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Impact Report 2021-22

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The Year in Numbers

Buttle UK is a charity dedicated to making direct, tangible improvements in the lives of children and young people experiencing crisis and poverty. We give holistic grants of up to £2,000, with a flexible approach to our grant making. This gives our grantees a tailored package of items and activities that are best suited to help them overcome their unique and challenging circumstances.

After seeing patterns of grant giving change during the first year of the pandemic, the numbers and types of grants made in 2021-22 began to shift again. Access to activities outside of the home have become possible once more, and education settings have returned to something closer to normal practice. Nonetheless, access to employment support, such as the furlough schemes, and additional financial support through Universal Credit has ended.

Although we moved on from the most severe pandemic restrictions, the ongoing impact caused by COVID-19 has remained. Meanwhile, the cost of living has soared. Buttle UK has worked towards addressing these issues alongside the wide network of referral organisations from across the support sector who make applications. This has resulted in over £4 million worth of items and activities being provided to those in desperate need, supporting 4,500 children and young people.



£4,259,658 spent on children & young people



£3,321,687 in Chances for Children grants



£937,971 in Support for Boarding grants



5,917 items funded for education, training and employment



2,250 grants made to families in need

6,323 items funded for a safe and equipped home



4,519 children and young people supported



3,167 items funded for wellbeing and social inclusion



£1,312 the size of an average grant

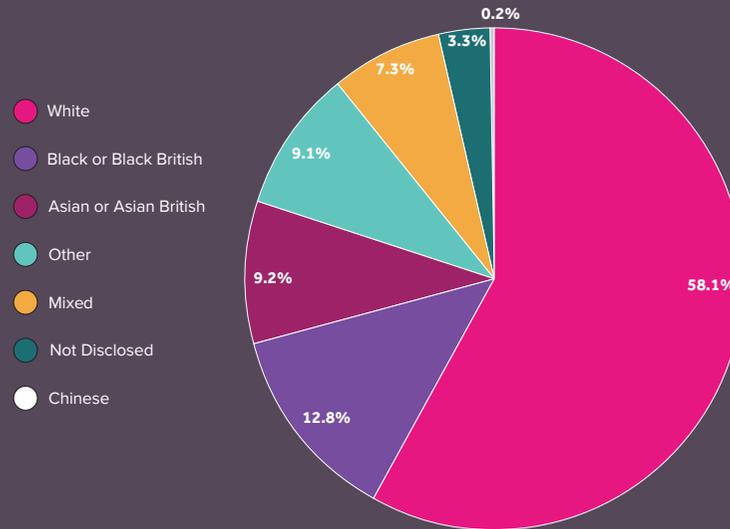
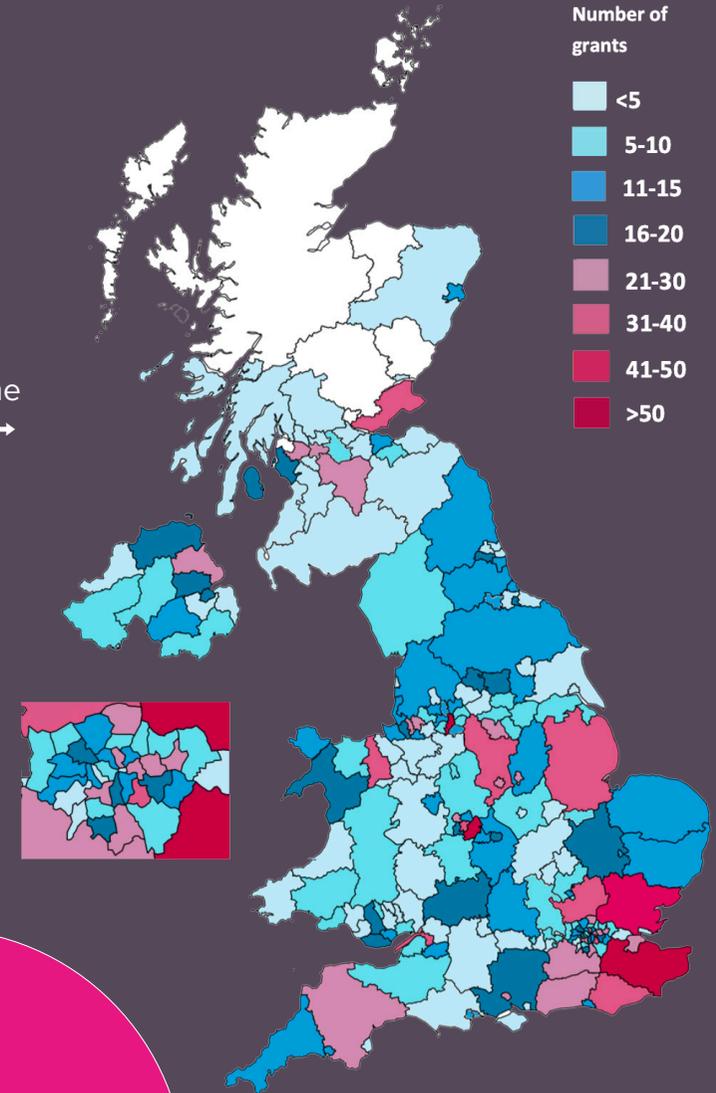
Our Grantees

