

Prepared for Life: A new impact strategy

2023 – 2026

Prepared for Life: A new impact strategy

The Childhood Trust is London's Child Poverty Charity. With 39% of London children living in poverty, our vision is to break the cycle of poverty so that every child experiences the healthy, happy and safe childhood which prepares them well for life.

Our new 2023 – 2026 impact strategy, Prepared for Life, has been developed in consultation with our board of trustees, executive team and key stakeholders. An evolution of our existing approach, it creates a framework which helps the Trust to focus its support on the most vital services provided to children living in poverty in London.

The Trust will focus its work on four priority areas: **1) Physical Health, 2) Mental Wellbeing 3) Home & Community Environment 4) Learning & Work Readiness.**

Our ambition is to partner with those charities who can demonstrate that their work within our four priority areas contributes to transforming the lives of children experiencing disadvantage in London.

Prepared for Life: 2023-26 impact strategy

Impact Goals	Area of Work	Children will benefit from:	TCT Outcomes	TCT Impact
Children are healthy	Physical health	Nutritious food & meals. Physical activity including play, sports and recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A healthy diet • Regular exercise / play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved health and wellbeing • Improved socio-economic prospects • Improved Quality of Life
Children are resilient	Mental health and well-being	Services that support, promote, protect and restore children's mental health and emotional wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater mental & emotional resilience • Reduced stress / anxiety 	
Children are safe	Home and community environment / Citizenship and community	Services that improve children's quality of life and sense of belonging through better living conditions; Environments that promote community cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure and suitable home environment • Positive family and peer relationships 	
Children are confident	Employment, training and education	Services that enhance life and work-readiness by raising confidence, aspiration, ambition and a passion for learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ready and able to learn • Motivated and better prepared for future work / careers 	

Impact Goal 1: Children are healthy

Fighting food insecurity, malnutrition and health inequalities.

Why this goal:

One in six (400,000) children in the capital experience food insecurity (GLA 2019). 16% of parents from food insecure households report being unable to provide balanced meals for their children with 9% not always having enough for their children to eat. Rising food costs are having an immediate effect with the Food Foundation reporting a 57% jump in the proportion of households cutting back on food or missing meals altogether between January and April 2022. A third of children leaving primary school are overweight or obese with rates of obesity rising for disadvantaged children. (NHS 2023)

What we want to achieve:

- ✓ Children have access to hot and nutritious meals, particularly during school holidays
- ✓ Equitable access and promotion of good quality, safe physical leisure activities and play
- ✓ Children have a positive attitude toward their own physical health and attitude to healthcare

How projects can deliver this goal:

- Meal provision / Food vouchers/ Food banks/ Food parcels
- Cooking and nutrition
- Play, sports and recreation activities and groups

Impact Goal 2: Children are resilient

Addressing children's mental health & emotional wellbeing

Why this goal:

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events or chronic stressors experienced in childhood. ACEs are more prevalent in deprived areas of London and are associated with a range of unfavourable physical, mental and social outcomes, including lower educational achievement, anxiety, personality disorders, substance misuse, cardiovascular disease and delinquent & criminal behaviour. Children facing socio-economic barriers are more likely to have experienced ACEs and may benefit from targeted support. Around 10% of Londoners are likely to have experienced four or more different types of ACE and children living in poverty are 3 times more likely to suffer from psychiatric conditions including poor self-regulation and coping skills.

What we want to achieve:

- ✓ Access to & provision of good quality services that promote and support children's mental health
- ✓ Children have support and a good understanding of their own mental health and emotional well-being
- ✓ Children build confidence, emotional self-control and are resilient

How projects can deliver these goals:

- Therapeutic and non-therapeutic interventions, in groups and 1:1, supporting mental health and wellbeing
- Mentoring & peer support
- Supporting parenting & attachment particularly in first 1000 days
- Providing opportunities for play and socialisation

Impact Goal 3: Children are Safe

Tackling squalid living conditions and preventing children from feeling lonely and vulnerable

Why this goal:

74,000 children are homeless in London, with many families living in unsafe, insecure or unaffordable homes. (Shelter 2023) Safe, secure and stable housing is a critical foundation for development and as such, is a valuable tool for combating the impact of poverty, particularly upon children. Research indicates that positive changes to a child's home environment can improve mental health. Community cohesion and a sense of belonging requires safe places for children to play and socialise. Since 2011 youth worker jobs have been cut by London Councils, reducing the average provision per Borough from 48 to just 15.

