

**WINSTON'S  
WISH **

Giving hope to grieving children



# **IMPACT REPORT**

**2019-20**

# WELCOME TO OUR 201

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# 9-20 IMPACT REPORT

## WHO WE ARE

Winston's Wish provides emotional and practical bereavement support to children, young people and those who care for them, after the death of a parent or sibling. Our expert teams offer one off and ongoing bereavement support and we also provide online resources, specialist publications and training for professionals.

The death of a parent in childhood can be the most traumatic experience a child will ever have to face. It is a life-altering, sometimes life-threatening event, which can, for the most vulnerable, lead to devastating lifelong consequences, including physical and mental illness, social exclusion and shortened life expectancy.

But it doesn't have to. With the right support, given at the right time, and in the right way, children can go on to live happy and healthy lives. Winston's Wish is determined to achieve its vision of a society in which every child can get the help and support they need when someone close to them dies.

Since our beginnings in 1992, Winston's Wish has helped tens of thousands of children and their families come to understand what has happened to them and learn how to live alongside their grief.

While demand for our services is huge and ever-increasing, we are fiercely resolute in our commitment to grow, so that many more thousands of the UK's grieving children and their families can get the help and support they need – and be able to face their futures with hope.

## OUR VISION

A society in which every child can get the help they need when someone close to them dies.

## OUR MISSION

To listen when a child is grieving.  
To act when a child needs our help.  
To know what to say when it's time to talk.



# 2019-20 AT A GLANCE

**21,737** children and young people directly supported through our Helpline, ASK email service, online chat and face-to-face

**524** service users supported via online chat

**13,379** have completed online training – a **48%** increase on last year

**282,657** visitors to our websites – a **53%** increase on last year

**2,148** memory boxes distributed

**19,720** publications distributed

**16,078** visitors to our young person's website [help2makesense.org](http://help2makesense.org)

**6,753** conversations were had through our Freephone National Helpline

**2,735** requests for support through our ASK email service – a **27%** increase on last year

**1,251** delegates attended training events and study days, held for professionals supporting bereaved children

Once again, I am proud that we were able to support more children and young people than ever before in our charity's history, continuing the momentum of the last five years as we have focused all our efforts on reaching the grieving children who need us so much. It is testament to everyone involved in making Winston's Wish what it is: our staff, volunteers, supporters, donors and funders. Thank you.

This year's figures also highlight the ways in which children, young people and their families now want to access support with a much greater emphasis on digital and online help. As well as extending our existing offers this year, we launched the first crisis text service for bereaved children and young people in partnership with Shout, and we continue to look towards technology to help us reach many, many more people. Our online training for professionals has seen huge growth this year, proving that we are not alone in our vision for supporting bereaved children.

In March, as the COVID-19 pandemic broke, children and young people across the country were enveloped in a public discussion about death, dying and bereavement that is unprecedented in our post-war society. As the death toll rose, services like our's became vital sources of support and guidance to thousands of people, and this work continues as the impact of the pandemic is more widely felt, heard and seen in the post-lockdown era.

This, of course, is a necessary but very painful process as we come to terms with

the tens of thousands of lives that have been lost, each one an individual story of grief that will have a profound impact on the bereaved and those around them for many years to come. These are the stories we hear every day, and it is a privilege to do so and to be able to offer our support at such a difficult time.

Again, I am indebted to my colleagues here for moving our services online within a matter of days of the lockdown in March, meaning we could protect the continuity of our support. I am also grateful that we had already made such significant strides towards embracing digital and remote delivery. These developments have now been accelerated to form the basis of our new delivery model which embeds these remote support services, accessible from right across the country, alongside face-to-face support for those in the greatest need.

Although the world around us may have changed dramatically in late 2019-20, the year proved that we have strong foundations and broad shoulders, and we are changing too. We all know that funding for services like ours is coming under severe pressure at a time when what we do is needed perhaps more than ever-but we remain absolutely resolute in our commitment to being there to do it.

Some things will never change.

Fergus

# CEO'S MESSAGE



# ISAAC AND ASHER

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark hair hugging a young boy from behind. The woman is wearing a dark top, and the boy is wearing a plaid shirt. They are outdoors, with a blurred background of greenery and sunlight filtering through.

Isaac and Asher were just five and nine when their dad died following an addiction to painkillers. The years that preceded his death were extremely traumatic for the whole family, as his illness took hold and his personality changed, and the boys were struggling with not only his death, but everything that came before. Isaac with PTSD, sensory processing issues, separation anxiety and complex bereavement, and Asher with issues of self-esteem and sense of self-worth. Mum called the Winston's Wish Helpline to ask for help, and began to receive support immediately.

