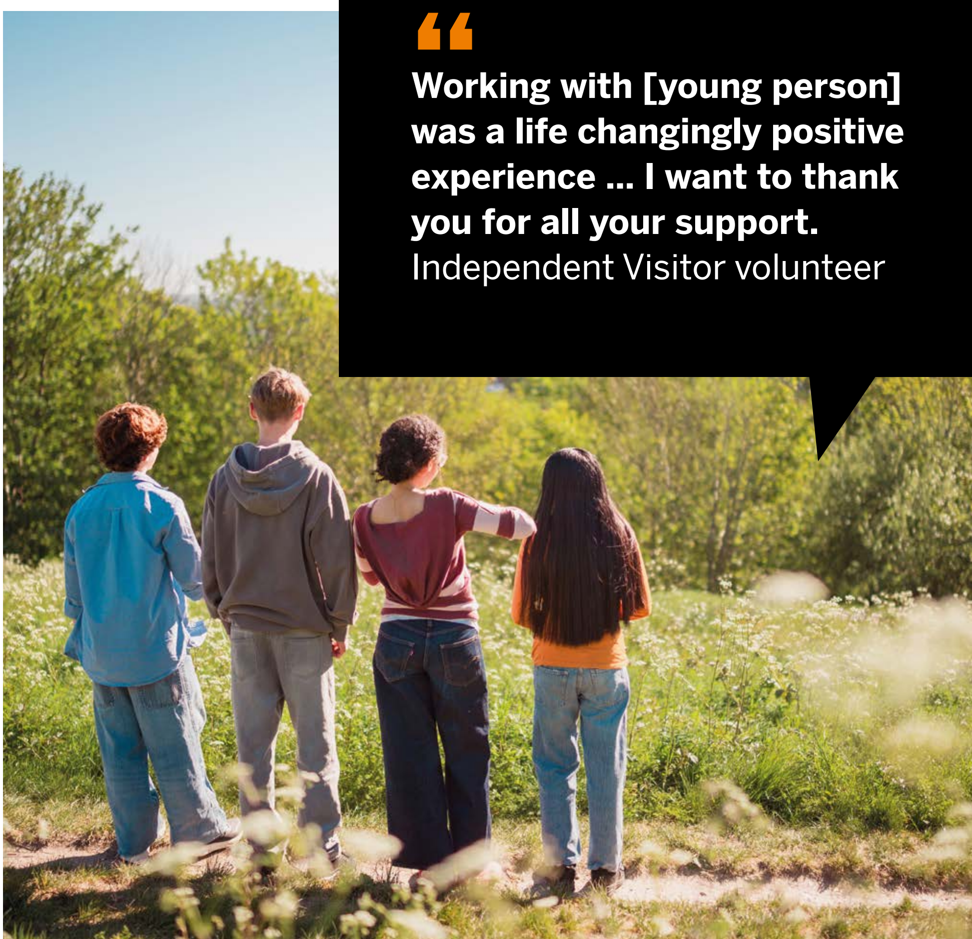
464
in impact roles

300
in fundraising roles, including retail

97
in enabling roles

Volunteers extended our reach far beyond that of our staff alone. Around **2,000** retail volunteers supported income generation for our services, while over **550** volunteers worked directly with children and young people, helping us reach those who need us most.

> **Working with [young person] was a life changingly positive experience ... I want to thank you for all your support.**
> Independent Visitor volunteer



> **Flexible working at The Children's Society has made a real difference to my life. It has allowed me to balance my role with being a parent, including managing childcare and school pickups … this flexibility and trust have been key to my wellbeing [and] commitment.**
> Staff member

Over the past year, we improved how people join, contribute and grow in the organisation through things such as:

Faster onboarding, stronger safeguarding

Our updated systems mean faster onboarding for staff and volunteers, and improved Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) processes. This means a better starting experience, reduced delays in service delivery and strengthened safeguarding for children and their families.

A new capability framework

A new capability framework was introduced. This co-designed framework, tested across the whole organisation, defines essential skills, knowledge, and behaviours for our staff, and is designed to enable them to operate and evolve in changing contexts, to address complex challenges, and grow in their roles. It supports career development, aligns individual contributions with strategic objectives, and promotes a positive workplace culture.

More confident management

Clearer policies and strengthened guidance help managers focus on supporting their teams and effective delivery of young people's services. Last year, we improved support for managers by strengthening guidance for them, supporting consistent and fair decision-making.

"The guidance is clear and easy to follow, helping us make decisions quickly and confidently."
Service manager

Strengthened leadership

Leadership skills and capability across the organisation were strengthened:

31 **staff** actively undertook leadership and management apprenticeships.

All **senior leadership** and **executive leadership** teams took part in a structured Inspiring Leadership programme.

16 **managers and leaders** took part in Compass, our bespoke management development programme.

25 **technical staff** commenced apprenticeships that develop specialist and technical leadership skills.

Youth voice in action

Young people are actively involved in growing our capabilities, for example through participating in recruitment across our services and leadership roles. This ensures we maintain strong, values-led recruitment processes.

41 young people took part in **11 recruitment processes** this year, sitting on interview panels and taking part in candidate activities. They helped assess whether candidates could build trust, communicate well and engage meaningfully with those we support. Their feedback is shared directly with hiring managers

> **"I would speak to [potential candidate], they were nice, but I wouldn't cry with them.**
> Young person involved in recruitment process

Whether through volunteers extending our reach, new staff enjoying a better start, managers feeling clearer and more confident, leadership skills being nurtured, or young trustees shaping recruitment decisions, our people are what make our impact possible, and that is why we try and ensure that as an organisation we have a positive impact on them.

Growing our income

Strong financial stewardship

Our capability to make a difference relies on growing our income and ensuring it's aligned to our vision, goal, aims and activities. Our income - along with strong financial management – are key to enabling all the work we do.

We worked hard to sustain and grow our finances across our core income streams last year.

£14.4m
Institutional funding – comes mainly from local authorities and the NHS to deliver contracted services

£2m
Philanthropy – income from trusts, foundations, corporate partners and major individual donors

£6.5m
Supporter fundraising – contributions generated through community events, challenge activities and national campaigns

£4.6m
Legacy giving – gifts left in wills, often by long-term supporters of The Children's Society

£12.6m
Retail income – proceeds from purchases made in our charity shops

We used these funds to create the impact described throughout this report, accountable to our board, commissioners and supporters, and in line with our goal. **For statutory detail on our finances, see page 68.**

Youth voice in action

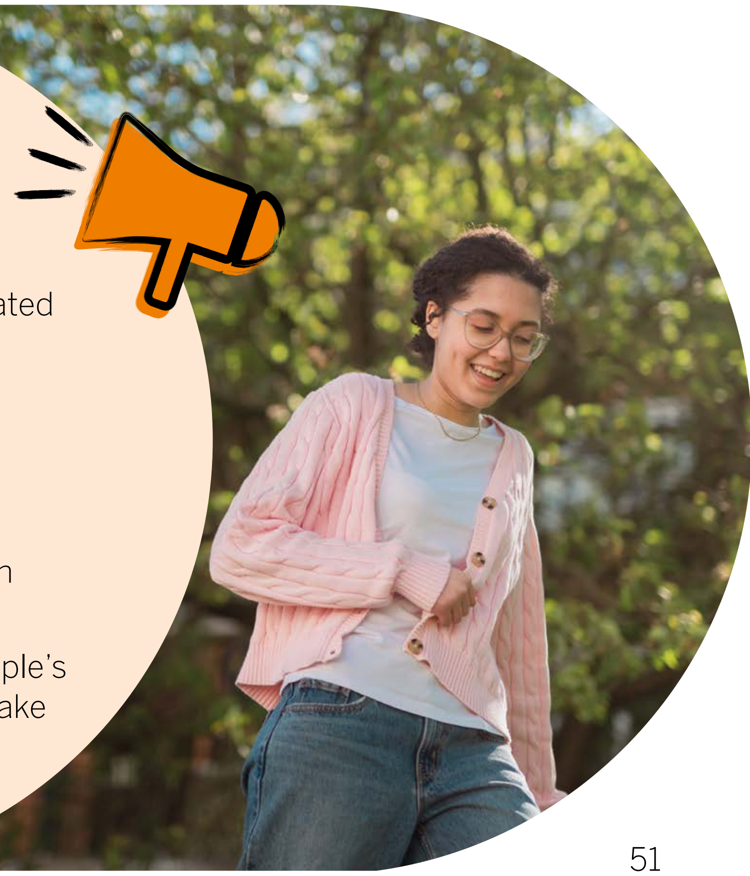
We're proud to involve young people in some of our financial decisions in proportionate, well-managed, and ethical ways, like Team Gold.

Team Gold is a group of young people who meet regularly to decide how small grants should be allocated to other children and young people supported by The Children's Society.

They assessed **112 applications** and **funded 106** last year, awarding **£15,657**.

Three Pot of Gold grants funded, supporting individuals and groups to develop social action, youth voice, and participation projects.

103 Golden Tickets funded, supporting young people's wellbeing by helping them connect with others and take care of themselves. **86 were used.**



Our supporters

Our supporters play a vital role in helping us grow our income, enabling change for children and young people. Across the country, individuals, local communities and corporate partners continued to give their time, money and voice in support of our charity – running Christingle services, holding open garden events, undertaking swimming challenges, hosting gala dinners, golf days and much, much more.

71,767
active supporters[27]

19,344 gave **time**
such as house box coordinators

47,103 gave **money**
such as Christingle or monthly gifts

6,984 gave **voice**
such as signing petitions

We have a community of over **28,000** generous regular givers whose contributions generated over **£3 million** in 2025-26. Over **1,000** new regular givers joined us, contributing by direct debit or through their payroll

Spotlight:

Give Hope

£132,000
from 2,877 donations

Give Hope, our online shop where gifts can be purchased for a child who's struggling, raised over **£132,000** from **2,877 donations**.

Gifts include daily essentials such as clothes, food, toiletries and education supplies, as well as items to help with rest and relaxation, like craft kits or a mindful music bundle.

Spotlight:

Our high street shops

£12.6m
from our retail portfolio, including Gift Aid

Our supporters are at the heart of our retail network: stock donors, customers, volunteers and neighbouring businesses all support our mission.

Last year, over **250 staff** and **2,000 volunteers** across our **103** shops served **1.9 million** customers, generating sales of **£12.6 million** from pre-loved donations at affordable prices.

We opened new shops in Calverton and Alvaston and expanded the footprint at our fantastic Burnham-on-Sea shop by leasing the neighbouring shop. A devastating fire temporarily closed our Ripley shop – thankfully without any injuries. Within days of the fire, the local Co-Op supermarket generously offered space in their premises for the Ripley team to open a pop-up shop.

Supporter story

In April last year, three brothers – James, Andrew and Will Emerton – rode a tiny green mechanical bus, barely big enough to accommodate them, from Land's End to John o' Groats. Marking the centenary of their family business, they raised over £11,000 for The Children's Society (and two other charities), inspired by their grandmother, a lifelong supporter of our work.

Travelling at no more than 12 miles an hour, they captured national attention and were featured on BBC News and other media outlets, helping to raise awareness of our work as well as vital funds.