What we want to achieve:

- ✓ Children have a secure and suitable home
- ✓ Children's living and play spaces are in a fit condition
- ✓ Access to community facilities and services for children & young people

How projects can deliver these goals:

- Home environment improvements
- Activities that prevent anti-social behaviour
- Interventions and activities that support the development of positive family and peer relationships
- Activities and services for children that promote individual wellbeing and community cohesion

Impact Goal 4: Children are confident

Reducing the impact of educational inequalities

Why this goal:

London has a very high proportion of student children experiencing disadvantage, with over a sixth of pupils qualifying for free school meals. 27% of children in London do not achieve the minimum expected standard in all Early Learning Goals at 5yrs of age (DFE, 2019). There is an attainment gap of 15 per cent at GCSE level between the poorest and the best-off pupils in London with one of the lowest acceptance rates to higher education. Only 17 per cent of the City's professional jobs are occupied by people from low-income backgrounds, compared to 30 per cent nationally (Reconnect London, 2022).

What we want to achieve:

- ✓ Supporting life and work-readiness
- ✓ Reduced barriers to employment, education or training
- ✓ Children feel inspired and hopeful about their future

How projects can deliver this goal:

- Academic mentoring & support
- Careers education and extracurricular activities
- Work readiness support & training
- Services that identify and support children in vulnerable circumstances

Prepared for Life: Grantmaking principles

- We will fund the activities of organisations in London's 33 Boroughs whose primary beneficiaries are children experiencing poverty.
- We will fund grassroots and larger organisations with annual incomes of between £25,000 and £10 million*, and who have filed at least one set of annual accounts with the Charity Commission.
- We will focus on organisations that deliver services that work to alleviate the impact of child poverty (children aged 0-17yrs), with an emphasis on our four priority areas.
- We will build strong relationships with the organisations that we fund, providing unrestricted grants, developing an in-depth understanding of the services we fund and promoting a culture of shared learning.
- We will share knowledge, facilitate collaborative working and promote synergies of delivery between our charity partners.

*relates to £10million income via donations and legacies

Prepared for Life: Grantmaking strategy

The new grantmaking strategy from 2023:

We will offer grantees a new funding model featuring two application tracks. The amount of grant funding applied for in each of our campaigns will determine which track is applicable.

Track 1: Grassroots Partner

Grant applications for matched funding of up to £10,000 will follow our **Grassroots Partner** track. Grassroots Partners will benefit from a simplified, faster application procedure and a quicker, self-selected reporting process. Where our Grassroots Partners have the ambition, we will support them to become Synergy Partners.

Track 2: Synergy Partner

Grant applications for matched funding of more than £10,000 and with an organisational turnover of more than £100,000 will follow our **Synergy Partner** track. Synergy Partners will work with the Trust to help ensure long-term sustainability and impact. Our ambition is to work with Synergy Partners to help build capacity and increase impact.

The two-track partnership model

1. Grassroots Partner

The Childhood Trust has funded hundreds of small projects supporting children in areas where there is often no other support available. Many of our Grassroots Partners, which are likely to be smaller organisations providing critically needed services in their community, participate regularly in our campaigns and have seen their incomes grow annually. We will support our Grassroots Partners, who have the ambition and capacity to grow, to become Synergy Partners.

- Campaign Fundraising Target: £8,000 - £40,000
- TCT Grant amount: £2,000 - £10,000
- Grant terms: Normally unrestricted / 12 months from grant award
- Entry criteria: Minimum turnover of £25,000 and one set of accounts
- Reporting requirements: Once a year producing a narrative, budget and outcomes report. Organisations will self-select the areas of impact they are reporting on.
- Simplified application, due diligence and reporting process
- Capacity Building: Events and resources

The 2-track partnership model

2. Synergy Partner

The Trust has helped larger organisations raise millions of pounds with the majority participating regularly in our campaigns, continuing to expand their donor base and exceeding their targets. We will work closely with our Synergy Partners, who are likely to be organisations with higher revenues often providing a range of services across multiple locations, to maximise the benefits from the Trust's network and support. Our ambition is to work with Synergy Partners to help build capacity, increase impact and evidence impact.

