



The Children's
FOUNDATION
 Making Serious Stuff Fun!
 Registered Charity Number 1000013



The Children's Foundation
 Sir James Spence Institute, RVI
 Queen Victoria Road
 Newcastle upon Tyne
 NE1 4LP
 Reg. Charity No. 1000013

Impact Report 2022-2023

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**MAKING THE
 SERIOUS STUFF
 FUN!**



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Barry Speaker OBE DL
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To donate, please text **70085** with **TCFNE1** if you wanted to donate £1 or if you wish to donate £10 you can text **TCFNE10** as examples, any whole amount from £1 up to £20 can be used.



*David Wood stepped down from the Board at the AGM on 8th November 2022 having served two terms, totalling eight years. The Children's Foundation would like to thank David for all his support and expertise over those years, wishing him and his family all the best.

Patron

Bradley Creswick MBE

Thank you to all our wonderful Volunteers, Corporate supporters and Trusts and Foundations who have supported us over the last year. We could not what we do without you!

The Children's Foundation is a North East child health charity, set up in 1990, with the vision of improving health and well-being services of Children and Young People in the North East by Making Serious Stuff Fun!

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Note from our CEO

Time flies when you are having fun, and Making Serious Stuff Fun is what we are all about.

The Children's Foundation has had another great year. Full credit to our small but mighty team directly impacting the lives of 1046 children and young people through our various projects. A staggering number, and we want to do more!

Our focus remains set on Early Years, children's Mental Health and children's Physical Health and I am proud of our delivery in each of these child health themes.

Key highlights for me have included, securing accredited centre status with City and Guilds, allowing us to directly deliver practical horticulture sessions to young people at our allotment site in Fawdon. Our 'Roots to Health' project is expanding and evolving. Children and young people have told us how important it is to have a green space and a therapeutic horticulture offer, vital for good health and well-being, embedding a green agenda within our work. I am excited to see this work develop.

The Baby Box launch in March resulted in many sleepless nights in the run up thinking if anyone would



come! Well, the event was a sell out and attracted some great regional press attention. It was a privilege to host England's first Children's Commissioner Sir Al Aynsley-Green at the event as our guest speaker. The current Commissioner, Dame Rachel de Souza added her support via video. Closing remarks by Professor Sir Liam Donaldson Chair of the Integrated Care Board North East and North Cumbria, reinforced the Commissioners remarks, all three talking so highly about our Baby Boxes, the importance of early years and the potential impact for

babies here in the North East and their parents. This is a project that continues to excite and expand! I would like to end my note with two little words, thank you, to everyone who has helped us make a difference to children and young people over the last 12 months, we could not have done it without you.

Sean Soulsby, CEO
The Children's Foundation

1046 
Children and Young People worked with

Number of projects delivered: **15**


 **222** hours volunteered

 hours of delivery: **794**

848 Children and Young People took part in our Mental Health projects

86 Children and Young People took part in Physical Health projects

 **36** Baby Boxes given out to first time parents

 **11** children completed the Couch to 2k Project

5 main Community Fundraising Events

28 Great North Run runners

Just over **£9,000** raised from the GNR 

23 student teams from Sunderland Uni took part in Take £25 Challenge

£7,831 raised by Take £25 Challenge 

Over **£2,600** raised at The Starfish Children's Concert 

1 Early Years - The Baby Box

Our Baby Box project and 'Make a Million' (MaM) fundraising appeal has gone from strength to strength over the last 12 months, culminating in our official launch event back in March 2023. The overall aim for the project is to provide a Baby Box to all first-time parents across the North East. The project is currently being delivered in Gateshead and Newcastle supporting specific families in defined areas with new referral pathways established within local NHS Maternity services.

"The box is great for a first-time mum who doesn't have much, it's been a huge relief"
 (Mother, Gateshead).

"The best thing about the box is how it made me feel. It made me feel confident, prepared, supported, and able to bond with my baby. This is a really nice experience. It has made me feel so happy and ready"

(First time mother, Gateshead)

The project impacted on **61** families this year

36 baby boxes were delivered in 5 months with the first boxes going out in November 2022



Initial feedback from parents has been incredible. So far, of the families who have received a baby box;

100%

said it helped them feel more prepared for their baby's arrival.

100%

said it helped them feel more confident as a parent.

100%

said it helped them feel more supported.

100%

felt that the items they had used in the box had helped them to bond with their baby.

Our baby box is unique, a first to take a developmental approach to the child. We are supporting new parents by giving them and their babies much needed support, both in terms of parental well-being and confidence as well as resources to promote healthy baby development and bonding. The contents of the box were carefully curated with parents, midwives and other health professionals. The items reflect five main basic principles; Love & Laugh, Play, Read, Talk & Sing, and Count.