Each year we set targets, based on population and published deprivation statistics, to guide the geographical spread of our grant giving. In 2021-22, we achieved a close alignment with these targets, with higher concentrations of grants in more densely populated areas. Birmingham received 236 grants alone, almost four times as many as the next most-granted area. This can be attributed to the strong relationships built with the support sector in this area, which is also reflected in the Kent and Essex areas. While many rural and outlying areas received few, or even no grants, this somewhat reflects the available infrastructure required to apply for and distribute the grants.

The recipients of our grants are ethnically diverse. While the majority of our grantees are White, the overall percentage of Black and Ethnic Minoritised grantees is above that of the national population. This illustrates the poverty landscape of the UK today, demonstrating the disadvantage that minoritised people face. In order for us to better understand and address this, we have started collecting data that represents the diversity within families and the specificities of ethnic identity.

Any areas where grant giving falls below the national average or our geographic targets, will be addressed through outreach to organisations and groups within those communities.

Figure 1: Grants made across the United Kingdom, London Inset →



← Figure 2: Ethnicity of grantees

Award Reasons

Buttle UK exists to support children and young people in poverty and who have experienced crisis, things which we know impact their home lives, education and wellbeing. With domestic abuse and family breakdown in 67% and 52% of households respectively, it is unsurprising that in three quarters of the families supported in 2021-22, children were experiencing emotional difficulties. Frequently occurring award reasons such as poor living conditions, homelessness and debt are contributing to the very difficult circumstances that our grantees are living through. This is compounded by high numbers of parents/carers experiencing mental health issues, or being unable to cope. Many children and young people are enduring developmental delay (22%), behaviour problems (15%) and mental health issues (15%) as a result of the trauma they are living through.

Our grants are designed to be holistic, in order to address multiple aspects of the crisis. They also reflect the household composition, addressing the difference in needs between the 13.2% of grantees who were estranged young people aged 16-20, or those that have become a family unexpectedly, such as the 3.4% of our grantees classified as kinship carers. While the vast majority of households are headed by a single parent, the number of children and level of income, debt and support available, varies from family to family. Therefore, we ensure that our grants are dynamic and flexible, as reflected in the items we granted in 2021-22