““ *There hadn't been any support for us as a family through the boys' school or my work, and we were left very vulnerable. I was in the thick of grief and could barely string a sentence together. We presented as a family with quite complex issues. When I spoke to the man on the Helpline at Winston's Wish, I completely broke down. Because I'd been going through it all alone, and suddenly I wasn't alone anymore.* ””

The family was later referred to a Lead Practitioner and SEND specialist for face-to-face work, both individually and as a family unit. The support received, says mum, was life-changing. Not only the bereavement support to process their grief, but also the

emotional support and advocacy that was given in helping her manage other agencies. Two years on from their dad's death and, as their support through Winston's Wish comes to a close, the family are in a much stronger and happier place.

““ *Isaac, Asher and I are a very tight little three. The difference in them is incredible and we are now definitely moving into a much happier, lighter space. If I talk about her [our family support practitioner] too much it makes me cry. She's honestly changed our life. It's been a pretty gruelling slog, as a single mum, raising two traumatised children, and she has just been there every step of the way. I cannot thank her enough, and that goes out to the whole organisation, because we wouldn't be where we are now if it wasn't for her support and keeping me sane.* ””

# OUR IMPACT

We understand grief and we have been supporting bereaved children, their families, and the professionals who support them since 1992.

We know from our experience that, with the right support, at the right time, delivered in the right way, children who have been bereaved can go on to live full and healthy lives.

By regularly analysing our support, we know that the children and young people we have supported have shown measured improvements in behaviour, wellbeing and mental health, bereavement-related issues, relationships with family and friends, and life at school.

**91%** had an improvement related to their behaviour

**89%** showed improvements in wellbeing and mental health

**99%** had improvements in issues directly related to their bereavement

**93%** were experiencing less stress within the family and improved relationships

**93%** found the support they received helpful

**96%** felt that their family's needs were understood

**92%** would recommend Winston's Wish to other people

\*Based on 156 replies via text feedback from parents/carers of closed families

**“ Winston's Wish provided a safe space for my daughter to feel she could open up and speak about the pain she had bottled up – such a light during a very dark time, when no one else would/could help. ”**

**72%** were able to talk about the death together with their family

**72%** had a better understanding of the death

**73%** had effective ways of coping with difficult feelings

**“ I feel my son feels like he has a better understanding of his feelings and is more open and more confident to communicate about our situation and ask questions. ”**

\*Based on practitioner observations of 140 CYP

In December 2019 we launched the UK's first 24/7 crisis text service for bereaved children and young people – offering free, confidential and anonymous support to those in crisis following the death of someone close. Powered by trusted partners Shout and Crisis Text Line, support can be accessed 24/7 by texting **WW** to **85258**

# CRISIS MESSENGER TEXT SERVICE



**shout**  
for support in a crisis

CRISIS TEXT LINE |





# CAMBRIDGE RESEARCH

In June 2019, Winston's Wish and the University of Cambridge released a report on the long-term consequences of childhood bereavement and the actions that can be taken to reduce their impact.

Without the right support, the long-term consequences for a bereaved child can include physical and mental illness, lower academic attainment, unemployment and social exclusion.

The report cites evidence suggesting that these risks can be mitigated by well-managed school support, however the research also found that bereavement support in schools is patchy and teachers said that they feel ill-equipped to help.

As a result of the report, we proposed that all trainee teachers should receive bereavement training and called on all UK schools to develop a bereavement plan. To support this, we created a free downloadable schools' bereavement strategy, guide and suggested lesson plans.

The report's release attracted national media coverage and was celebrated widely across the education sector, amongst school leaders and teachers.



# MACEY, SHELBY AND LETTI



Winston's Wish supported Macey, Shelby and Letti after their big brother, Thomas, died by suicide. When asked about the help they received, their mum, Nikki said:

“ The news about Thomas was devastating and so unexpected. It was like being hit by a bolt of lightning. As a mother to five other children, I was so worried and concerned for them and how they would cope. I had no idea how to explain to my children that they wouldn't see Thomas again, no Thomas hugs or kisses. The support from Winston's Wish has been invaluable to me and my girls. It is still early days, but they are a huge support in helping us to understand and process the devastating loss of Thomas. They understand our grief completely and, with their help, we are beginning to try to find a 'new' normal. ”

# HOPE AFTER SUICIDE

On average, someone takes their own life every 90 minutes in the UK. Many of these will leave behind children or siblings who are left distraught and overwhelmed.

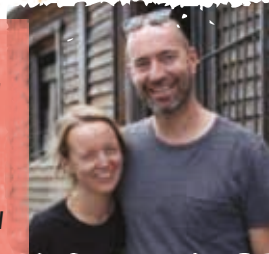


In September 2019, to coincide with World Suicide Prevention Day, we launched our **#HopeAfterSuicide** campaign to raise awareness of this issue. In the first three days alone, the short film was viewed **290K** times, increased average daily web traffic by **417%**, and drove a **40%** increase in calls into Helpline. **£10,347** of donations were received as a direct result.

# HONORARY SUPPORT

Winston's Wish was honoured to announce Glastonbury Festival organisers Emily Eavis and husband Nick Dewey as Patrons.