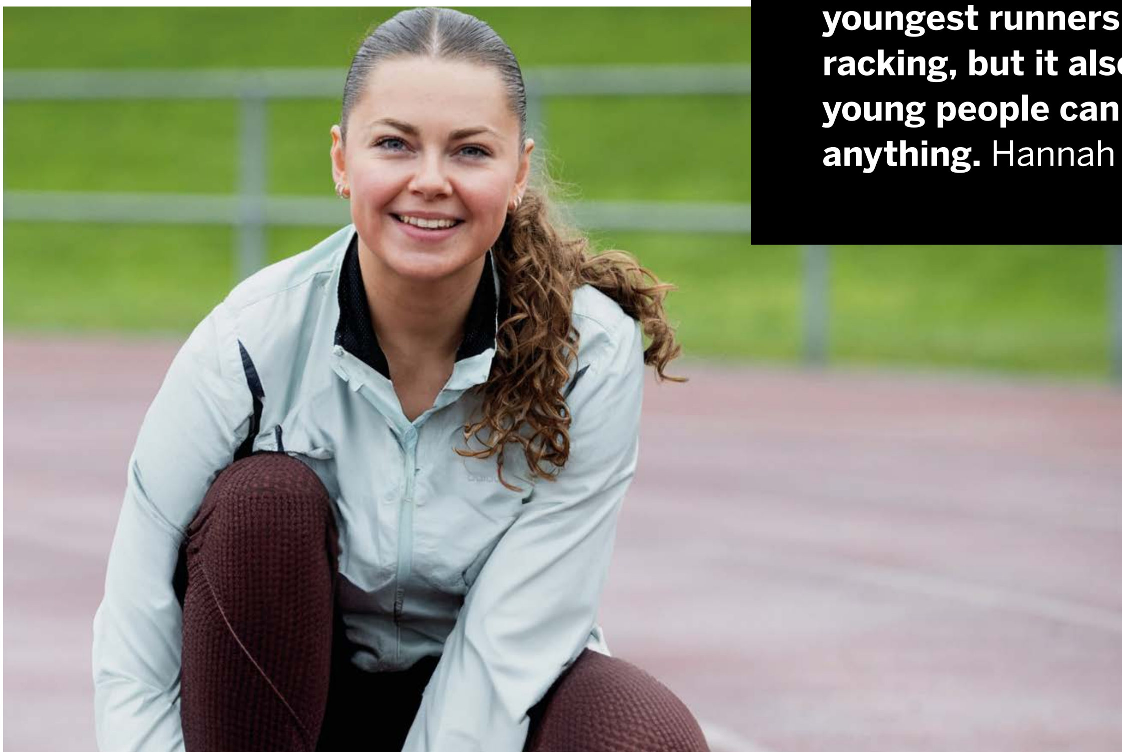
The Emerton family, left to right: Simon Emerton, Gerald Emerton, Deana Emerton, James Emerton, Andrew Emerton and William Emerton

Youth voice in action

Our flagship London Marathon event once again saw incredible supporters go the distance for young people. Among them was 19-year-old Hannah.

Passionate about mental health, she has been actively involved in our youth voice work, advocating for better support and safe spaces for young people to go when they need help.

> **It feels really great to have my friends and family here. The atmosphere is amazing. Knowing I'm one of the youngest runners is nerve-racking, but it also shows that young people can achieve anything.** Hannah



Ensuring effective governance

Strong governance underpins how we grow our income and increase our capabilities. It provides clear structure, accountability and oversight, ensuring we use resources effectively, manage risk responsibly, and stay aligned with our charitable purpose. Our robust governance structure continued to provide assurance and oversight for our charitable activity over the past year.

Our governance structure

Board of trustees

Responsible for governance and strategic direction of the organisation, providing oversight through review, reporting and constructive challenge

Organisational Development Committee

Oversees organisational governance, leadership development and the effectiveness of human resources policies

Finance and Investment Committee

Ensures financial sustainability, appropriate use of resources and alignment with growth priorities

Risk, Audit, and Assurance Committee

Oversees risk, safeguarding, compliance and internal controls, and external auditing to ensure protection of our beneficiaries

Clear delegation and strong controls ensure decisions are made at the right level, enabling staff and volunteers to focus on delivering services, influencing systems and improving outcomes. Our governance also strengthens accountability and trust with young people, partners, and funders through transparent reporting and robust assurance.

Youth voice in action

Young people are central to our organisational governance, with young trustees part of decision-making.

For statutory detail on our governance, please see page 63.

"[having young trustees] allows The Children's Society to be confident their work is centred around what young people need the most. Young trustee

Thank yous

The Children's Society's work and impact would not be possible without our dedicated supporters. We're so grateful to our corporate partners, donors, and funders, including those who wish to remain anonymous, for supporting our work over the past year. We thank the following for their significant contributions:

- Carol Anne Kennedy
- Ms Catharine Williams
- Eileen F. Carter
- Janet Legrand OBE KC (Hon)
- Tim and Katie Newman
- Tim Jones and Kim Walker
- Armed Forces Covenant Trust
- Bawden Fund
- Baily Thomas Charitable Fund
- BBC Children in Need
- Brian Woolf Trust
- Cheltenham Borough Council
- Eveson Trust
- Islamic Relief UK
- Ofenheim Charitable Trust
- The Peter Dixon Charitable Trust
- Robert Fleming Hannay Memorial Charity
- Sir James Knott Trust
- Sport England
- The Thomas Waley-Cohen Charitable Trust
- BGC Group
- Chicken Cottage Limited
- ClearScore UK
- Coinstar
- Fothergill's Seeds Ltd
- Kennedys Law LLP
- Kia UK
- Labb
- Manchester Airports Group
- PPHE Group
- Valero Energy Ltd
- Vitabiotics Foundation
- The Health Foundation
- Impact on Urban Health

During the year ending March 2026, two individuals were awarded honorary lifetime membership to The Children's Society for their outstanding contribution to the charity:

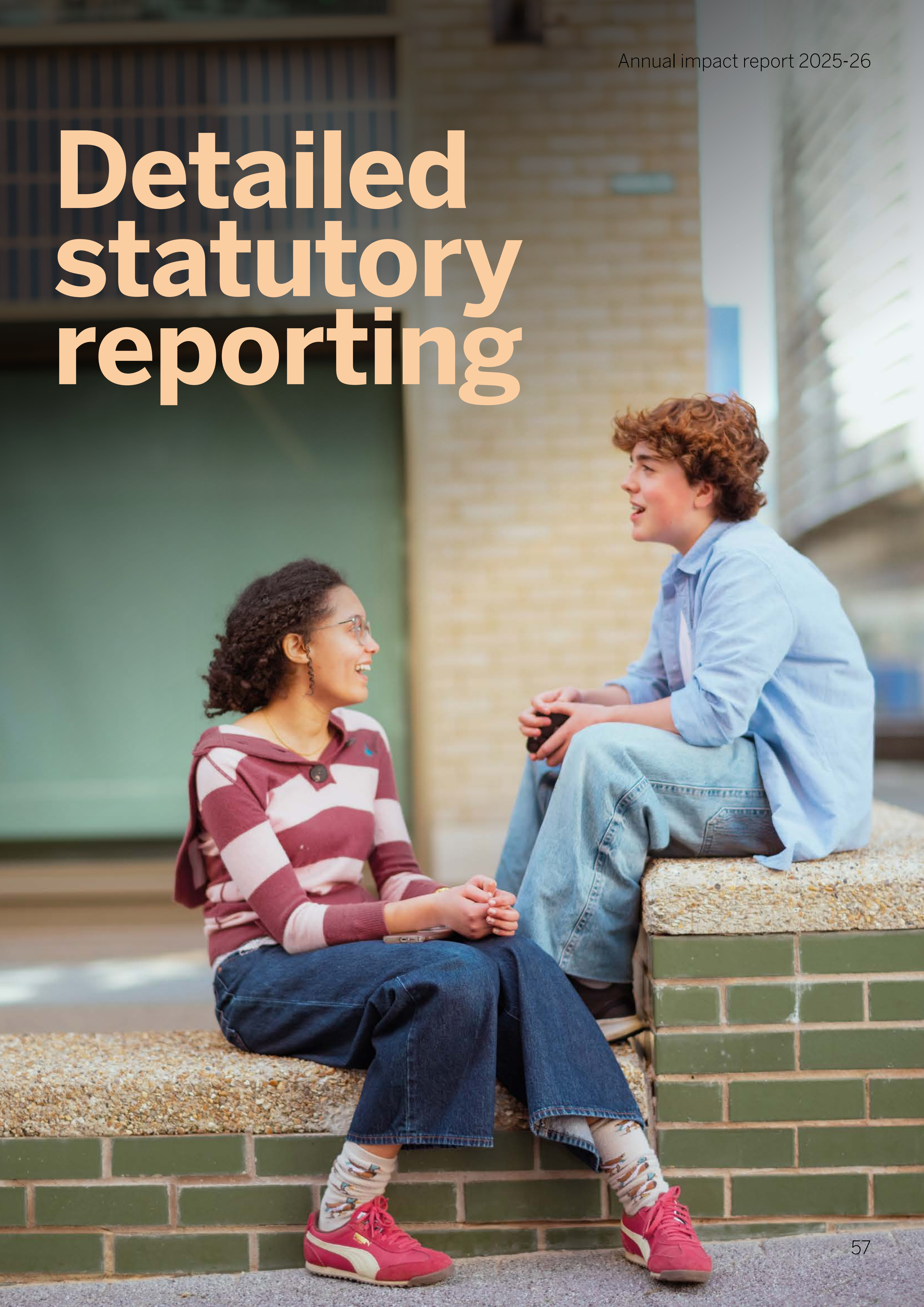
- Diana Snagge
- Rosemary Sweet

Thank you to our kind supporters who thoughtfully remembered us in their wills, resulting in a gift from their estate over the past 12 months.

We remember them with heartfelt thanks below and pay tribute to their support.

Edna Ackroyd
Heather Joan Alliston
Jill Allum
Philip H Andrews
Joyce Ann Appleton
Philip Arthur Avery
Susan Makascal Bailey
Margaret Ann Ballard
Barbara Jean Barker
Betty Grace Constance Barnett
Joan Marion Barnett
Margaret Mary Baynes
Jean Beardow
David John Bennett
Cynthia Ruth Berry
Avis Blake
Diane Yvette Bonny
Irene Broadhead
June Dorothy Brooks
Norah Kathleen Broomfield
Ann Elizabeth Brown
Lois Muriel Buckley
Margaret Buckley
Joyce Dorothy Bullock
Robert William Bunn
Mildred Elise Burgoyne
Edith Gillian Buxton
Margaret Campbell
Bessie Ann Canning
Valerie Jane Carlisle
Janet Margaret Chadwick
Audrey Mary Cheeseman
Mair Claret
Janet Mackenzie Clark
Margaret Clark
Lexie Clarke
Gillian Elizabeth Cleaver
Margaret Clipsham
Walter Philip Charles Cobb
John Alexander Cole
Nora Josephine Colley
Joy Margaret Connell
Anne Cecelia Cook
Geoffrey Cooke
Pauline Ann Cooper
Christine Anne Coulthread
Sheila Mary Croft
Kathleen Mary Cross
Lillian Amy Currell
Barbara Alice Cutter
Jocelyn Dalton
Rosemary Jeanetta Dampier
Una Margaret Davis
Charles Ivor Davis
Peggy Jean Denman
Stella Elizabeth Dibble
Sheila Frances Dobner
Hazel Doughty
Margaret Joan Duxbury
Marian Elizabeth Eagles
Irene Easey
Jennifer Isabel Elston
Brian Emmett
Margaret Anne Exley
Bernard Manion Fennell
Margaret Ferguson
Joan Finch
Jean May Findlay
Barbara Firth
Bryan Ivor Follett
Peter Hugh Ford
Patricia Foster
Valerie Jean Fox
Elsa Margarethe Fraser
Jeanette Freeman
Mrs Fry
Dorothy Marguerite Fuller
Yvonne Jacqueline Gadd
Barbara Gardiner
Prudence Mary Gingell
Elspeth Alison Drummond Gordon
Brenda Gove
Shirley Barbara Stafford Grist
Audrey Grocott
Jean Grundy
Gillian Ann Hale
Eileen Hall
Patricia Mary Hilda Halsall
Dorothy Edna Hardwick
Pauline Hardy
Reginald Arthur Harlow
Kathleen Margaret Harris
Margaret Hartley
Elaine Margaret Hault
Mary Hawker
Marta Haworth
Marilyn Jane Healy
Peter John Helm
Joan Hey
Betty Heyworth
David James Hill
Dorothy Mossop Hilton
Janet Hobbs
Douglas Pilkington Hodgson
Joyce Beryl Holliday
Michael Holt
Margaret Elizabeth Holthouse
Kathleen Ann Horsley
Sheila Ann Horswill
Jennie May Howard
Audrey Howgate
George Raymond Huck
Philip Laurence Hutchinson
Evelyn Louise Jeffs
Penelope Anne Jones
Jillian Kennaugh
Christopher Allen Lane
Barbara Mary Latham
Jennifer Daisy Latto
Philip Walter Lawrence
Gordon Leaf
Margaret Elizabeth Lee
Trevor Vincent Lewis
Ann Mary Lewis
Mary Jeffrey Lillie
Kathleen Mary Lindsay
Anthony David Lloyd-Jones
Carol Long
Sheila Margaret Loraine White
Alfreda Mary Lowe-Willetts
Derek Macklam
Roger A Marks
Nancy Lilian Martel
Doris Ellen Joan Martin
Margaret Anne Martin
Avery Elizabeth Matthews
Alistair James McArthur
John McCann
Muriel Metcalfe

Detailed statutory reporting



Statement on environmental impact

Protecting the environment

The Children's Society recognises the importance of environmental issues to young people and to our planet. We take our role in reducing our environmental footprint seriously, and are committed to conducting ourselves in a responsible, sustainable way that protects both people and planet. We're on a journey to reduce our environmental impact while maintaining high operational standards across all activities.