Figure 4: Family status by household →

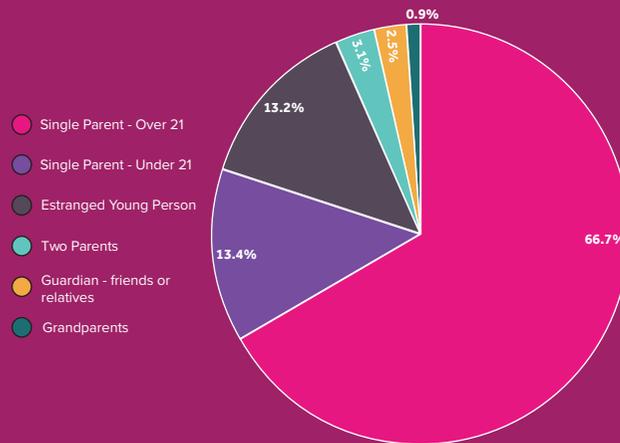


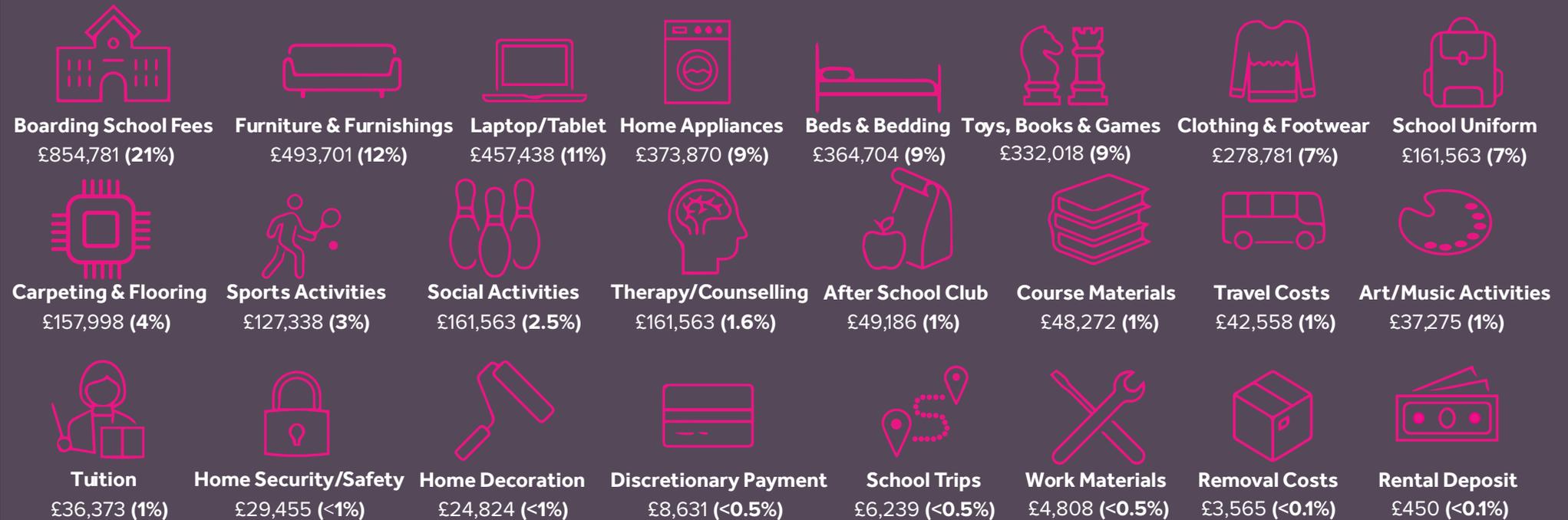
Figure 3: Award reasons, representing those in >3% of cases ↓

