



# 2023-24 ANNUAL REPORT

*Supporting families in the local community*



Registered charity number:  
**1153769**

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

Once again, I face the challenge of writing a foreword that will do justice to our charity and the wonderful achievements of all of those children, young people and families that CHEXS has had the privilege to work with during the last 12 months. As daunting as this task always first appears, as soon as I started to immerse myself in the content of this year's annual report, I realised that I needn't have worried in the slightest.

Once you also begin to peruse the following pages, you will soon appreciate that my real challenge with composing this foreword is that I could well run out of superlatives to describe the achievements described within its pages. The data (and more importantly, the numerous inspirational success stories behind this data) contained within this fabulous report truly are a testament to the hard work and commitment of all concerned, personifying the following words from Martin Luther King Jr.

“ *All labour that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence.* ”

The tailored family support that the CHEXS team provide has ensured that over 160 families within our community have benefited from bespoke intervention, with 100% positive feedback in terms of the support provided by CHEXS, and subsequently other agencies based on identified needs. As part the services that CHEXS provides, our GROWTH programme has supported many children with complex needs to improve their confidence and self-esteem, enabling them to develop hitherto hidden talents and skills, and encouraging them to work steadfastly towards realising their true potential.

Through my ongoing involvement in CHEXS, I am constantly amazed at the sheer scale of the challenges facing so many members of our community in the current economic/societal climate; however, I am even more in awe of the resilience and determination of the people that our dedicated teams work with on a daily basis, helping them to face up to these challenges, and to ultimately overcome them.

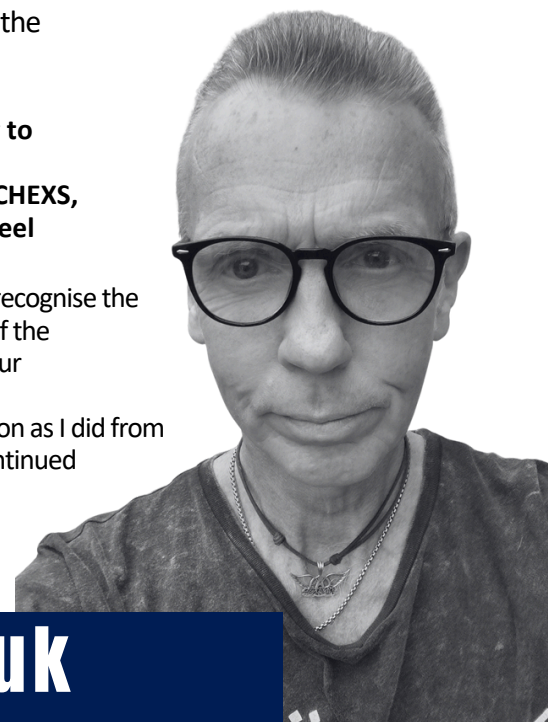
Speaking from the perspective of a teacher for over 30 years, the demands placed on children and young people in today's society are very different to those of previous generations; this is of course equally the case for their parents and carers. Hence, the continued success of CHEXS and ensuring its increased outreach in the years to come will mean that our local community can be one in which the dignity of every person will be respected, and the contribution of every individual to the 'common good' will be valued and celebrated in equal measure. As you read this truly inspiring report, take the opportunity to both appreciate and celebrate:

- ➡ **The achievements of every person behind the facts and figures;**
- ➡ **The efforts of every individual that has contributed in some way to the data and statistics with which you are presented;**
- ➡ **The understanding and compassion that underpins the work of CHEXS, making each person involved in our programmes and activities feel truly valued.**

As referenced in 'Final Thoughts' (page 15), as Trustees of CHEXS, we certainly recognise the incredible strides' that we've made this year...but we are also equally mindful of the 'significant challenges that remain' as we strive to ensure that all members of our community are recognised for their inherent worth and value to society.

I hope that you enjoy reading this wonderful report...and find as much inspiration as I did from the success stories described within the following pages; thank you for your continued support.

**Tony Gorton**  
Chair of Trustees







# A WORD FROM OUR CEO

***Reflecting on the remarkable work CHEXS has achieved over the past academic year fills me with an overwhelming sense of pride.***

Since the charity's inception in October 2010, I have been amazed by the passion and dedication of our team, volunteers, stakeholder schools and partners, who are committed to supporting children and families. What began as a vision to empower children and strengthen family relationships has grown into a dynamic charity, grounded in our mission and driven by our dedication to the communities we serve.

For the last 13 years, CHEXS has been dedicated to creating opportunities for children, young people (CYP), and families, focusing on both their educational needs and the daily stresses faced by parents through family support services (FSS). We believe in offering a listening ear for parents and ensuring children have early, age-appropriate opportunities to build their self-esteem and resilience. Research shows that children from financially insecure families lag behind their peers by an average of 10 months in primary school and 19 months in secondary school. ***In the past year alone, we've supported over 300 children and 170 parents***, helping them navigate challenges and develop the confidence to succeed. Instead of focusing on "interventions," we emphasise meaningful opportunities that allow young people to discover their strengths and thrive, with peer support playing a vital role in this process. A national strategy is needed to ensure early opportunities equip young people with life skills and academic knowledge to succeed in today's evolving world, including helping families stay connected through a listening ear and support.