Our operational activities

The majority of our retail stock is donated by customers and companies. With turnover this year of £12.6 million, including Gift Aid contributions, just under one third of our income comes from environmentally friendly operations, generated from the sale of donations that are reused, recycled, or upcycled. We do all that we can to minimise any unsold donations going to landfill, for example, rotating unsold stock between shops, seeking to sell all that's donated to us.

Inevitably, some of the donations we receive cannot be sold through any of our shops and in that circumstance, we work with a small number of recycling merchants who buy unsold stock from us. Our recycling merchants are either Trader Recycling Universal Standard (TRUST) accredited, meaning they are audited to ensure legal compliance and that robust minimum standards are adhered to, or are currently going through the TRUST audit process. Working with our recycling merchants has diverted 1,225 tonnes of unsold stock from landfill.

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

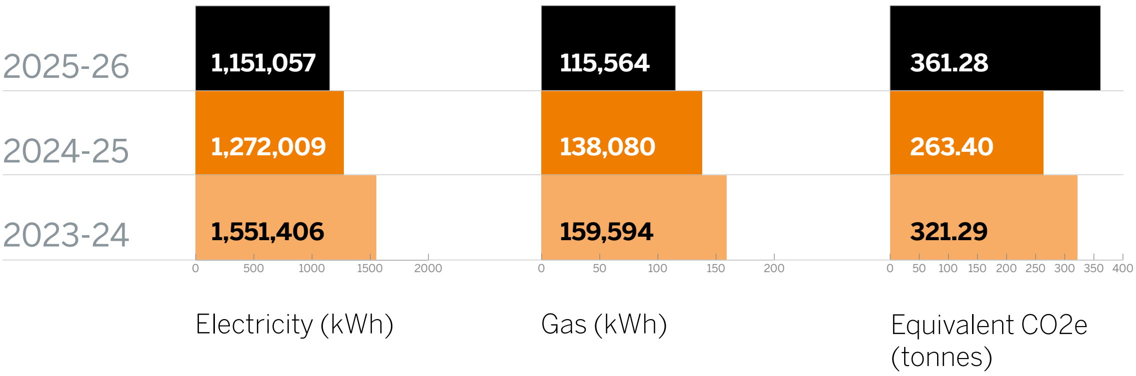
- continuing to use bags for life made from sugar beet, selling **117,000** in 2025-26
- **86%** of shops now have energy efficient lighting, reducing energy consumption by approximately **70%**
- continuing to use **100%** recycled plastic price taggers
- recycling or purchasing second hand shop fittings as we open new stores
- configuring the tills across our **103** shops to capture the number and average weight of each garment we sell. This then calculates the carbon saved by a customer purchasing a pre-loved garment where carbon is not created as it would be with the manufacture of a new garment. The total carbon saved for the year was **977** tonnes
- printing estimated CO_2 emissions savings on customer receipts, to help encourage those purchasing items in our retail shops to be environmentally minded.

In addition to our retail initiatives, we have:

- continued to offer a bike loan scheme
- continued to recycle ink and toner cartridges
- migrated our car fleet from those with internal combustion engines to a mix of battery electric, plug-in hybrid, or self-charging hybrid vehicles, thereby reducing CO_2 emissions by around **85%**
- worked with our IT partner, Coforge, to minimise energy usage and to collect and recycle redundant IT equipment.

Carbon and energy reporting

The year ending 31 March 2026 is our sixth 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:



We use public transport where possible, but where car travel is needed staff either use their own or one of 12 fleet cars. In 2025-26, our combined mileage came to 565,047 (2024-25: 717,657 and 2023-24: 424,689). This equates to 157.5 tonnes of CO_2 or 642,204.5 kWh using the unknown fuel conversion factor.

When contracts for the fleet vehicles expired, we moved from combustion engined vehicles to electric or hybrid vehicles. Based on the 12 cars in the fleet, and with the assumption that the fleet size remains unchanged, over the term of the four-year leases, the move to electric vehicles will cut CO_2 from 116 tonnes to 17 tonnes, representing reduction of 85% against the equivalent combustion engined vehicles.

In July 2025, our executive leadership team published our Environmental Commitment Statement that highlights more about what we have done and our next steps.

Statement on social impact

Safeguarding children, young people, and vulnerable adults

Safeguarding is embedded within The Children's Society's governance and leadership structures, with clear lines of accountability at every level. The board of trustees holds ultimate accountability for ensuring that appropriate structures, processes and resources are in place to safeguard children, young people, and adults at risk, and to ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements.

On behalf of the board, the Risk, Audit, and Compliance Committee (RACC) maintains oversight of safeguarding and quality practice. Safeguarding is a standing agenda item at every RACC meeting, ensuring regular scrutiny of risks, trends and performance. A Lead Safeguarding Trustee (Florence Kroll CBE), who brings specialist expertise, sits on RACC and provides independent challenge and advice to the board. The board is further strengthened by two additional safeguarding trustees who bring both strategic and operational safeguarding experience.

The board receives an annual safeguarding report which provides assurance on the effectiveness of safeguarding governance and operational practice across the charity. This includes analysis of safeguarding activity and compliance, emerging risks, learning from incidents and reviews, and developments in safeguarding and quality practice. Trustees use this information to hold senior leaders to account and to commission further assurance activity where required.

The chief executive officer is the senior accountable officer for safeguarding across The Children's Society, with responsibility for fostering a strong safeguarding culture and ensuring robust reporting, escalation and accountability arrangements. Corporate accountability for safeguarding policy and practice sits with the executive director of Youth Impact, who provides expert leadership and oversight across the organisation.

The safeguarding and quality practice team provides specialist advice and support, strengthens safeguarding practice across all areas of the charity, and leads continuous improvement in the quality of services delivered to young people.

Safeguarding responsibilities are clearly defined for all staff, volunteers, and trustees. These responsibilities are embedded within role profiles, supported through mandatory training, and reinforced through the consistent application of organisation-wide safeguarding policies and procedures. Safeguarding is integral to our culture at The Children's Society, supported by a comprehensive and interconnected framework of governance, leadership, training, oversight, and learning that enables us to safeguard effectively and responsibly.

Modern slavery

Modern slavery is a significant global human rights issue that includes human trafficking, sexual exploitation, forced and bonded labour, domestic servitude, and child labour. We are committed to acting ethically and with integrity in our relationships and to taking every reasonable opportunity to act within our direct operations and wider sphere of influence to help ensure that slavery and human trafficking do not take place in connection with our operations.

Modern slavery risks can be difficult to identify without effective supplier visibility, governance controls, due diligence and active, ongoing monitoring. Suppliers are expected to identify, manage and report risks within their own operations in line with applicable legislation and ethical sourcing standards.

We recognise that modern slavery risk varies across our supply chain and requires ongoing governance, supplier oversight, and active monitoring. While the overall risk within our operations is considered low, risks remain and are managed through our systems and controls, supported by our procurement partner, BuyingStation. BuyingStation supports supplier onboarding, due diligence, contract management, compliance monitoring, and ongoing supplier oversight to help mitigate modern slavery risks.

We maintain governance controls, procurement processes, and supplier management practices designed to support compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and to strengthen ethical supplier oversight.

Through our work to tackle exploitation, abuse, trafficking and other harms faced by young people, we know we will encounter situations of modern slavery. Our safeguarding, recruitment, procurement, and whistleblowing policies and procedures are critical in supporting a robust, safe, and ethical response.

In line with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, we published our **modern slavery statement** for this financial year, which provides further detail on our approach to preventing modern slavery and includes examples of issues encountered through our work with children and young people.

Equitable and fair pay

Our ability to deliver lasting impact for children and young people depends on having skilled, motivated and committed people. We pay our people fairly, equitably and responsibly, in a way that supports our vision and goal while safeguarding the long-term sustainability of the organisation.

Our approach to pay balances external benchmarking and internal equity and affordability, helping us attract and retain the skills and experience needed to deliver high-quality work. Oversight of remuneration sits within our governance framework, with trustees retaining responsibility for the pay, pensions, and benefits of the chief executive and executive leadership team.

Our annual pay review is informed by clear principles:

- We work within the parameters of our pay policy and structures.
- We engage with our recognised trade union partner, Unite the Union, to determine any cost-of-living pay awards, supporting transparency, challenge, and staff representation.
- We go beyond statutory requirements by carrying out in-year diversity and gender pay gap reporting, enabling timely action to promote pay equity.
- We aspire to consider Living Wage Foundation recommendations to support fair pay that reflects the cost of living. We were aligned with the real Living Wage in 2025-26 but have recently moved away from this due to the pressures on our income and affordability. We aim to reconsider recommendations in the future.

This year, we continued implementing our new pay model, including job levels and a refreshed pay policy. We introduced a new pay structure in April 2025, alongside a negotiated pay award agreed with Unite the Union. In line with sector benchmarking, this ensured all staff were paid at least the minimum of the new pay bands or received a one-off cost-of-living payment.

Executive leadership remuneration sits within the same overarching pay framework as the wider organisation, supporting consistency and internal equity.

For the year ending 31 March 2026:

- The chief executive's salary was **£138,402**.
- The ratio of the highest paid role to the median salary (including retail roles) was **4.6:1.**

Our **2025 diversity pay gap results** reflect the positive impact of sustained review of pay structures, grading and progression. The introduction of a standardised pay approach has contributed to our lowest median gender pay gap to date, reinforcing our commitment to fair and equitable pay. See full details in our **2025 Diversity Pay Gap Report**.

Informed by staff feedback, we also carried out a targeted review of benefits during the year and will continue this work in the coming year, strengthening our offer to better support wellbeing and retention.

Looking ahead, we are working towards full implementation of the pay model and embedding of our capability framework so that development and equitable pay progression are more clearly linked to pay. This will evolve to give managers greater discretion in setting starting salaries for new hires, informed by assessment against the capability framework.

Statement on governance compliance

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 objectives – to care for and support children and young people in need across the country, whether material, physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, or otherwise.

Public benefit

Trustees have a duty to report on how our organisation's charitable objectives have 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 board of trustees

The board of trustees is responsible for the governance and strategic direction of the charity, ensuring it delivers its objectives and operates in line with its values.

Day-to-day management is delegated to the chief executive and executive leadership team, who are accountable to the board for operational delivery. The executive team attends board and committee meetings as appropriate.

Trustees are appointed through a transparent recruitment process designed to ensure the board maintains an appropriate balance of skills and experience. Induction and ongoing development are provided to support trustees in fulfilling their responsibilities, including training on safeguarding and The Home Office's Prevent programme, engaging with staff and volunteers, and visiting young people's services and our shops.

The board collectively brings a wide range of skills and expertise, which is kept under review to support effective governance, including safeguarding oversight. All our trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no rewards or benefits from The Children's Society.