*“We're honoured to have been invited to become patrons of Winston's Wish. Nick and I have huge respect and gratitude for the work that Winston's Wish does to support children and young people who have lost a parent or sibling, which I [Emily] experienced first-hand after losing my mum.”*



Ambassador, Mark Lemon, was just 12 years old when his father was murdered. He is now an award-winning children's author and podcaster.

*“When I first heard about Winston's Wish, I simply had to work with them. The work that they carry out to support bereaved children across the UK is wonderful, and it reminded me of how much I would've loved to have been supported by such a charity as a child.”*

Ambassador, Gary Andrews, is better known as Gary Scribbler. His well known doodle a day documents everyday family life with his two children, after the death of their beloved mother, Joy. Gary is keen to raise awareness of the support available to bereaved children and to encourage healthy discussions about death through his own inimitable style.



# GLASTONBURY FESTIVAL 2019

A stand in the Green Futures field at Glastonbury 2019 helped us raise awareness of our services and support some families over the weekend.

We are very grateful to Patrons, Emily and Nick, for inviting us to the festival and giving this fantastic platform.



“It's so brilliant that you're here.”

## MEMORY MAKERS BALL

In March this year we held our first ever Memory Makers Ball at the Bristol Harbour Hotel & Spa – a glitzy black tie affair, with a champagne reception and three-course sit-down meal, followed by live music and dancing.

Entertainment was provided by Jonathan Wilkes and his seven-piece swing band, delivering some big brass sounds to create an unforgettable evening, which raised over £33,000!



## INCOME

Total income raised in the last year was **£2,432,894**

A further **£20,548** was released from funds held in restricted reserves whilst our investments reduced in value by **£35,201**

For every **£1** spent in fundraising we raised **£4.15**

## EXPENDITURE

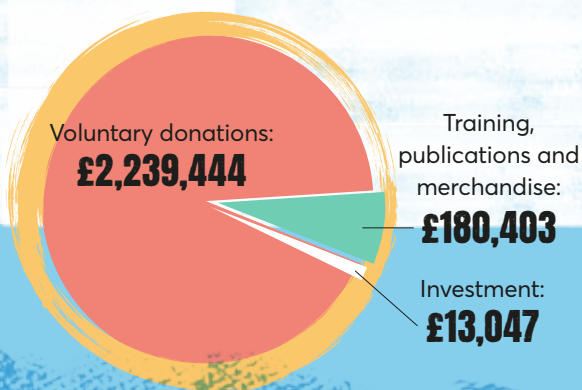
Total expenditure in the year **£2,254,294**

Of every **£1** spent,  
**74p** went on direct delivery

Total spent on furtherance of  
charity's objectives **£1,668,293**

Cost of generating funds **£586,001**

## WHERE DOES OUR INCOME COME FROM?



# OUR NUMBERS FOR 2019-20



# CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Whilst March 2020 represents the end of our financial year, it will forever be remembered for the month in which the COVID-19 pandemic put the UK into "lockdown". It is easy to lose sight of what we achieved in the year prior to lockdown and I am delighted to be able to capture that in this document for you.

Prior to March, we had put a number of plans in place which enabled us to react very quickly, adapting our services to the new COVID-19 context. For example, our switch to "cloud" computing and equipping staff with portable IT equipment allowed us to immediately switch to remote working, providing families with the option of phone or video support in the absence of a face-to-face services.

In December 2019, in conjunction with our stakeholders, we started to review our delivery model to increase the equity of access to our services throughout the UK, with phone and video support playing a key role. These plans have become even more important as we move forward in a changed world, where we are likely to be called upon to support more children and young people than ever before.

There are significant challenges – we know that our income is likely to fall significantly as our generous donors and supporters adjust to the 'new normal' and the impacts of an enduring recession are felt. However, we are clear about what we need to do to ensure that Winston's Wish is able to continue to support children, young people and the adults that care for them for many years to come.

We are delighted that you have joined us on this journey and we hope that you will want to come with us into the future - whatever that may look like.

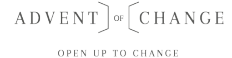
Nigel Purveur, Chair of Trustees

# THANK YOU

We could not do the work we do supporting bereaved children, young people and their families, without the invaluable support and work of our donors, volunteers, partners and staff.

Thank you to each and every one of you.

Our funders include:



# WE CANNOT SUPPORT BEREAVED CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT.

## ONLINE:

To make an online donation via our website, please go to [winstonswish.org](https://winstonswish.org)

## PHONE:

To make a donation by phone using your card please call our fundraising team on **01242 515 157**

## POST:

Please send a cheque payable to 'Winston's Wish' to the address below. Please include your name and address so we can thank you for your donation. Kindly post to: **17 Royal Crescent, Cheltenham, GL50 3DA**



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**Helpline: 08088 020 021**  
**winstonswish.org**

17 Royal Crescent, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL50 3DA | Tel: 01242 515 157

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**WW**