Award Reasons	Number	Percentage
Child or Young Person (CYP) - Emotional Difficulties	1,760	75%
Domestic Abuse	1,570	67%
Family Breakdown	1,218	52%
Isolation / Unsupported	1,082	46%
Legally Homeless	699	30%
Poor Living Conditions	675	29%
Non-Coping Parent/Carer	635	27%
Debt	597	26%
Parent/Carer - Mental Health Issues	556	24%
At Risk in their Home/Area	547	23%
CYP - Serious Developmental Delay	509	22%
CYP - Behaviour Problems	349	15%
CYP - Mental Health Issues	344	15%
CYP - Out of School / Poor Attendance	313	13%
Poverty	286	12%
CYP - Estrangement	276	12%
Family relationship difficulties	246	11%
CYP - Child Neglect	228	10%
COVID-19	223	10%
Large Family Size	217	9%
Parent/Carer - Drug or Alcohol Misuse	201	9%
CYP - Child in Need	185	8%
CYP - Child Protection Plan (CPP)	177	8%
Victim of Harassment/Assault/Theft	166	7%
CYP Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	164	7%
CYP - Child Abuse	157	7%
Bereavement	123	5%
Kinship Care	94	4%
Young Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker	83	4%
Parent/Carer - Physical Ill-Health	82	4%

What Was Granted - 2021-2022

The items we grant are those requested by referrers on behalf of the families and young people they support. They therefore offer a unique snapshot on what children living in poverty desperately need to improve their home, education and wellbeing. It is worth examining noteworthy comparisons to items given across 2020-21. For example, the proportion granted for laptops and tablets has fallen from 18% to 11% this year, reflecting the reduced need for home learning. Meanwhile, grants given towards boarding fees have climbed 8%. While this reflects their larger proportion within a reduced overall grant spend this year, it also represents an actual increase of £220,000.

The demand for our most commonly given items has remained steady, such as furniture and furnishings, home appliances, beds and toys, books and games. As essential items, it is worrying to note how many households have a desperate need for them. The demand for school uniform has seen it rise over 1% as a proportion of overall spend since last year, most likely due to the return to in-school learning. Positively, this is mirrored by 1% increases in grants towards sports and social activities, which we know benefit children in many ways. This is an indication of the increased access to these activities as COVID restrictions began to lift.



Reflections on Impact

Estranged Young People

You will notice that there is no improvement score opposite for those classified as estranged young people (EYP) by Buttle UK. That is because their feedback does not currently encompass numerical data. However, of the qualitative feedback received from this group, over 86% of feedback received at both 3 months and 6 months was positive. The remaining 14% of responses were neutral. Due to the low response rates, it is hard to draw firm conclusions on the experiences of EYP overall, but we have recently completed an extensive co-produced research project to address this, which is due to be published in Autumn 2022. Furthermore, we are committing to a survey pilot with this group, with specific and highly targeted questions to increase uptake and feedback overall.

Changing the Measures

The way we measure impact is changing. The improvement scores opposite are taken from groups of responses to multiple questions around a single theme, which is then averaged to represent the survey respondents' perspective on a theme on the whole. While this is a valid and useful way to summarise the perspectives of many, we are always looking to improve our transparency. In the future, we intend to break down and share the numbers of responses. This will be supplemented by much more qualitative data that will help us to explore specific issues that emerge from the surveys in greater depth.

Impact in numbers

Area of improvement	Family at 3 months	Family at 6 months	Support workers at 3 months	EYP support workers at 3 months
Wellbeing	72%	71%	82%	80%
Education	70%	73%	82%	88%
Home Environment	80%	78%	93%	81%
Family Relationships	78%	76%	88%	N/A
Parent Coping	74%	65%	88%	N/A

In 2021-22, 460 families and 596 support workers responded to our 3 month survey, with an additional 305 families responding at 6 months. This wealth of feedback gives us a clear insight into the impact of a grant from Buttle UK. For families, the biggest improvements were reported in the home environment and relationships. Even at 6 months, this improvement was mostly sustained, within a few percentage points. In only one area was improvement not sustained. Grants make a very positive improvement towards parent coping initially (74%), but do not result in a sustained improvement (65%). Access to activities was the area with lowest reported improvement. This will be carefully monitored now that COVID-19 restrictions have eased, to ensure we act to overcome any additional barriers.