Supporting this oversight, we have three trustees with extensive experience and knowledge in relation to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. This year, we recruited one new independent committee member to sit on one of our board committees.

During the year, the board met formally on four occasions and held two strategic away days. In November 2025, the charity's Articles of Association were amended to allow the chair of the board of trustees to continue in office for a tenth year, while a replacement chair could be recruited.

Young trustees

Our young trustees are young people from across the country who have previously engaged with 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.

Our governance is strengthened by the lived experience young trustees bring directly into board-level discussions and decisions. This ensures that our governance is not only compliant and robust, but deeply connected to the people we exist to serve.

The young trustees meet regularly as a group. As described in their introduction, they attend board meetings and support the organisation in other ways, such as recruitment, and depending on their interests, make a significant contribution to The Children's Society's work.

Their voices are central to what we do, and they influence work across the organisation at all levels.

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's purpose is to keep the charity's finances under review, providing assurance to the board that it remains solvent, that its resources are properly and appropriately applied to its objectives, that sufficient resources are available to meet its current objectives, and that income is aligned with the growth strategy agreed by the trustee board.

The Organisational Development Committee oversees all matters concerned with the effective governance of the charity, to support the chief executive in building and sustaining an effective leadership team, and to guide and monitor the effectiveness of key human resources policies for the organisation.

The Risk, Audit, and Compliance Committee (RACC) oversees the risk and control environment in which the charity operates, including safeguarding, systems, controls and, processes which may have an impact on the charity's ability to meet its objectives. This includes ensuring the effectiveness of internal, operational and external audit functions, the adequacy of risk management processes, and the internal control environment. It covers financial and asset management aspects, compliance with laws and best practice, and impact, avoiding harm and ensuring that positive impacts are delivered efficiently and effectively.

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 confirms 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 Children's Society's success to achieve 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 following:

Over the past year, trustees have taken key decisions to support the achievement of our charitable objectives and to help achieve our ambitious goal to overturn the damaging decline in children's wellbeing.

For example, the budget for 2025-26 was prepared not only for the financial year ahead, but with the aim to achieve a solid platform for sustainable growth. The core budget will serve as a foundation for the necessary growth in impact, income, and organisational capability, with the overall ambition of working to reduce the declining state of children and young people's wellbeing across England and Wales.

The interests of our staff, our business relationships, and acting fairly

Trustees have regard to the interests of our staff and volunteers and the need to foster business relationships with key stakeholders, including young people, beneficiaries, funders, and the wider community. During the year, we kept our staff informed with regular updates provided by the chief executive and executive leadership team via written communications, as well as at the monthly 'TCS Live' meetings, which trustees also attend and present at.

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 pages 58 to 62.

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.

Fundraising disclosures and compliance

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. Most of our fundraising activity is led by our 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 to us. Our approach, policies and standards aim to protect vulnerable people and other members of the public from inappropriate behaviour. We continually learn from what we do, always with an eye to improvement.

Complaints

In 2025-26, we logged 114 complaints across the charity — the lowest volume in six years. Overall, 93% were resolved within the organisation's Service Level Agreement (10 working days, or 15 working days for Young People's Services under the revised 2026 Complaints Policy). Only 11 complaints exceeded the service-level agreement, primarily due to staff absences or the complexity of multiparty issues within young people's services. Most complaints (112) were resolved at stage one by the relevant staff member or team, with two progressing to stage two for independent senior review. No complaints were received via, or escalated to, the Fundraising Regulator during the year. 80% of complaints were upheld, most commonly relating to retail interactions, data errors, service misunderstandings, or concerns about staff or volunteer behaviour. Appropriate corrective action was taken in all cases, including staff coaching, process improvements, and additional training. Overall, complaint volumes remain low, processes are effective, regulatory risk is minimal, and learning from complaints continues to drive improvement.

Principal risks and uncertainties

Our 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 RACC 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. Matters that have potential to cause reputational risk are kept under close review, management and mitigation. This year, we have developed a new Risk Management Policy to clarify and standardise risk management practices across our charity.

There are three principal risks and uncertainties facing the charity and its subsidiary undertakings, as identified by the charity trustees, together with a summary of their plans and strategies for managing those risks.

We pay particular attention to mitigating safeguarding risks: protecting children and young people is central to all we do. We manage the following principal risks on our corporate risk register:

Income Generation

The risk that The Children's Society may be unable to sufficiently grow income from its new strategic approach to address the decline in historic fundraising activities. We manage this risk through monthly management reporting and quarterly forecast and performance meetings that provide the opportunity to review and update income programme plans.

Impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and changing work environment

AI presents a risk to our organisational effectiveness and capability which could result in reduced sustainability through the failure to appropriately understand, govern, or adapt to the increasing use and impact of artificial intelligence. This could arise through the unmanaged use of AI tools, lack of strategic direction, insufficient skills and governance arrangements, or failure to adopt AI where it could support delivery and efficiency. We manage this risk through our AI policy, by restricting AI access to a secure, contained internal tool and by developing a transformational plan with a key focus on digital and data usage, including AI.

UK youth sector change

Shifts in funding and policy across the UK youth sector have the potential to disrupt delivery and constrain impact. This risk is mitigated through sustained engagement with key government departments, preserving influence through periods of political change. Active participation in sector coalitions and partnerships ensures early awareness of emerging developments and enables coordinated responses.

Dedicated capacity is in place to monitor policy and funding trends across UK, Welsh, and local government, supporting the identification of risks and opportunities. Engagement with politicians across all parties is conducted impartially and in line with regulatory requirements, maintaining long-term relationships and ensuring that the needs of young people remain a consistent priority.

Safeguarding

The risk that failure to maintain effective safeguarding practices may result in serious harm to a child or adult at risk, with severe consequences including injury or death, loss of trust and confidence, reputational damage, reduced staff morale and loss of income.

We maintain robust organisational wide safeguarding policies and procedures, under a Safeguarding Governance Framework. We have a dedicated Safeguarding & Quality Practice team, operating a duty system and out of hours safeguarding support, to ensure compliant responses to safeguarding incidents. Mandatory safeguarding training is undertaken by all of our staff, with tailored approaches depending on roles (for example for trustees, young people's services and for volunteers). We achieved 100% staff compliance in 2025-26 with our Safeguarding training and Knowledge Check of understanding our safeguarding rules and processes.

Financial review

The financial year ending 31 March 2026 experienced a 1% decrease in income and 3% increase in expenditure overall. Total income was £40m (2025: 40.6m) and total expenditure £45.7m (2025: £44.2m). This led to an operating loss of £5.6m (2025: £3.6m loss). This operating loss was supported by the gains in investments, leading to an overall loss of £3.2m (2025: £0.9m). The organisation will absorb this loss from its reserves, resulting in general funds of £13.3m at the end of March 2026.

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 detailed in our ‘thank you’ list on page 55.

Legacy income is decreased this year by 32% with £4.6m (2025: £6.8m). The decrease of £2.2m (2025: £2.5m increase) reflects the inherently uncertain and uneven nature of legacy receipts, which are influenced by the timing of estate administrations, market conditions affecting asset realisations, and the volume and value of estates reaching completion within the financial year. The charity continues to maintain a strong pipeline of notified legacies, and while legacy income is difficult to predict, we expect income levels to remain in line with this year’s income level.

Retail sales generated £11.7m in the year and exceeded £12m for the third time when we include the related Gift Aid attributed to retail sales. This aligns with the prior year (2025: £11.6m). The increase was driven primarily by retail activities, with the majority of the uplift attributable to a full year of trading across our retail channels, including our physical shop network, ecommerce operations, and the sale of bought-in goods. This broader and more sustained period of activity has significantly strengthened overall performance.

Our retail shops operate at the heart of local communities, and their success is made possible largely through the dedication and commitment of our volunteers. Volunteers are supported and guided by experienced professional management, ensuring that each shop runs effectively and consistently delivers value. Together, this combined effort creates a strong and visible presence, enabling us to maintain a meaningful connection with communities across more than 100 high streets throughout England and Wales. The number of The Children’s Society retail shops was 103 shops (2025: 105).

This year, income from our unique Christingle events generated £0.8m (2025: £0.8m), while our dedicated house box groups gave us £0.7m (2025: £0.7) from their collections. Other donations that include Gift Aid performed better compared with last year at £6.9m (2025: £6.5m). The increase in donations in the last year shows that our supporter base remains committed and strong in continuing to support The Children's Society.

Income from charitable activities increased compared to last year, at £15.3m (2025: £14.02m). This income supports the continued delivery of vital services to young people through a range of approaches, including digital resources and the amplification of youth voice to advocate for, and drive change within, governmental and societal systems. Contract funding is received from national and local government, police and crime commissioners, and the NHS. Our grant income has benefitted from a new partnership with Children in Need and we reached the final year of funding for our national programme focused on disrupting child exploitation and strengthening our digital capabilities within our practice.

Expenditure

Our biggest item of expenditure is staff costs, which increased by 4% year-on-year to £30.02m (2025: £28.91m). This increase of £1.01m was a combination of increased headcount and an increase in staffing costs. Staffing costs increased due to an annual increment in staff salaries, in line with our pay policy and the organisation's commitment to paying the real living wage. More details can be seen in note 10 in the accounts.

We continue to invest in our supporter engagement and community fundraising. The direct costs of fundraising slightly increased by £0.7m to £5.9m (2025: £5.2m). This 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 £11.37m (2025: £11.24m), mostly due to inflationary increases in costs required to run the retail operations. Retail was able to produce a £0.3m contribution towards the organisation's activities before allocating support costs and excluding Gift Aid donations, representing a 2.7% gross margin (2025: £0.4m, 3.4% gross margin).

The direct cost of providing support to young people increased from last year by £1m to £16.2m (2025: £15.2m). This increase is directly linked to the increase in income for charitable activities. Direct costs of changing governmental and societal systems reduced by £0.1m to 3.6m (2025: £3.7m).

Support and governance costs are slightly lower than the prior year at £8.6m (2025: £8.8m).

Fixed assets

In financial year 2023-24, we introduced an intangible assets category for software developments and continue to invest in the organisation's CRM system. The organisation also introduced a new asset replacement programme for staff laptops and purchased a new vehicle for one of our large regional programmes. During this financial year, we implemented a new tool for budgeting, Workday Adaptive Planning, which is now used for budget planning and reporting.

Investments

At 31 March 2026, The Children's Society held £36m of investments (2025: £38.1m) comprising unrestricted and endowment funds invested in a well-diversified range of short to long-term investments, as well as a modest investment in land and buildings (£165K). The investment market strategy is to mitigate risk by diversifying the portfolio across a number of investment managers who themselves are investing in a diverse range of assets. This year saw strong investment gains compared with the previous year's gains, and we were able to realise some of these gains as we sold some of our investment funds to hold a higher portion of lower risk funds, supporting our operational cashflow gaps. The year ended with investment gains of £2.4m (2025: £1.4m gain).

Cash and working capital

We continue to manage our working capital effectively, ensuring that we pay suppliers within the terms agreed and collect 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 the use of cash with negative generation of £3.5m (2025: £4.9m negative generation). This negative cash generated is in line with the annual operating deficit and was covered using proceeds from sales of investments. During the year both debtors and creditors showed a small increase. We continue to hold highly liquid investments should our cashflow patterns change suddenly.

Reserves

Unrestricted funds

In reviewing the adequacy of reserves, trustees considered and stress-tested a range of scenarios relating to:

- variability in annual unrestricted income (excluding legacies)
- fluctuations in legacy income
- inflationary pressures on costs and service delivery
- structural deficits and the need to align the cost base with short- and medium-term income expectations
- the ability to adapt strategy in the event of income decline
- maintaining adequate working capital and liquidity
- reputational risk and its potential impact on income generation
- defined benefit pension scheme funding obligations.

The trustees consider that the organisation's unrestricted general reserves are now just below the desired target range given the current external environment and the organisation's ambition to increase its impact for children and young people. At 31 March 2026, unrestricted general funds totalled £13.3 million, equivalent to just over three months' total annual expenditure.