- Campaign Fundraising Target: £40,000 - £100,000+
- TCT Grant amount: £10,000 - £25,000+
- Grant terms: Normally unrestricted / 12 months from grant award
- Entry criteria: Minimum turnover of £100,000, demonstrable impact plan
- Reporting Requirements: At start of funding period – impact and outcomes data, programme KPIs and budget; mid-point check in; end of funding period – reporting on self-selected outcomes including supporting narrative and case studies. Additionally, subject to agreement, the Trust intends to work with selected Synergy Partners to help further evidence-progress against our primary impact measures.
- Capacity Building/Funder plus: Events, resources, 1-1 support, enabling volunteering projects promoted by TCT
- Other requirements: providing beneficiaries for TCT media coverage and content, response to TCT surveys and hosting TCT donor visits.

Prepared for Life: Impact Monitoring & Evaluation

An essential part of the Trust's work is the monitoring and evaluation of our impact. Accurate monitoring and evaluation enables us to understand and demonstrate how the Trust's funding is alleviating the impact of childhood poverty in London. Our new Impact Monitoring and Evaluation framework will be deployed later this year to help us to understand how our grantees are contributing to the achievement of our shared goal in reducing the impact of poverty on children in London. The key characteristics of this framework are:

All Partners:

- We will classify and map projects by 'areas of work' aligned to our strategic framework.
- We will enable charities to identify the outcomes on which they would like to report, in line with our strategic framework. We envisage that grantees will pre-select two outcomes that they believe will be improved by their project and which they (ideally) already measure as part of their M&E plan.
- To avoid duplication of reporting, Partners should ideally use data that they already collect including basic information on project beneficiaries (such as numbers of children, gender, ethnic group, age, disadvantage group type) as well as expenditure data and outcomes data.
- We require only one annual report, and will check in with our partners at 6 months for a snapshot of how projects are progressing.

Synergy Partners:

- It is our ambition to identify and collect partners' existing in-depth data where it aligns with our strategic goals. Additionally, in collaboration with selected Synergy Partners, we aim to conduct specific impact evaluations to better understand the impact of interventions. The following matrix illustrates examples of how data may be collected. Through this process we hope to create a virtuous circle of demonstrating impact, generating funding and improving or scaling impact.

Prepared for Life: Synergy Partners – collaborative impact monitoring and evaluation

Impact Goals	TCT Outcomes	Examples of surveys & measures we may use to evaluate impact & outcomes;
Children are healthy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A nutritious diet • Regular exercise / play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Behaviours, Attitudes, Environments & Knowledge Scale (Loughborough University) • Children's Physical Activity Questionnaire (NIHR, Cambridge) Examines physical activity and sedentary activities across school time and leisure time.
Children are resilient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional resilience • Reduced stress / anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM-R, Resilience Research Centre) A tool to explore the resources available to children that may bolster their resilience. • The Perceived Stress Scale - Children (PSS-C, ASA) An effective assessment for identification of anxiety/stress in children that assists in the development of appropriate interventions.
Children are safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure and suitable home environment • Positive family and peer relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale. A measure of a child's life satisfaction in five key domains (family, friends, school, self and living environment), with the aim of promoting positive psychological wellbeing. • Generic Children's Quality of Life Measure (GCQ) The GCQ focuses on areas that are interest to all children such as families, peer relationships and school.
Children are confident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ready and able to learn • Hopeful & inspired about future work / careers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Subjective Wellbeing Questionnaire (SSWQ) Subjective well-being is related to positive educational outcomes. Subjective well-being has been shown to correlate positively with achievement (particularly in primary school students) and feeling accepted and fitting in at school (particularly in secondary school students).