With positive improvement scores of over 80% in all areas, approaching 90% in the areas around relationships and parenting, support workers consistently report higher improvement levels than families. This may well be because of their outside perspective, but may also be informed by formal assessments related to their role in supporting their families. There is a notable difference in their assessment of access to activities, which they report as highly improved compared to parents and carers. The perspectives of families and referrers are most closely aligned regarding the home environment. It is clear that grants do make a big difference within the home, often with tangible and essential items that last for a long time. An area of interest in the coming year is education and wellbeing, and how Buttle UK can enhance the improvements reported in this area. The following pages explore what we have learned through qualitative feedback on these areas of improvement.

Wellbeing

Many parents and carers attribute the items received for education and the home as factors in the huge improvement of their child’s wellbeing. In particular, having their own fully furnished bedroom is repeatedly seen as helping to reduce anxiety and stress. Simply having a safe space of their own is so important to many of our grantees, particularly those that are recovering from fleeing domestic abuse. For many young people, their wellbeing is improved by having items that many of their peers take for granted: warm and well-fitting clothing, proper school uniform and a bed of their own. This is reported as

especially important due to the impact of the trauma they have experienced. For many children, confidence and self-esteem is gained through grants for sports or social activities. Parents describe the happiness and fun their child experiences in learning new and exciting skills, and their own joy at seeing their child or children thrive. This is attributed to feelings of being able to cope with, or overcome, trauma. Some children and young people benefit from the support of a therapist; referrers describe the tangible impact this has on their day-to-day wellbeing.

“Without a doubt, their beds and desk have helped them to feel good”

“They had nothing, their confidence has gone up ten fold especially with having decent clothing, matching socks & feeling beautiful ...she told me that she felt beautiful now”

“For my children’s wellbeing, the outdoor play equipment has been amazing! It also helps my older 2 children when they are feeling strong emotions, to let off steam”

“We moved home with very little and without the grant we would still be trying to settle. She is much happier than I could ever have hoped for”

“He has felt less embarrassed about his appearance, and he feels less invisible, more confident”

Education

Many parents report the difference in their child’s confidence and increased engagement at school after receiving a grant for a laptop or tablet, adding that they are better able to participate in home-learning and keep up with their peers. While tuition is not commonly requested in grants, those that receive it state how essential it has been in addressing the gaps in learning that many children experienced during the pandemic. Families often attribute much wider holistic impacts such as mental wellbeing and self-confidence to the educational items they receive. For example, school uniforms help their children

feel the same as their peers, which has particular resonance for those that have had to change school settings due to fleeing difficult home circumstances. For very young children, many parents reference the difference that age-appropriate educational toys and games have made, describing the calming and motivating effect they have, as well as increased enjoyment with learning activities. Some of the estranged young people stated that they simply could not have continued their further or higher education studies without the essential course materials provided in their grant.

“Access to a tutor to bring her up to speed with maths has been wonderful, due to falling behind in the pandemic. Her confidence has soared”

“The tablet has definitely improved her development and learning for the better!”

“The tutoring has raised my son’s confidence immensely...his self-esteem has raised as he has started to catch up on lost learning”

“For my youngest, it was her educational toys and my oldest, it was her laptop for school. These have improved their education and ability to improve!”

“I’ve got a laptop for college and I’m doing so well. All my teachers are so proud of me. I have got barbering stuff and I could prove myself through a volunteer job with these tools. Now I’m pretty good at barbering”

Home

We see many requests for furniture, furnishings and appliances that no home should be without. Feedback from these families is overwhelmingly positive, sharing the joy and relief at being granted items that make their home feel like a safe, welcoming space. Many sadly reference the incredibly difficult circumstances they were living in before, with one reporting that the grant made them feel worthy of moving forward in their recovery. Even simple home furnishings have a big impact, such as the sense of cosiness described by a young person upon receiving decorating materials and soft furnishings.