Reserves have recently been deployed to support delivery of the organisation's multi-year strategic plan. This is designed to increase impact for children and young people while strengthening the charity's long-term sustainability. The plan includes targeted investment in a new public campaign in 2026, aimed at increasing awareness of and driving change for the challenges faced by teenagers today.

As a result of these planned investments, trustees expect unrestricted reserves to reduce further by 31 March 2027 before stabilising. The board and executive leadership team remain committed to rebuilding reserves over the medium-term and returning them to the target range through successful delivery of this multi-year plan.

Designated funds

The Children's Society holds three designated funds.

The designated fund is made up of the property fund, Impact fund and Slack fund. It has slightly decreased to £12.6m (2025: £13.3m). 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 achieve its mission.

The Impact fund was created to enhance our strategic ambition by funding innovative pilots and projects for which traditional forms of funding are unavailable. In the current year, the fund had one project running which incurred expenditure of £1m and benefited from investment gains of £0.7m. The balance of the Impact fund at the end of the year was £7.8m (2025: £8.2m).

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 £15,000.

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 2026, the value of these funds was £1.5m (2025: £1.6m).

Endowment funds

Endowment funds represent the value of assets donated to The Children's Society where the income may be spent while the underlying capital is maintained. The funds are invested in a portfolio investment whose value at 31 March 2026 was £14.5m (2025: £13.3m). As part of our financial strategy, we are unlocking funds from the endowment portfolio, with Charity Commission approval, to enable them to be used to enhance our impact for young people.

Statement of trustees' 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 (FRS 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 sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions, and to disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the charitable company at any time. This enables 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.

The report of the trustees, which incorporates the requirements of the strategic report, was approved and authorised for issue by the trustees on and signed on their behalf by:

Sarah Payne CBE Sarah Payne
Chair of Trustees
30 July 2026

Note: Sarah Payne became Chair of Board of Trustees of The Church of England Children's Society on 30 June 2026.

Independent auditors' report

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Church of England Children's Society for the year ended 31 March 2026, 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 applied in their preparation is applicable law and UK accounting standards, including FRS 102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland, issued by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC).

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 2026 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 or the parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least 12 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 72, 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 estimates.
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**. 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 three 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
HaysMac LLP
Statutory Auditor

10 Queen Street Place
London EC4R 1AG

The Church of England Children's Society Consolidated statement of financial activities Year ended 31 March 2026

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2026 £000	Restricted funds 2026 £000	Endowment funds 2026 £000	Total funds 2026 £000	Unrestricted funds 2025 £000	Restricted funds 2025 £000	Endowment funds 2025 £000	Total funds 2025 £000
Income and endowments from:									
Donations and legacies	2	12,984	-	-	12,984	14,944	-	-	14,944
Charitable activities	3	14,439	866	-	15,304	13,004	1,016	-	14,019
Trading income	4	11,681	-	-	11,681	11,626	-	-	11,626
Investments	5	64	-	-	64	38	-		38
Other income	6	49	-	-	49	15	-	-	15
Total income and endowments		**39,216**	**866**	**-**	**40,082**	**39,627**	**1,016**	**-**	**40,642**
Expenditure on:									
Raising funds	7	19,854	-	-	19,854	19,233	-	-	19,233
Charitable activities	8	25,139	741	-	25,880	24,212	833	-	25,045
Total expenditure		**44,992**	**741**	**-**	**45,733**	**43,445**	**833**	**-**	**44,278**
Finance costs	11	(9)	-	-	(9)	0	-	-	0
Net gains on investments	14	1,290	-	1,127	2,417	992	-	445	1,437
Net income		**(4,478)**	**125**	**1,127**	**(3,226)**	**(2,826)**	**183**	**445**	**(2,198)**
Other recognised gains/(losses):									
Gains on revaluation of fixed assets	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Actuarial gains/(losses) on defined benefit pension schemes	11	7	-	-	7	1,297	-	-	1,297
Transfers between funds	20	253	(253)	-	-	964	(64)	(900)	0
Net movement in funds		**(4,218)**	**(128)**	**1,127**	**(3,219)**	**(565)**	**119**	**(455)**	**(901)**
Reconciliation of funds									
Funds brought forward		30,120	1,619	13,325	45,064	30,685	1,500	13,780	45,965
Net movement in funds		**(4,218)**	**(128)**	**1,127**	**(3,219)**	**(565)**	**119**	**(455)**	**(901)**
Summary of total income and expenditure									
Total income		40,512	866	1,127	42,505	40,619	1,016	445	42,080
Total expenditure		(44,983)	(741)	-	(45,724)	(42,148)	(833)	-	(42,981)
Net income		**(4,471)**	**125**	**1,127**	**(3,219)**	**(1,529)**	**183**	**445**	**(901)**

All amounts relate to the continuing activities of the group. The reference to the notes, which form part of these financial statements, is shown on each line as appropriate. The notes are shown on pages 81 to 107. The group has taken advantage of the exemption under s408 of the Companies Act 2006 and has not prepared a separate Statement of Financial Activities for the charity. The net income for Charity Projects in the year was £164,000 (2024: net expenditure of £4,070,745)

Company registration number 40004

The Church of England Children's Society Group and Society balance sheets As at 31 March 2026

		Group		Society	
		2026	2025	2026	2025
	Note	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
Fixed assets					
Intangible fixed assets	12	1,010	1,602	1,010	1,602
Tangible fixed assets	13	2,836	2,630	2,836	2,630
Investments	14	36,045	38,299	36,045	38,299
Total fixed assets		**39,891**	**42,531**	**39,891**	**42,531**
Current assets					
Debtors	15	8,116	9,270	7,581	7,699
Cash		2,001	800	1,820	509
Total current assets		**10,116**	**10,070**	**9,402**	**8,208**
Current liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	(7,485)	(6,863)	(5,228)	(4,895)
Net current assets		2,631	3,207	4,173	3,313
Provisions for liabilities	17	(662)	(652)	(662)	(652)
Net assets excluding pension deficit		41,860	45,086	43,402	45,192
Pension deficit	11	(15)	(22)	(15)	(22)
Net assets		41,845	45,064	43,387	45,170
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	20	13,317	16,777	14,859	16,883
Designated funds	20	12,601	13,365	12,601	13,365
Pension reserve	20	(15)	(22)	(15)	(22)
Total unrestricted funds		**25,903**	**30,120**	**27,445**	**30,226**
Restricted funds	20	1,491	1,619	1,491	1,619
Endowment funds	20	14,451	13,325	14,451	13,325
Total funds		**41,845**	**45,064**	**43,388**	**45,170**

The notes on pages 81 to 107 form part of these financial statements. The financial statements were approved and authorised by the board of trustees on 30 July 2026 and signed on their behalf by

David Ramsden
Honorary Treasurer

The result of the parent charity for the year was a net deficit of £3.4m (2025: net deficit of £164,000)

The Church of England Children's Society
Group and Society cash flow statements
Year ended 31 March 2026

	Note	Group		Society	
		2026	2025	2026	2025
		£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
Net cash used by operating activities	**A**	**(3,473)**	**(4,886)**	**(3,365)**	**(4,635)**
Cash flows from investment activities					
Investment income received		64	38	64	38
Purchase of investments		(19,500)	(2,015)	(19,500)	(2,015)
Proceeds from the sale of investments		24,977	6,543	24,977	6,543
Purchase of tangible and intangible fixed assets		(867)	(816)	(867)	(816)
Net cash provided by investment activities		**4,674**	**3,750**	**4,674**	**3,750**
Increase/(decrease) in cash		1,201	(1,137)	1,309	(885)
Cash at the start of the period		800	1,936	510	1,395
Cash at the end of the period		**2,001**	**800**	**1,819**	**510**

Notes to the cash flow statements

A reconciliation of net income to cash used by operating activities

Net income as reported in the statement of financial activities	**(3,226)**	**(2,198)**	**(2,286)**	**(1,461)**
Adjustments for:				
Net investment income receivable	(64)	(38)	(64)	(38)
Net interest cost on defined benefit pension liability	-	-	-	-
Depreciation and amortisation charges	1,326	927	1,326	927
Impairment charges and other adjustments	(71)	366	176	908
Gains on investments and assets	(2,423)	(2,734)	(2,423)	(2,734)
(Increase) in debtors	(46)	(98)	(1,126)	(1,126)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	622	(839)	622	(839)
Intercompany creditor	-	-	-	-
Increase/(decrease) in provisions for liabilities	10	58	10	58
Net cash provided by operations before pension contributions	**(3,872)**	**(4,556)**	**(3,764)**	**(4,305)**
Pension contributions	399	(330)	399	(330)
Net cash used by operating activities	**(3,473)**	**(4,886)**	**(3,365)**	**(4,635)**

Notes to the financial statements
Year ended 31 March 2026

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. The charity has taken advantage of the exemption in S408 of the Companies Act 2006 not to publish a charity only Income and Expenditure Account.

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.

Notes to the financial statements (continued) Year ended 31 March 2026

1 Accounting policies (continued)

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 12-month period from the date of signing of the accounts.

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.

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.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
Year ended 31 March 2026

1 Accounting policies (continued)

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.

j. Volunteers

The Society benefits from volunteer support in its retail network, fundraising groups, working with children and young people, and in 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

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
Year ended 31 March 2026

1 Accounting policies (continued)

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 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'. For prudence, net gains on are not recognised in the financial statements.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
Year ended 31 March 2026

1 Accounting policies (continued)

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 rates which, when used to discount the future recovery plan contributions due, 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 into 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. Endowment funds are those held on trust where the capital must be held permanently and the income generated from the capacity can be used in line with the original purpose of the fund. The Charities SORP permits and The Children's Society uses a negative fund to represent the value of the pension deficit as separate from other funds.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
Year ended 31 March 2026

1 Accounting policies (continued)

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	Four years	Nil
Other assets	Four 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.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
Year ended 31 March 2026

1 Accounting policies (continued)

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 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.

Notes to the financial statements (continued) Year ended 31 March 2026

1 Accounting policies (continued)

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 of the liability is uncertain, a provision is recognised at the best estimate of the amount to be paid.

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.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
Year ended 31 March 2026

1 Accounting policies (continued)

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. The assumptions 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 crisis and rising interest rates
- whether investments can be realised at the 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 years
- the future need to invest for growth, particularly unrestricted income to help ensure income keeps up with rising costs and to deliver our strategic ambition.