"I am absolutely thrilled to welcome this initiative from The Children's Foundation and to see it supported by Gateshead Council. In Gateshead we believe every child deserves the best possible start in life and in supplying the Baby Box, we hope will assist toward that aim. Thank you so much for this well thought out initiative which I know will be very much welcomed and appreciated by our new parents in Gateshead"

(Mayor of Gateshead)



Children's Commissioner for England

"My team were so impressed with what it offered. They all commented this should be available nationwide to help parents feel more prepared and confident" ...

..."being a parent is the most joyful but also the most challenging thing you can do"...

..."as a society we need to think family ...this is why I am so delighted The Children's Foundation have developed their Baby Box project"...

..."I want to congratulate everyone involved in the development of this brilliant initiative... this will have such an impact in supporting children to have the very best start in life"

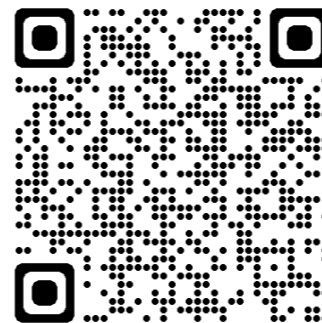
- Dame Rachel de Sousa

Next Steps

We are working with more NHS Trusts, Local Councils and Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to bring the Baby Box to other areas of the North East, expanding reach and impact to first time parents and their babies. We have also started to put together a national steering group to share our learning looking at the impact of the baby boxes and their potential benefits if rolled out nationally.



To watch the full video, scan here!



2 Mental Health

Clown Doctors



Our long running project in partnership with TIN arts came to end in January this year. For over 10 years The Children's Foundation has delivered this project with TIN Arts bringing smiles, laughter and joy to children during their treatment and stay in the Great North Children's Hospital. For most, it provided a distraction from the medical world, a moment of fun, allowing children to be children. It has been a privilege to have touched so many lives and be a part of a truly unique project.

The Clown Doctors project reduced stress and anxiety for children enduring prolonged hospital stays and uncomfortable treatment. Working in pairs they delivered therapeutic play, games, storytelling and music helping children be children even when in hospital. In the last year:





Roots to Health

This project is thriving, this year we reached capacity on our first allotment, so took on another! Our corporate partners at Turnitin enabled us to clear the site and install basic infrastructure to get it ready for delivery. We were also very grateful to receive funding from The Guy Readman Endowment Fund via The Community Foundation to make improvements to the new allotment site including the building of 'The Hive', a learning hub and outdoor classroom as well as a poly tunnel, which will support activity in changeable weather. This year we have worked with two Newcastle schools supporting small groups of young people each week at our Fawdon site to achieve their City and Guilds Level 1 Award in Practical Horticulture.



275 
children and young people
benefited from a visit

104  
children showed noticeable
progress during interactions

"It was lovely to read about your project. The quotes you included from children, hospital staff and parents really helped to highlight the impact of your work. The case study was very simple but very powerful, a really nice tangible example of the benefits the Clown Doctors can provide. Congratulations on successful delivery of this project!"

BBC Children in Need



BBC
Children
in Need



What next?

Roots to Health and Happiness is our newest project supporting young people, post pandemic, who are experiencing anxiety or other mental health challenges which are affecting their school attendance. Funded by the Newcastle Youth Fund, we aim to tackle the barriers young people identify, adding individual youth work support and informal therapy, fostering trust, openness and reflection in nature around a firepit.

"If I wasn't here I'd just be in my bedroom"



What our Green influencers had to say...

I would say that working with Robson was a nice experience as he always listened to our ideas.

It was a good opportunity for us to help take part in the action of the environment.

It was also cool looking at things we could buy to help charity and improve the environment.

It was cool to say we want to build a pond and then Robson got the money and we started digging the next week.

I enjoy being at the allotment and being around nature because it is calming and relaxed.

I really enjoyed making a pond and felt our ideas were listened to.

Green Mentor

As the Green Mentor project enters its final few months, 164 young people have become Green Influencers as a direct result of this project, with a further 332 young people indirectly benefitting through the scheme. 13 individual groups have seen their environmental social action projects come to life since 2020. Half of these groups were from the top 20% of the most deprived areas in Newcastle.

Some feedback from young people involved with the project:

'It was very interesting and exciting to learn about the environment'.

'This has been the best project we have done in our school and it felt really good presenting our idea to the rest of the school.'



100% of young people said they felt the environment and other people benefitted from their project.