Relationships

Building and sustaining positive relationships is so important in recovery from trauma. Unfortunately, disrupted education and the immense stress caused by crisis and poverty often leaves young people and children isolated and lonely. The impact of the grants on relationship building is therefore critical. Many families report that simple items like trampolines, games and tables and chairs are important, because they offer opportunities to sit, eat or play together. This is also reflected in feedback around the relationships children are newly able to create and sustain with their friends and peers. This is often linked by

Practically speaking, items such as curtains, carpeting and equipment for under-5s afford families privacy and safety in their homes, something that many young parents reported in particular. The impact of some of our most popular granted items, namely home appliances, is often linked to the parent feeling better able to cope. Children benefit from having clean clothes and cooked meals, adding to their overall wellbeing. Support workers also highly rate the impact of home items, describing how they contribute hugely to a safer, healthier household.

reduced feelings of shame or embarrassment about their home, meaning that they feel able to invite friends over. More widely, the critical relationship between the parent/carer and their referrer has often been reported as improving following the grant. Many referrers state that it builds trust and allows them to support their clients in expanded ways. All of this is critical to enhance wellbeing and health.

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“After being in refuge for so long and losing everything for us to move into our new home and for her to know that her new bed is hers, she had new toys, and for them both to feel comfortable in their new home”

“I couldn’t afford these items but this grant changed my negative attitude into positive. We aren’t hopeless anymore”

“New beds to help sleep comfortably, clothes are all hung up and a nice tidy bedroom for them to play safely with their new toys. We can eat fresh foods which are stored in our new fridge freezer and freshly washed clothes in our new washing machine”

“Having their bedrooms re-decorated in the way that they wanted enabled them to sleep better which helped their attention span at school”

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“We got some vouchers to use at soft play, this has got us out of the house a lot more, somewhere to socialise with other children when she otherwise couldn’t”

“The trampoline has made my girls so happy. The garden furniture has made a massive difference, my girls have had friends over and are able to sit in garden!”

“The Xbox for my boys [helps them] keep in touch with close friends and play their games together”

“Being able to do things as a family we would not otherwise have done due to finances, it helps them bond as siblings and have a sense of pride”

“I know it sounds silly but the board games have been great for family time!”

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Parent Coping

While our grants are primarily for children and young people, their parents and carers often vicariously benefit in myriad ways. This is important, because we recognise that a safe and healthy home creates the best possible circumstances to grow up in. It is clear across feedback from families and referrers that grants contribute to increased self confidence in parenting. Some parents described their feelings of hopelessness and disappointment when they could not afford to furnish their home, or give opportunities for their child/ren to thrive outside of the home. The grant was reported as alleviating their own self-doubt

Activities

In recent years, access to activities has dropped dramatically as a result of COVID restrictions. The benefits of accessing activities can seem less tangible than items for the home or for educational purposes. It is therefore hugely important to note the impact that activities can and do have for our grantees. On the whole, parents, young people and support workers alike describe at length the incredible difference that various activities make on wellbeing and relationship building. Art, music and drama activities are reported as building new skills and self confidence, while sports activities are described as great

and stress, by giving them the opportunity to treat their children. Many referenced Christmas as a particularly difficult time, which was helped by the grant. Given the high proportion of award reasons around parental mental illness and non-coping, it is reassuring to repeatedly see feedback from parents and carers linked to their own improved health, which they often describe as contributing to an overall sense of calm and wellbeing.

for team building and healthy habits. Many estranged young people are granted a gym membership, with their specific feedback describing the motivation and increased wellbeing this affords them. Many social activities, such as days out to the zoo, farms, theme parks and soft play offer families a sense of normality and fun, often after years of missing out. One parent described how after-school activities and clubs gave her much needed space to help with her own recovery from trauma.