Notes to the financial statements (continued) Year ended 31 March 2026

2 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
	2026	2026	2026	2025	2025	2025
	£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
Donations						
Christingle	765	-	765	814	-	814
House boxes	679	-	679	728	-	728
Other donations	6,934	-	6,934	6,521	-	6,521
Legacies	4,607	-	4,607	6,881	-	6,881
Total income from donations and legacies	**12,984**	**-**	**12,984**	**14,944**	**-**	**14,944**

3 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
	2026	2026	2026	2025	2025	2025
	£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
Providing direct support to children and young people	13,413	98	13,511	11,464	379	11,843
Changing governmental and societal systems	1,026	768	1,794	1,540	637	2,177
Total income from charitable activities	**14,439**	**866**	**15,305**	**13,004**	**1,016**	**14,020**

4 Income from trading activities

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
	2026	2026	2026	2025	2025	2025
	£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
Income from retail activities	11,555	-	11,555	11,511	-	11,511
Card sales	108	-	108	103	-	103
Event entry fees	18	-	18	12	-	12
Total income from trading activities	**11,681**	**-**	**11,681**	**11,626**	**-**	**11,626**

5 Income from investments

	Unrestricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
	2026	2026	2026	2025	2025	2025
	£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
Income from financial investments	-	-	-	29	-	29
Income from investment properties	64	-	64	9	-	9
Total investment income	**64**	**-**	**64**	**38**	**-**	**38**

6 Other income

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
	2026	2026	2026	2025	2025	2025
	£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
Sundry income	49	-	49	15	-	15
Total income from other sources	**49**	**-**	**49**	**15**	**-**	**15**

7 Expenditure on raising funds

	Direct costs	Support costs	Total costs	Direct costs	Support costs	Total costs
	2026	2026	2026	2025	2025	2025
	£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
Direct fundraising	5,936	743	6,679	5,222	912	6,134
Costs of retail operations	11,366	1,809	13,175	11,235	1,864	13,099
Total expenditure on raising funds	**17,302**	**2,552**	**19,854**	**16,457**	**2,776**	**19,233**

8 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Direct costs	Support costs	Total costs	Direct costs	Support costs	Total costs
	2026	2026	2026	2025	2025	2025
	£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
Providing direct support to children and young people	16,210	5,298	21,508	15,188	5,278	20,466
Changing governmental and societal systems	3,619	754	4,373	3,783	796	4,579
Total expenditure on charitable activities	**19,829**	**6,052**	**25,880**	**18,971**	**6,074**	**25,045**

Net income is arrived at after charging:

	2026	2025
	£000	**£000**
Amortisation of intangible fixed assets	760	328
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	566	599
Rentals payable under operating leases	2,668	2,624
Auditor's remuneration		
Audit of the Group's financial statements	67	64

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
Year ended 31 March 2026

9 Support costs and their allocation to activities

2026	Direct services	Changing systems	Donations and legacies	Retail	Total
	£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
HR and organisational development	1,487	215	212	440	2,356
Property services	90	-	-	266	355
Information systems	2,446	354	349	725	3,874
Financial processing and management	951	138	136	281	1,506
Senior management	89	13	13	26	141
Governance	235	34	34	70	373
Total support costs	**5,298**	**754**	**744**	**1,808**	**8,604**

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

2025	Direct services	Changing systems	Donations and legacies	Retail	Total
	£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
HR and organisational development	1,342	206	235	407	2,190
Property services	82	-	-	287	369
Information systems	2,475	379	434	751	4,040
Financial processing and management	887	136	156	269	1,447
Senior management	343	53	60	104	560
Governance	149	23	26	45	244
Total support costs	**5,278**	**796**	**912**	**1,865**	**8,851**

Governance costs are made up of:

	2026	2025
	£000	**£000**
External audit	67	64
Internal audit	95	113
Trustee recruitment	30	34
Trustee expenses	1	3
Trustee meetings	11	4
Professional fees	2	-
Senior leadership team	143	133
Total governance costs	**349**	**351**

Notes to the financial statements (continued) Year ended 31 March 2026

10 Trustees and staff

Group and Society

Average monthly number of full-time equivalent staff employed in:	**2026**	**2025**
Providing direct support to children and young people	332	319
Changing governmental and societal systems	53	53
Direct fundraising	47	56
Retail operations	197	194
Support services	93	91
Total	**722**	**713**

Average monthly number of staff employed in:	**2026**	**2025**
Providing direct support to children and young people	408	391
Changing governmental and societal systems	56	57
Direct fundraising	48	57
Retail operations	252	251
Support services	97	96
Total	**861**	**852**

Costs of staff	**2026**	**2025**
Group and Society	£000	£000
Wages and salaries	25,476	24,661
Social security	3,020	2,238
Pensions	1,215	1,194
Redundancy and compensation for loss of office	81	497
Agency staffing	233	325
Total	**30,025**	**28,915**

The total amount paid in the year for redundancy and compensation for loss of office was £81,000 (2025: £393,088). The amount accrued for future redundancy payments at the balance sheet date was Nil (2025:104,402).

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:

	2026	**2025**
	Number	Number
Between £60,001 and £70,000	10	10
Between £70,001 and £80,000	3	6
Between £80,001 and £90,000	2	–
Between £90,001 and £100,000	2	1
Between £100,001 and £110,000	4	3
Between £130,001 and £140,000	1	1

The Society paid pension contributions into a money purchase scheme of £103,326 (2025: £97,623) for 22 (2025: 21) of the higher paid staff.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
Year ended 31 March 2026

10 Trustees and staff(continued)

Key management personnel

The key management personnel serving in the year comprise the Chief Executive Officer, Executive Director Youth Impact, Executive Director Finance & Strategy, Executive Director Social Impact and Executive Director People, Culture & Transformation. The total remuneration paid to key management personnel was £654,991 (2025: £627,138).

The salary of the chief executive during the year ended 31 March 2026 comprised of salary £138,402 (2025: £137,802). In addition, the company paid pension contributions of £8,268 (2025: £7,464) into a defined contribution scheme.

Trustee remuneration

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 £1,717 (2025: 448.00) were reimbursed to six trustees (2025: 3). Trustee indemnity insurance was purchased at a cost of £9,790 (2025: £8,820).

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 £1,215,096 (2025: £1,193,542).

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, 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 521 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).

11(a) Defined benefit scheme

The actuarial valuation as at 30 September 2024 showed a deficit of £3,730,000. The Children's Society has agreed with the Trustee that it will aim to eliminate the deficit over a period of seven years and one month from 30 September 2024 by the payment of deficit contributions of £250,000 per annum, payable monthly from 1 January 2026 to 31 October 2031.

In addition and in accordance with the actuarial valuation, the Employer agreed with the Trustee that it will pay contributions of 17.5% (non-salary sacrifice members) and 27.5% (salary sacrifice members) per annum of pensionable earnings in respect of the cost of accruing benefits. Member contributions are payable in addition at the rate of 10% per annum of pensionable earnings for non-salary sacrifice members. Salary sacrifice members are non-contributory.

The Children's Society also agreed that from 1 April 2026 they would pay contributions at a rate of £189,000 per annum (payable monthly) towards the expenses of running the Scheme (including an allowance for the Pension Protection Fund levy). Expense payments will increase each 1 April by 3% p.a. with the first increase on 1 April 2027.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
Year ended 31 March 2026

11 Pensions (continued)

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 Trustee of The Pensions Trust ("the Trust") has completed a review of the changes made to the benefit structures of the defined benefit pension schemes within the Trust, which involved reviewing the changes made to the benefits over the years:

- the Trustee determined that it is prudent to follow best practice and seek directions from the Court
- the Court case is known as Verity Trustees Limited v Wood and commenced on 12 February 2025
- an outcome is expected no earlier than the autumn of 2025
- the Court case has an interaction with the issues considered in the Virgin Media Limited v NTL Pension Trustees II Limited and this case may or may not impact the schemes within the Trust, depending on the outcome of the Verity Trustees Limited v Wood case
- it is unclear at this stage whether the Verity Trustees Limited v Wood case, including the impact of the Virgin Media judgment, may give rise to an additional liability.

The matter is unlikely to be resolved before Q2 of 2026 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.

	2026	2025
Rate of increase in salaries	0.00%	0.00%
Rate of increase in pensions in payment	2.83%	2.60%
Discount rate	6.04%	5.60%
Inflation assumption (RPI)	3.30%	3.12%
Rate of increase for deferred pensions	3.30%	3.12%

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

Life expectancy included in the valuation of the scheme is calculated using the S4PXA (All Pensioners - Pension Amounts) tables with a best estimate scheme-specific scaling factor of 102% (2025 -102%). The base tables have been projected using the S4PXA 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:		2026		2025
	Females	Males	Females	Males
Now	23.9 (88.9)	21.8 (86.8)	23.7 (88.7)	21.3 (86.3)
In 20 years	25.3 (90.3)	23.4 (88.4)	25.1 (90.1)	22.9 (87.9)

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
Year ended 31 March 2026

11 Pensions (continued)

Assets and liabilities of the scheme	2026	2025
	£000	£000
Bonds (including LDIs)	71,072	70,891
Equities	1,836	88
Property	667	10,619
Cash	1,360	2,602
Other	23,455	15,886
Scheme assets	**98,390**	**100,086**
Present value of scheme liabilities	(95,737)	(98,877)
Surplus/(deficit) in the scheme - pension liability	2,653	1,209
Effect of asset ceiling	(2,551)	(1,035)
Eliminate FRS102 scheme surplus	-	-
Present value of Growth Plan provision (note 11(b))	15	22
Net pension liability	**117**	**196**

11 (a) Defined benefit scheme (continued)

Profit and loss impact

	2026	2025
	£000	£000
Current service cost	74	78
Past service cost	-	-
Expenses	262	307
Interest on obligation	5,367	5,223
Expected return on scheme assets	(5,436)	(5,158)
Total	**(69)**	**450**

Movement in defined benefit obligation

	2026	2025
	£000	£000
Opening defined benefit obligation	98,877	111,548
Current service cost	74	78
Past service cost	-	-
Interest cost	5,367	5,223
Contributions by employees	5	5
Actuarial loss/(gain)	(2,339)	(12,343)
Benefits paid	(6,247)	(5,634)
Closing defined benefit obligation	**95,737**	**98,877**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
Year ended 31 March 2026

11 Pensions (continued)

Change in fair value of the scheme assets

	2026	2025
	£000	**£000**
Opening value of the scheme assets	100,086	110,238
Expected return	5,436	5,158
Expenses	(262)	(307)
Actuarial (loss)/gain	(1,027)	(9,704)
Contributions by employer	399	330
Contributions by employees	5	5
Benefits paid	(6,247)	(5,634)
Closing fair value of the scheme assets	**98,390**	**100,086**
Actual return on scheme assets	**4,409**	**(4,546)**

Defined benefit costs recognised in other comprehensive income

	2026	2025
	£000	**£000**
Return on plan assets (excluding amounts included in net interest cost)	(1,027)	(9,704)
Experience gains and losses arising on the plan liabilities	(395)	415
Effects of changes in the demographic and financial assumptions underlying the present value of the plan liabilities	(1,456)	10,893
Total amount recognised in other comprehensive income	**(2,878)**	**1,604**

11 (a) Defined benefit scheme (continued)

Sensitivity analysis

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

Assumption change	Effect on liabilities
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 one year	3-5% increase/decrease in liabilities

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
Year ended 31 March 2026

11 Pensions (continued)

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 521 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 2023. This valuation showed assets of £514.9m, liabilities of £531m and a deficit of £16.1m. 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 521 employers)	
From 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2028:	£2,100,000 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.

	2026	2025
	£000	**£000**
Present values of provision (only relating to The Children's Society)	**15**	**22**

	2026	2025
	£000	**£000**
Changes in provision		
Provision at start of period	22	9
Unwinding of the discount factor (interest expense)	1	-
Deficit contributions paid	(8)	(9)
Remeasurements - amendments to the contribution schedule	–	22
Provision at end of period	**15**	**22**
Profit and loss impact		
Interest expense	-	-
Remeasurements – impact of any change in assumptions	-	-
Remeasurements – amendments to the contribution schedule	**7**	**(22)**

	2026	**2025**
Assumptions		
Discount rate	**4.92%**	**4.84%**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
Year ended 31 March 2026

12 Intangible fixed assets

	Software	Total
	£000	**£000**
Group and Society		
Cost or valuation		
At 1 April 2025	3,892	3,892
Additions	141	141
Disposals	79	79
WIP	27	27
At 31 March 2026	**3,981**	**3,981**
Amortisation		
At 1 April 2025	2,290	2,290
Amortisation charged	760	760
Released on disposal	79	79
At 31 March 2026	**2,971**	**2,971**
Net book value		
At 31 March 2026	**1,010**	**1,010**
At 31 March 2025	1,602	1,602

13 Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold land and buildings	Leasehold land and buildings	Vehicles	Other Assets	Total
	£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
Group and Society					
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2025	2,035	8,291	68	4,090	14,485
Additions	-	195	-	533	727
Disposals	470	6,869	33	3,799	11,170
WIP	-	73	-	21	94
Revaluation/impairment	52	-	-	-	52
At 31 March 2026	**1,513**	**1,690**	**35**	**848**	**4,086**
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2025	588	7,406	43	3,818	11,855
Depreciation charged	31	312	9	214	566
Released on disposal	470	6,869	33	3,799	11,171
Revaluation/impairment	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2026	**150**	**849**	**19**	**233**	**1,251**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
Year ended 31 March 2026

13 Tangible fixed assets(continued)

Net book value					
At 31 March 2026	**1,364**	**841**	**16**	**615**	**2,836**
At 31 March 2025	1,447	885	26	272	2,630

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 £1,513,526 (2025: £2,164,519) and accumulated depreciation of £150,353 (2025: £724,786), leaving a net value of £1,363,173(2025: £1,517,577).