83% reported having improved their team working skills

80% had fun

86.5% said their local community was improved

75% reported improved communication skills

Story Chair



This new project started in March 2023 at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital Gateshead. Our storyteller Tom makes fortnightly visits to Children's Out-Patients and Day Unit, reading stories to children and their families as well as running craft sessions during their time and treatment in hospital. Along with our story chair there are over 80 books for children to choose from. This project has got off to a great start and will run until early 2024. Here's what the children and their families have to say...

"Thanks for making it fun"

"Tom was amazing with my daughter. He made us feel very welcome. He has fantastic energy and is very friendly"





Fuzzy Subjects

Our puppets Febus and Cobie continue to visit primary schools across the region delivering their ever popular mental health well-being workshops. The workshops introduce children in years 5 & 6 to how important it is to look after your mental health just like you do your physical health. They are the embodiment of our tag line 'Making Serious Stuff Fun!' and they introduce difficult subjects in a fun and engaging way that ensures information retention. This project is delivered in partnership with Life and Limb Puppets.



431 
children took part in
mental health workshops

An increase of
59% 
since 21 - 22

Feedback shows
96% 
information retention among
the children taking part

Fuzzy subjects visited
15 
primary schools



3 Physical Health

Holiday Activities

We repeated last year's success, delivering pop-up games in Leazes Park as part of Newcastle's Holiday Activity Scheme. Being active, outdoors and 'out of the house' was a great way to spend some of the summer holidays, trying new things and making new friends.



42 children and young people took part in our pop-up sessions

Couch to 2K

Supports young people to gain self-confidence, improve fitness, increase physical activity and have fun via weekly walking/jogging/running sessions over 6-8 weeks in local parks/ green spaces. Our Youth Workers support referrals via child health professionals for young people who are "inactive" or otherwise not engaged in sport or physical activity. We delivered two projects in the last year, one in Saltwell Park in Gateshead and the other in Leazes Park in Newcastle. A total of 11 young people completed the weekly sessions building up to the timed 2K run at the end and all were thrilled to receive their medal and T-shirts!

100%

of the young people referred completed the timed 2K'



Allotment

Our Children's Community Allotment is a big hit. Children drive the sessions and take home what they've helped to grow. The children's allotment continued to be well attended during the 22/23 growing season. At the request of the children sessions continued in an extended form throughout the 2022 summer holidays. Lack of youth provision in the area around Coxlodge and Fawdon makes these sessions very popular! The young people enjoy being out of the house and able to spend time with their friends.

"I wear stick-on nails from Primark and I use them as diggers"

11 children and young people regularly attended allotment sessions this year



Your Impact!

Without the support of our business community, children would miss out. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Stiller Warehousing and Distribution, who store, pack and deliver our Baby Boxes in-kind as their gift to us. Their logistical support is critical to the success of this project. The Children's Foundation thank the Stiller family and employees for their incredible support.

We are fortunate to be the chosen Charity of TechnipFMC, Turnitin Newcastle and Accenture Advanced Technology Centre, who have each supported us in 22/23 and our projects in different ways. Thank you to everyone who has done anything, it all adds up to a big difference.

We spent some time as the Charity Member of Bulman BNI, a business networking group. Their activities generated an 8:1 ROI, and we made some long- lasting friends.

Being a member of The North East England Chamber of Commerce also allowed us to start and explore different opportunities to work on various projects.

We partner with University of Sunderland to run an entrepreneurial challenge for the first- year students in the faculty of Business. This is a core module. Enterprise Holdings Foundation sponsored this Challenge again this year, thank you.

Thanks also to the teams from different businesses, including Brewin Dolphin, SOS Group Ltd, Cundall, Irwin Mitchell and Ward Hadaway, who competed in Big Bowl 2023 and had fun while helping us with the serious stuff.

In the community The Yellow Brick Road Pony Show has been an annual event for over 30 years, District 1A are incredible in their loyalty, some of the original children on ponies are now the mums leading their children, what a tribute to the team.

The Starfish Children's Concert, thanks to our Patron Bradley Creswick, his friends, the school, community choirs and Gateway Studio who made this such a success, alongside the businesses who donated raffle prizes.

As we grow and generate more awareness in the business community an increasing number are volunteering, hosting a raffle, taking on a challenge, or matching the sponsorship of their employees, thank you to all of you, you know who you are.

Finally, we are fortunate to have found Lauren Regan of Mole Creative who has made an incalculable difference to our presence across all media, you are amazing.



Left to right, John McCabe, CEO, North East England Chamber of Commerce, Sean Soulsby, CEO, The Children's Foundation, Matthew Stiller, Managing Director, Stiller Warehousing and Distribution Ltd.

Headlines