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“I felt loved for the first time in forever...My house now feels like it is my forever home and I can be a better parent”

“I am a lot less stressed now the home is looking great but more importantly I see the change in my children and knowing that they are happy makes me happy”

“The grant has helped me come from such a dark and low place to now being fully comfortable and secure in my own home”

“This made me feel supported when things were very wobbly...it made a big difference knowing there was help and good people out there...which was just as important as the grant itself”

”

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“The passes to visit places like the zoo, this is something we could not of afforded and meant my son could go out and learn and explore. he bus pass has also majorly helped life for us getting to places with free groups”

“The football activity funded by the grant was highly appreciated, my son absolutely enjoyed his time spent at the activity. This activity improved his mental well-being enormously”

“Being able to provide my children with swimming lessons as it helped get them back into a routine, stay active and have something to look forward to”

“We went bought a cinema card, it's so good for bonding and getting a little normality back”

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Lehan's Story

Lehan, 14, has been through circumstances that no young person should. His mother suffered from substance addiction and left the home, leading to his three younger siblings being taken into foster care. When his father was remanded in prison, a kinship care arrangement was agreed, leaving him in the care of his father's partner. However, this left the family facing incredible financial pressures. His carer already had a daughter, and another baby on the way. They were plunged into a single income household, compounded by being rehoused into a larger property with no flooring, curtains, light fittings or blinds. Lehan himself came to the home with very few personal belongings or clothes and even had to share a bedroom with his carer for some time before they were rehoused. According to his support worker, all he wanted was to feel the same as his peers.

To support this family as they transitioned to a new home, Buttle UK granted various household items, including white goods and a shed to keep their outdoor equipment safe. A new bicycle and accessories were provided for Lehan, to give him the freedom to unwind and explore. His bedroom furniture was entirely funded through the grant, as well as a new set of school uniform. Their support worker described how important the grant was to get the family through a very difficult period for them.

“The clothing grant took a massive pressure off myself, as well as the children being able to get what they most wanted and being the same as their friends. The bedroom furniture and tumble dryer was a blessing and has really made life easier in the home. It certainly took a lot of pressure off my shoulders and really helped us all out” Lehan's Carer

N.B. Name, location and any other identifying information has been changed to protect anonymity



Penelope's Story

At only 3-years-old, Penelope has sadly already experienced domestic abuse and living in extreme poverty. Living with her mum and two older siblings, they all had to flee the home when her father's controlling and violent abuse reached crisis point. This left the whole family with nothing. Even when they were moved into emergency housing, the lack of furnishings and furniture left Penelope with no bed and the family with no appliances to cook or store food. Living solely on Universal Credit left room for nothing more than the bare essentials.

As a result, Penelope was suffering with emotional difficulties linked to the trauma she had experienced. She was withdrawn and reserved, clinging to her mum and experiencing anxiety about being apart from her. Her nursery noticed that her appetite had dropped and had concerns over her wellbeing. Her older siblings and mother were experiencing serious stress, and the household on the whole was in crisis.

Through an application from their social worker, the family received a grant of just under £2,000; this included bedroom furniture, home furnishings, clothing, family activities, toys and best of all, money towards a sports club for Penelope to build her confidence and wellbeing. With additional support from a domestic abuse charity, life has improved for this family in many ways. Their referrer reported that they are all in a much better place, but particularly Penelope.

"It literally allowed us to have a home with furniture at a time of crisis. Everyone had their own bed. We were able to have a Christmas feeling safe, which we haven't had for over 4 years"
Penelope's Mum

N.B. Name, location and any other identifying information has been changed to protect anonymity



Fundraising Achievements

A key pillar of our 2020-25 Strategy is to grow our income. Our Chances for Children Campaign, which began in 2016, achieved its initial £10m target early in 2021. A follow-up campaign has since been launched, with the goal to raise another £10m in the next 3-5 years. At the end of 2021/22 it had already reached £2.4m. It is only through the hard work and generosity of the Chances for Children Campaign Board that we have been able to achieve this. As we continue to develop our major donor, corporate and trust and foundation income through the Campaign, Buttle UK has also been testing generating donations directly from the public as a potential long term income source.

Over recent months we have partnered with the supermarket chain Asda to run a campaign to highlight how challenging it is for some families to afford the costs of school uniform. The campaign ran in the Mirror, Express, Daily Record and other Reach newspapers and the partnership included a donation of £125,000 towards school uniform costs over the next year.