14 Investments

Group and Society	Investment properties	Listed investments	Total
	£000	**£000**	**£000**
At 1 April 2024	**165**	**41,204**	**41,369**
Purchases	-	2,015	2,015
Transfer from fixed assets	-	(8)	(8)
Sales	-	(6,543)	(6,543)
Realised and unrealised gains - Society	-	1,466	1,466
At 1 April 2025	**165**	**38,134**	**38,299**
Purchases	-	19,500	19,500
Sales	-	(24,977)	(24,977)
Realised and unrealised gains - Society	-	3,223	3,223
At 31 March 2026	**165**	**35,880**	**36,045**

15 Debtors

	Group		Society	
	2026	2025	2026	2025
	£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
Trade debtors	2,151	2,862	846	594
Prepayments and accrued income	5,972	6,377	5,972	6,377
Other debtors	(7)	31	(7)	31
Amounts due from subsidiary	-	-	770	697
Total debtors	**8,116**	**9,270**	**7,581**	**7,699**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
Year ended 31 March 2026

16 Creditors: amounts due within one year

	Group		Society	
	2026	2025	2026	2025
	£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
Trade creditors	820	656	820	656
Accruals	2,182	2,325	2,182	2,325
Deferred income	3,731	3,161	1,475	1,193
Taxation and social security	651	612	651	612
Other creditors	101	109	101	109
Amounts due to subsidiary	-	-	-	-
Total creditors: amounts due within one year	**7,485**	**6,863**	**5,228**	**4,895**

Creditors: amounts due within one year (continued)

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

	Group		Society	
	2026	2025	2026	2025
	£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
Deferred income at the start of the year	3,079	3,581	1,193	2,274
Deferred income brought forward released in the year	(2,308)	(3,063)	(24)	(1,162)
Income deferred from the year	2,960	2,561	306	81
Deferred income at the end of the year	**3,731**	**3,079**	**1,475**	**1,193**

17 Provisions for liabilities

Group and Society

	Property dilapidations	Total provisions
	£000	**£000**
At 1 April 2025	983	983
Charged in the year	54	54
Used in the year	(44)	(44)
Total provisions	**993**	**993**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
Year ended 31 March 2026

17 Provisions for liabilities (continued)

	Property dilapidations	Total provisions
	£000	**£000**
Amounts due within one year	331	331
Amounts due after more than one year	662	662
Total provisions	**993**	**993**

Under the terms of operating leases for properties, the Society is required to make good any demerit 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 2026, the Group and Society had £Nil (2025: Nil) of authorised but not contracted capital commitments and Nil (2025: Nil) contracted capital commitments that had not been reflected in the financial statements.

Minimum payments under operating leases are:

2026	Land and buildings	Motor vehicles	Office equipment	Total
	£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
Amounts falling due:				
within one year	1,820	96	-	1,916
between two and five years	3,146	62	-	3,208
after more than five years	-	-	-	-
Total operating lease commitments	**4,966**	**158**	**-**	**5,124**

2025	Land and buildings	Motor vehicles	Office equipment	Total
	£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
Amounts falling due:				
within one year	2,097	117	-	2,214
between two and five years	5,063	133	-	5,196
after more than five years	-	-	-	-
Total operating lease commitments	**7,160**	**250**	**-**	**7,410**

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 is recovered from the Society. At the date of these accounts the value of such indemnities provided totals was £328,274 (2025: £347,794).

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
Year ended 31 March 2026

20 Funds

Group

	Balance at 31 March 2025	Income	Expenditure	Other gains and (losses)	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2026
	£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
Unrestricted funds						
General funds	16,777	39,216	(42,507)	(422)	253	13,317
Designated funds:						
Fixed Asset fund	4,232	-	(1,326)	940	-	3,846
Impact fund	8,233	-	(1,076)	696	-	7,853
Slack fund	900	-	(74)	76	-	902
Total designated funds	13,365	-	(2,476)	1,712	-	12,601
Unrestricted funds before pension deficit liability	30,142	39,216	(44,983)	1,290	253	25,918
Pension deficit fund	(22)	-	-	7	-	(15)
Total unrestricted funds	**30,120**	**39,216**	**(44,983)**	**1,296**	**253**	**25,903**
Restricted funds						
The National Lottery Community Fund	297	-	(44)	-	(253)	-
Other grants	1,322	866	(697)	-	-	1,491
Total restricted funds	**1,619**	**866**	**(741)**	**-**	**(253)**	**1,491**
Endowment funds						
The Children's Society fund	7,319	-	-	619	-	7,938
Charnwood House	1,964	-	-	166	-	2,130
Charnwood Forest	1,303	-	-	110	-	1,413
Hampshire Girls and Boys Trust	1,203	-	-	102	-	1,305
The George and Marion Slack Fund	602	-	-	51	-	653
The Croghan Fund	934	-	-	79	-	1,013
Total endowment funds	**13,325**	**-**	**-**	**1,127**	**-**	**14,451**
Total funds	**45,064**	**40,082**	**(45,724)**	**2,423**	**-**	**41,845**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
Year ended 31 March 2026

20 Funds (continued)

	General funds	Designated funds	Pension deficit fund	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total
	£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
Intangible fixed assets	-	1,010	-	-	-	1,010
Tangible fixed assets	-	2,836	-	-	-	2,836
Investments	12,839	8,755	-	-	14,451	36,045
Total fixed assets	**12,839**	**12,601**	**-**	**-**	**14,451**	**39,891**
Cash	510	-	-	1,491	-	2,001
Other current assets	8,116	-	-	-	-	8,116
Total current assets	**8,626**	**-**	**-**	**1,491**	**-**	**10,116**
Current liabilities	7,485	-	-	-	-	7,485
Net current assets	**1,141**	**-**	**-**	**1,491**	**-**	**2,632**
Provisions for liabilities	662	-	-	-	-	662
Net assets excluding pension deficit	13,317	12,601	-	1,491	14,451	41,860
Pension deficit	-	-	(15)	-	-	(15)
Net assets	**13,317**	**12,601**	**(15)**	**1,491**	**14,451**	**41,845**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
Year ended 31 March 2026

20 Funds (continued)

Group

	Balance at 31 March 2024	Income	Expenditure	Other gains and (losses)	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2025
	£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
Unrestricted funds						
General funds	19,169	39,627	(41,814)	(205)	-	16,777
Designated funds:						
Fixed Asset fund	4,239	-	(926)	919	-	4,232
Impact fund	8,596	-	(705)	278	64	8,233
Slack fund	-	-	-	-	900	900
Total designated funds	12,835	-	(1,631)	1,197	964	13,365
Unrestricted funds before pension deficit liability	32,004	39,627	(43,445)	992	964	30,142
Pension deficit fund	**(1,319)**	**-**		**1,297**	**-**	**(22)**
Total unrestricted funds	**30,685**	**39,627**	**(43,445)**	**2,289**	**964**	**30,120**
Restricted funds						
The National Lottery Community Fund	864		(567)	-	-	297
Other grants	636	1,016	(266)	-	(64)	1,322
Total restricted funds	1,500	1,016	(833)	-	-	1,619
Endowment funds						
The Children's Society fund	7,090	-	-	229	-	7,319
Charnwood House	1,903	-	-	61	-	1,964
Charnwood Forest	1,262	-	-	41	-	1,303
Hampshire Girls and Boys Trust	1,165	-	-	38	-	1,203
The George and Marion Slack Fund	1,455	-	-	47	(900)	602
The Croghan Fund	905	-	-	29		934
Total endowment funds	**13,780**	**-**	**-**	**445**	**(900)**	**13,325**
Total funds	**45,965**	**40,643**	**(44,278)**	**2,734**	**-**	**45,064**

Description of funds
General funds represent the other assets available for the general purposes of the Society.

Designated Fixed Asset fund (previously called Property fund) represents the carrying value including revaluations of land and buildings held for use in the activities of The Children's Society and the net book value of all other tangible and intangible fixed assets.

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 was started from the trustees transferring £3.5m from funds remaining from a previous strategy designated fund. It further benefitted from a £4.5m 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.

The Slack fund represents a fund transfer from endowments of £0.9m following permission from the charity Commission in June 2024, for the public benefit to care for and support children and young people in need, whether material, physical, mental, emotional, spiritual or otherwise by promoting or otherwise advancing their education or training (including by way of apprenticeship schemes) in such ways as the Children's Society, as trustee, thinks fit.

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 together. The George and Marion Slack Fund is held to provide educational opportunities for disadvantaged children and young people. Charnwood House, Charnwood Forest, Hampshire Boys and 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 and Girls Trust. The Croghan Fund is to support young people in education.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
Year ended 31 March 2026

21 Financial instruments

	Group		Society	
	2026	2025	**2026**	2025
	£000	£000	**£000**	£000
Financial assets measured at fair value through profit and loss				
Financial investments	35,880	38,134	35,880	38,134
Debt instruments measured at amortised cost				
Trade debtors	2,151	2,862	846	594
Other debtors	(7)	31	(7)	31
Amounts due from subsidiaries	-	-	770	697
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost				
Trade creditors	820	656	820	656
Accruals	2,182	2,325	2,182	2,325
Other creditors	101	109	101	109

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 2026 is:

	Services		**Trading**	
	2026	2025	**2026**	2025
Summarised profit and loss account				
Income	8,281	7,630	319	306
Expenditure	(7,424)	(6,973)	(236)	(226)
Profit for the year	857	657	83	80
Gift Aid distribution to The Children's Society	(857)	(657)	(83)	(80)
Retained earnings	-	-	-	-
Summarised balance sheet				
Current assets	1,332	2,613	153	272
Current liabilities	(1,332)	(2,613)	(153)	(272)
Net assets	-	-	-	-
Share capital	–	–	–	–
Retained reserves	–	–	–	–
Total reserves	–	–	–	–

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
Year ended 31 March 2026

23 Related parties

Information on trustees' expenses is set out in note 9.

The total amount of trustee donations made, without conditions, was £6,615 (2025: £4,625).