Prepared for Life: Strategic Objectives 2023-2026



Developing partnerships with eligible charities supporting projects that transform the lives of children experiencing disadvantage in London



Deliver a two-track partner funding programme, building sector capacity and fostering collaboration

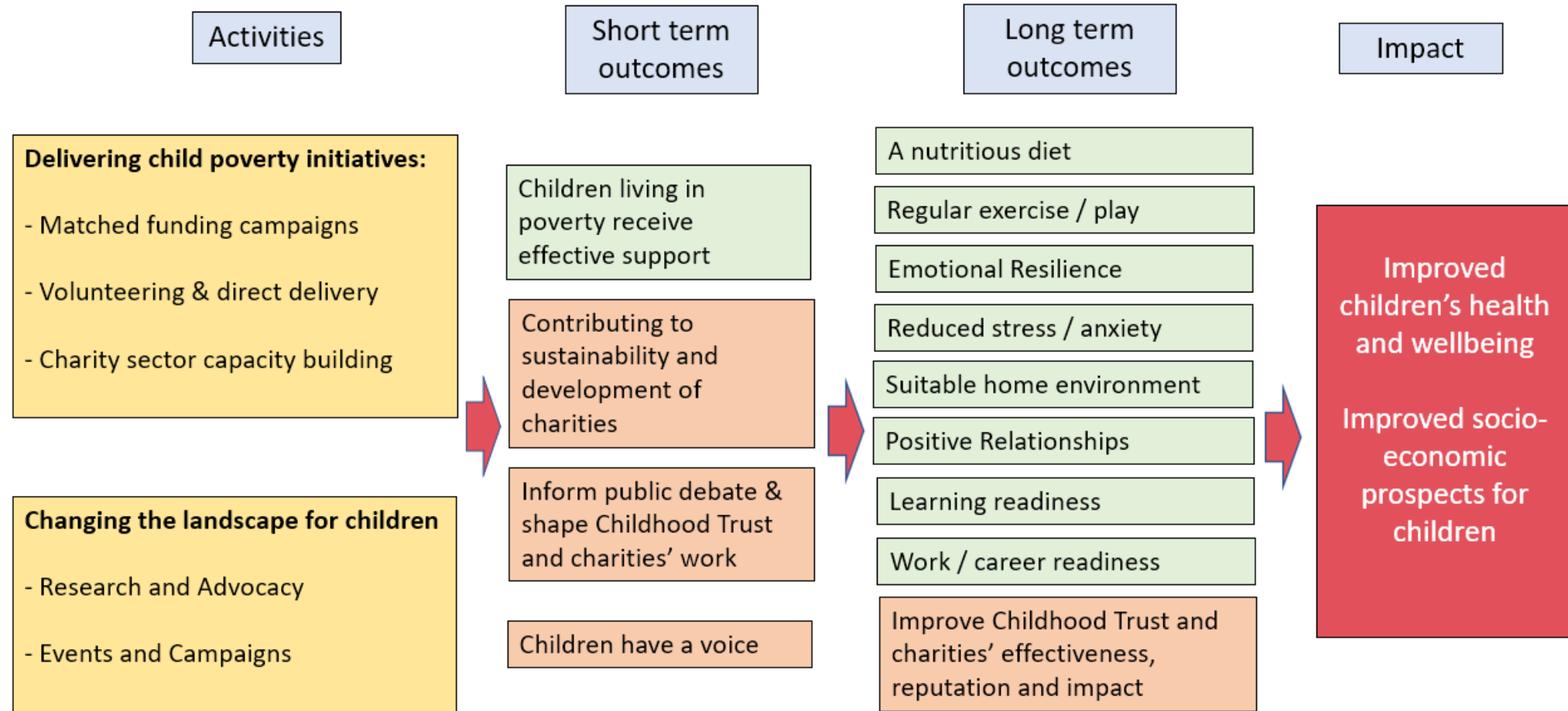


Robust impact reporting, with emphasis on shared learning and CYP datasets



Amplify the voices of children, low-income families and charity staff to ensure their stories and experiences are heard

Prepared for Life: The Childhood Trust's Theory of Change



Enablers

1. Successful fundraising by TCT
2. Engagement with stakeholders incl. charities and children
3. Good alignment with partner charities
4. Government policy environment
5. Good alignment with partner charities
6. Government policy environment
7. Media access