We have also launched a new initiative, the Women's

Giving Circle. This is an opportunity for a network of women to come together to provide a helping hand to mothers who are struggling with poverty and crisis and young women in their teens trying to relise their goals without any support from family. The programme launched in May at an event hosted by broadcaster Aasmah Mir in a wonderful space donated by the Covent Garden Hotel.

£249,632

from our partnership with TKMaxx and Comic Relief

£125,000

pledged by Asda for school uniforms

£43,000

raised so far by the Women's Giving Circle

£35,000

raised through public fundraising

Thanks and Acknowledgements

Our work at Buttle UK would not be possible without the generous support given to us by individuals and organisations. While our gratitude extends to all, we would like to express particular thanks to...

The Edward Gostling Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, Comic Relief, TK Maxx, Barclays, Graphite Capital, Peoples's

Postcode Lottery, Colin Crawshaw, KPMG Foundation, Band Trust, Mercers' Company, The Italian job, Ajaz.org, Schroder Foundation, Dulverton Trust, Clothworkers' Foundation, Rob Rinder, Taylor Family Foundation, Denbighshire Foyer Company, Cyril Taylor Charitable Foundation, Dreams Beds, KIDLY, Mat Waugh, Eleanor Hamilton Educational Trust and Medlock Charitable Trust

What Next?

Though this report celebrates the positive impacts that our grant making has had in 2021-22, we know there is always more to be done. Our work is always being expanded by the collaborations we make in the wider sector. With this in mind, we will be working closely with the End Child Poverty Coalition to identify what we can be doing as a grant maker during this cost-of-living crisis. Likewise, we will use our partnerships in the grant-making sector to lobby for change at a government level, particularly around the need for increases in welfare support for children and young people living in poverty.

Our recent work with estranged young people is coming close to publication. We will act on this to ensure change for this marginalised group, championing their voice to be better heard in the support sector. Aligned with this, our work is going to be hugely supported by our brand new post of Co-Production and Youth Engagement Manager. We know that our best way to improve is to listen to and involve our grantees in as many meaningful ways as possible.

Closing Remarks from Joseph Howes, CEO

Even though I am well aware of the challenges children and young people are facing right now in the UK, reading through this report - particularly as a parent myself - still makes my heart sink. Knowing that children all over the UK are going without such basic items and activities is terrible. At the same time, I'm so proud of the work of our team, and the tangible difference we can make in children and young people's lives. People understand the power of what we provide instantly; many that read this will have made the decision to pay for these things themselves, for their own children. So, we are effectively providing an impact report on the things we all know children should have, but not everyone has the funds to do so.

Our grants do not aim to change the world, but are focused on supporting individuals. Seeing a change in an individual child's lives is critical to us. Why should a child living in poverty, and who has been through crisis, not be supported with the items and activities so important to any of us? We know that our Chance for Children grants offered at the right time, at the right value, can make a significant difference to their wellbeing and engagement in education. That they provide a foundation on which other changes can take place. As the proverb

says, 'mighty oaks from little acorns grow'. But I always need to highlight that whilst we can do this for many children, there are still more living without these basic items, particularly in these challenging times.

That is why we also want to support wider change for children and young people. It is not always appreciated that there are children in the UK missing out on such basic items and activities. And perhaps we need this report to remind ourselves that all parents should have the means to provide these things for their children, particularly when 68% of those in poverty in 2020/21 were in a household where at least one adult works.

We share this impact data with others who focused on these issues, to support their work in attempting to change or strengthen the systems already in place to help children and young people. We are passionate about pushing for wider change and work with expert organisations to do this. So, by a combination of supporting individuals directly, involving the communities we support in our organisational decision-making and working in collaboration to create broader change, we can maximise the impact that we, as an organisation, can have for children and young people.



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Registered Charity No - 313007
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