Transactions with subsidiary undertakings		2026		2025
	£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
	Services	Trading	Services	Trading
Balance sheet amounts				
Amounts due to the parent undertaking	924	(153)	645	52
Expenditure				
Donations to the parent undertaking	857	83	657	80

24 Grants received

The National Lottery Community Fund (previously The Big Lottery)	
Reaching Communities Grants	**15**
Disrupting Exploitation	15
Other Grants	**750**
BBC Children in Need - Safeguarding Children At Risk - Prevention and Action	750
Other grants from charitable bodies in the year amount to:	**1,568**
National Prevention Project CSE/A	712
Safe Zones	249
Other	607
Total	**2,333**

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

Subsidiary companies

The Children's Society (Services) Limited, company no: 4545124
The Children's Society (Trading) Limited, company no: 885496

Royal president

HRH The Duchess of Gloucester LG GCVO

Presidents

The Most Reverend and Right Hon the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury
Dame Sarah Mullally
The Most Reverend and Right Hon the Lord Archbishop of York
Stephen Cottrell

Vice-presidents

Company Secretary
Matthew Scott-Pearce

Chief Executive Officer
Mark Russell OBE

Executive Director, People, Culture and Transformation
Michelle Clark

Executive Director, Youth Impact
Nerys Anthony

Executive Director, Finance and Strategy
Segun Olowookere

Executive Director, Social Impact (until March 2026)
Joe Jenkins (resigned March 2026)

Executive Director, Marketing and Income Generation (interim from March 2026)
Louise Robertshaw (appointed March 2026)

External Auditor
HaysMac LLP, 10 Queen Street Place, London EC4R 1AG

Bankers
Barclays plc, 1 Churchill Place, London E14 5H

a) Member of the Finance and Investment Committee (FIC)
b) Member of the Risk, Audit, and Compliance Committee (RACC)
c) Member of the Organisational Development Committee (ODC)

Trustee board and committee attendance (from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026)

Trustee board members

Name	Trustee board	FIC	RACC	ODC	Trustee away days
The Rt Rev’d Elizabeth Lane, Bishop of Derby, Chair (c)	3/4			1/4	2/2
Diane Blausten Senior Independent Director (c)	4/4			4/4	2/2
Alyson Coates (a) (b) (stepped down from Risk, Audit, and Compliance Committee in July 2025)	3/4	4/5	2/2		0/2
Chris Coles (a)	4/4	4/5			2/2
Deborah Harris-Ugbomah FCA (b)	1/4		4/4		0/2
Helen Keppel-Compton (a)	4/4				1/2
Florence Kroll CBE (b)	3/4		2/4		1/2
Sam Monaghan (c)	2/4			4/4	1/2
Sarah Payne CBE (c)	2/4			2/4	2/2
David Ramsden, Honorary Treasurer (a)	4/4	5/5			1/2
Sharon Ward (b)	1/4		3/4		0/2
Stella McAteer (c) (joined Organisational Development Committee in March 2026)	1/4			0/1	0/2
Jamie Elliott	3/4				2/2
Will Fernandez (c) (joined Organisational Development Committee in March 2026)	4/4			1/1	1/2

Committee members (other than trustees on previous table)

Name	FIC	RACC	ODC
Vincent Anane Nimoh (stepped down November 2025) (c)			1/2
Leon Ward (stepped down July 2025) (c)			1/1
Sara Boiten (c)			3/4
Raj Cheema (b)		3/4	
Alison Hopkinson (a)	2/4		
Nasima Patel (b)		2/4	
Vannessa Whitehead (stepped down May 2025) (b)		0/1	
Alexandra Barrington (b)		4/4	
Alaba Dayo-Payne (b)		4/4	
Stephen Soper (appointed November 2025) (a)	2/2		

Definitions of key terms

How we define key issues and frameworks covered in this report.

Child criminal exploitation (CCE)

A form of child abuse. When an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate, or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity. This may be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, or through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Child sexual abuse (CSA)

Child sexual abuse is any act in which an adult, or another child or young person, involves a child in sexual activity that they do not fully understand, cannot consent to, or are not developmentally ready for. It includes both contact and noncontact behaviours and can occur in person or online.

Child sexual abuse is characterised by an abuse of power, trust, authority, or vulnerability. It can involve manipulation, coercion, pressure, threats, or grooming. Responsibility always lies with the person causing harm – never with the child.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

A form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity. This may be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Childhood poverty

Poverty means not having enough money to buy or access the essential things you need to survive and live a healthy, happy life. Poverty harms children's social and emotional wellbeing, their health, their education and their future outcomes. We use a standard poverty measure, where a child is considered to be living in poverty if their household income is below 60% of the national average (median) household income after housing costs. There are more than 4 million children living in poverty in the UK by that measure.

Emotional wellbeing

Emotional wellbeing is about our emotions – how we are feeling in any given moment – for example, happy, excited, safe, anxious, calm, angry. It can also relate to how we identify, react to and process those internal feelings and emotions. Emotional wellbeing is a type of subjective wellbeing.

Some of our services specifically address emotional wellbeing, helping young people understand and manage their emotions. Some of our policy asks address this by ensuring young people have access to people and places for support.

Mental health

Mental health is a broad term, it is our emotional, psychological and social wellbeing — it affects how we think, feel, act and relate to other people.

Everyone has mental health, and it can change over time. It's normal for children and young people to feel distressed, worried, angry or low at times, especially when life is difficult.

Most distress is not an illness. A mental health problem is more likely when difficult feelings or behaviours are severe, last a long time, or make it hard to cope with everyday life, for example, at home, in education, with friendships or self-care.

In our non-clinical settings, such as open access, support focuses on what helps: safe relationships, listening, practical skills and tools for coping, and connection to community and early help.

Our clinical teams provide therapeutic support delivered by trained professionals. This may include a structured understanding of what's happening, regular sessions to help a child or young person make sense of feelings and experiences, and practical strategies to reduce distress and strengthen coping.

Mental health support also includes responding to risk: working alongside safeguarding processes and linking with or referring to specialist NHS mental health services when needs are higher, risks increase, or specialist assessment and treatment are required, for example, when a young person is at risk of suicide.

Quality Assurance Framework

The system that young people's services uses to make sure its work with children, young people, and families is safe, consistent, and high-quality. It sets out how practice will be monitored, reviewed, and improved — including what standards staff should follow, how performance will be checked, and how feedback, audits, and outcomes are used to learn and strengthen services. Overall, a Quality Assurance Framework helps ensure young people receive the best possible support and that the organisation continually improves its practice.

Risk

When we talk about young people being at risk of harm, we're referring to factors and situations that might threaten a child's safety – for example, abuse, including exploitation, or neglect.

Vulnerability

Vulnerabilities are factors that might make a young person potentially more at risk of harm.

Youth voice

Youth voice describes the different ways we give space to and listen to the views and experiences of young people in The Children's Society's work. Our youth voice work is guided by our youth voice charter (see page 13), which lays out how we enable, equip, and support young people to influence our work.

Endnotes

1 Total Youth Voice activities comprises all the dedicated participation opportunities that young people have taken part in. 'One-to-one and one-off opportunities' mainly includes interview panels, storytelling and video work, content creation to amplify youth voices, one-off consultations and workshops; 'service-led participation groups' are groups for young people accessing specific local services that identify issues and develop ideas to improve the service; 'functional groups' are groups led by our Youth Voice team, who perform an organisational function, such as young trustees; and 'thematic participation groups' are groups largely led by policy and advocacy teams. Youth voice figures are collated monthly from across the organisation, by our dedicated, specialist Youth Voice team.

2 This year, we piloted a new youth voice satisfaction survey with young people who participated in our youth voice activities. We received responses from 78 young people.

3 Between December 2025 and February 2026, we conducted research with professionals who work closely with our services. We completed 23 online semi-structured interviews and received 46 online survey responses. The 46 online survey responses form the basis of this feedback.

4 We use a range of outcomes tools with children and young people, including an Advocacy Outcome Tool, the Empowerment Star, Family Star, Goal Based Outcomes, Me and My Feelings, Outcomes Rating Scale, the Revised Children's Anxiety and Depression Scale (RCADS), the CORE-10 (Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation), the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS), My Wheel, and Exploitation Wheel.

5 A note on data: all figures are based on children and young people who have outcomes data recorded – not all young people we work have a complete set outcomes tools.

6 The Goal Based Outcome tool compares how far a child or young person feels they have moved towards reaching a goal that they have set for themselves at the beginning of an intervention, on a scale between 0 and 10. An improvement of at least 3 points up the scale suggests meaningful progress toward the outcome. See: **corc.uk.net/outcome-measures-guidance/directory-of-outcome-measures/goal-based-outcomes-gbo/**

7 We completed 23 online semi-structured interviews and received 46 online survey responses with professionals who work with our services, some of which support us to work directly with young people.

8 Fraud strategy 2026-2029. [online]. Gov.uk; 2026 [Accessed July 2026]. Available from: **gov.uk/government/publications/fraud-strategy-2026-to-2029**

9 Tackling financial exploitation: Youth voice insights. [online]. The Children's Society; 2025 [Accessed July 2026]. Available from: **childrenssociety.org.uk/information/professionals/resources/tackling-financial-exploitation**

10 Funding boost for young people's mental health services. [online]. Gov.uk; 2026 [Accessed July 2026]. Available from: **gov.uk/government/news/funding-boost-for-young-peoples-mental-health-services**

11 Almost million more pupils get access to mental health support. [online]. Gov.uk; 2025 [Accessed July 2026]. Available from: **gov.uk/government/news/almost-million-more-pupils-get-access-to-mental-health-support**

12 According to The Department for Work and Pensions' Policy Simulation Modelling. Removing the two-child limit on Universal Credit: Impact on low income poverty levels in the United Kingdom. [online]. Gov.uk; 2025 [Accessed July 2026]. Available from: **gov.uk/government/publications/poverty-impacts-of-social-security-changes-at-budget-2025/removing-the-two-child-limit-on-universal-credit-impact-on-low-income-poverty-levels-in-the-united-kingdom**

13 Children's social care prevention grant determination 2025 to 2026 [online]. Gov.uk; 2025. [Accessed July 2026]. Available from: **gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-social-care-prevention-grant-determination-2025-to-2026/childrens-social-care-prevention-grant-determination-2025-to-2026**

14 Recovery grant determination 2025 to 2026. [online]. Gov.uk; 2025. [Accessed July 2025]. Available from: **gov.uk/government/publications/recovery-grant-determination-2025-to-2026/recovery-grant-determination-2025-to-2026**

15 We use media monitoring and reporting software to track our media performance. This software tracks the number of mentions in the press of particular stories, removing any duplicate pieces.

16 The energy provider in a small number of our properties is chosen by the landlord

17 Trader Recycling Universal Standard

18 TIDE (Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation) is Onvero's tool for self-assessment, evaluation, and benchmarking, designed to help organisations assess and enhance their culture, focusing on progress and strategies in promoting diversity and inclusion.

19 Recently evaluated and found to have a positive impact on identification and awareness of young carers, and on young carer's attendance and wellbeing at school.

20 Also evaluated recently and assessed as making a positive contribution to professional knowledge and confidence in identifying and disrupting exploitation, and to strengthening multi-agency working in this area.

21 Good Childhood Report 2025

22 In March 2026, 879,955 children and young people accessed mental health services compared to 840,063 in March 2025 and 572,912 in March 2021. As reported by: Mental Health Services Monthly Statistics (2026). NHS Digital. Available at: **digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-services-monthly-statistics/performance-march-2026**

23 This is the proportion of referrals for children and young people mental health services that were waiting for a first contact at end of the reporting period that were waiting more than 52 or 104 weeks. See: Mental Health Services Monthly Statistics: Performance March 2026 Referral Spells dataset (2026). NHS Digital. Available at: **digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-services-monthly-statistics/performance-march-2026**

24 Children in need: A focus on sexual abuse and exploitation. [online]. Gov.uk; 2026. [Accessed July 2025]. Available from: **explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-in-need-a-focus-on-sexual-abuse-and-exploitation/2025**

25 Percentage of children in relative low income after housing costs was 27% (using 60% income threshold). See: Households Below Average Income: An analysis of the UK income distribution: FYE 1995 to FYE 2025 (2026). Department for Work and Pensions. Available at: **gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-for-financial-years-ending-1995-to-2025/households-below-average-income-an-analysis-of-the-uk-income-distribution-fye-1995-to-fye-2025**

26 For example, While 22% of children and young people from White families experienced relative poverty, for those from Black families the figure was 47% and higher still at 63% for children and young people from Bangladeshi families. See data table with detailed breakdown of children in relative low-income groups according to different family and household characteristics. Available to download at: **gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-for-financial-years-ending-1995-to-2025**

27 Active supporters includes everyone who has given their time, money, and voice to support The Children's Society in the last year. Note that the total active supporter number is less than the sum of time, money, and voice, as supporters can appear in more than one category.

Across the country, young people's needs are being ignored.

Trapped in poverty, facing poor mental health and abuse both on and offline, too many only receive help once they reach crisis point.

We're working to change that.

The Children's Society is by young people's side when they need us, providing lasting support and campaigning for the changes that will improve young lives.

Together, we can make sure that no young person faces life alone.

childrenssociety.org.uk

Scan this QR code to find out more about our work and the impact we have.

Bluesky: @childrenssociety.bsky.social

Instagram: @thechildrenssociety

Facebook: childrenssociety

Tel: 0300 303 7000

Charity Registration No. 221124 Photos: Chris O'Donovan, Serena Brown.

MCB582/0726.

The Children's Society