As we look at the landscape today, the challenges facing vulnerable families continue to grow. The cost-of-living crisis, combined with years of cuts to state school budgets, has left many children, especially those who are socially excluded, without access to the opportunities that should be available to all. Research shows a significant correlation between parental income and a child's ability to become an innovator—highlighting the need for equal access to education, resources, and support networks.

***CHEXS is determined to bridge that gap, ensuring that talented children from low-income backgrounds have the opportunities they need to unlock their potential and thrive.***

💡 ***Together, we are transforming lives and empowering the next generation to overcome adversity and achieve their dreams.*** 💡

Despite the mounting obstacles, our charity remains steadfast in its mission. We are committed to creating inclusive programmes that provide extended learning opportunities for all children, not just those who can afford them. By focusing on building positive partnerships with local businesses, councils, schools, and other community organisations, we have created a strong network of support that allows us to extend our reach and impact.

**Pete Maiden**  
Chief Executive Officer

# ENABLE OUR COMMUNITY TO WORK TOGETHER WITH A SENSE OF BELIEF OWNERSHIP TACKLING LOCAL ISSUES AND IMPROVING COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

## OBJECTIVE 4



At CHEXS, we believe in our community. Our aim is to create a ***united local environment*** where everyone works together to support one another and improve the area in which we live. This year, we've strengthened partnerships with local businesses, schools, councils, and housing associations, ***building an inclusive, thriving community***. These collaborations have been crucial in addressing the pressing issues many families face, from financial struggles to social isolation. By creating spaces where people feel heard, we help ***build a foundation of trust*** and support that leads to ***meaningful and lasting change***.



# COMMUNITY

## Improving community relationships

At CHEXS, we believe in the power of bringing people together to build stronger, more resilient communities. Throughout the year, our community events have played a key role in showcasing the services we offer and how we can support local families. Two of our standout events in Cedar Park—our Easter event and the Black History celebration in October—offered invaluable opportunities for our team to connect with the community, share resources, and promote inclusivity.

These events are more than just gatherings; they provide a meaningful outlet for families to:

➡ **Bond across diverse backgrounds:** Our events build an inclusive environment where families from different cultures can come together, share experiences, and form lasting connections.

➡ **Spend quality time together:** We create a safe, fun space where families can engage in activities that encourage communication, collaboration, and shared enjoyment.

➡ **Achieve goals and meet challenges together:** Through our activities, families can work together, whether it's through friendly competition or working towards a shared goal, strengthening their family bonds in the process.

➡ **Engage the entire community:** Our events are designed for everyone—children, parents, and extended family members—creating a sense of unity across the community.

77

Families attended our FREE Craft sessions delivered by the CHEXS team



Last year we supported **133** families through food & fuel grants worth **£7,556.91**



**6** schools attended our Grow Club Finale and collected their achievements

## Intergenerational Support

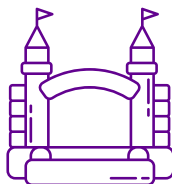
CHEXS has been hosting weekly "Time for You" sessions at the Beaumont Centre in Cheshunt, offering adults from the community a welcoming space to come together. These sessions provide an opportunity for participants to enjoy a tea or coffee, engage in conversation, and take part in activities such as crafts and games. The "Time for You" sessions offer more than just a casual meet-up.

They provide:

- ➡ **A safe space to escape isolation**
- ➡ **Opportunities to form new friendships across generations**
- ➡ **A warm, welcoming atmosphere**
- ➡ **A trusted, listening ear**



**136** Foodbank vouchers distributed



**500** families attended our Easter Trail event at Cedars Park

## ➡ Local Collaborations

CHEXS remains dedicated to supporting local initiatives that benefit our community and its families. This year, we actively participated in the B3 Living community event and joined forces with the local community to fundraise for Theobalds Christchurch.

In addition, we collaborated with our local Argos store to deliver breakfast bags to **100** families in need. Working closely with our partner schools, we identified families requiring food support and ensured that these essential resources reached those most in need.

## Tailored Family Support

This year, we have adapted our services to better meet the specific needs of the families we support, focusing on the key reasons for referral. By carefully identifying challenges such as attendance, low self-esteem, limited aspirations, financial concerns, housing issues, children's behaviour, and anxiety, we have been able to provide targeted assistance. Our approach involves connecting families with specialised services, including ADD-Vance, SPACE, Beacon, Safer Places, SFYP, DSLP4, and Broxbourne Council. Additionally, we've delivered a range of FREE group parenting sessions on topics such as:

- ➡ Establishing boundaries and routines, and managing behaviours
- ➡ Supporting children with emotionally based school avoidance
- ➡ Helping with school transitions
- ➡ Addressing and supporting your child's SEN (Special Educational Needs)

# HOMES

## 165

Families supported with 1 to 1 advice last year

### ➡ Difference made

## 91%

Parents have improved relationship with their child

## 96%

Parents feel more confident with their parenting

## 95%

have found better ways to cope with their child's behaviour

## 100%

parents have felt supported during their time with CHEXS

### ➡ Food & Fuel Support

CHEXS was selected by Broxbourne Council to distribute vouchers to local families in need, through the Household Support Fund and Food & Heat Grant. This funding allowed us to provide essential support, with vouchers totaling £7,556.91.

These vouchers helped families cover costs for utilities, fuel, and food, offering crucial assistance that contributed to:

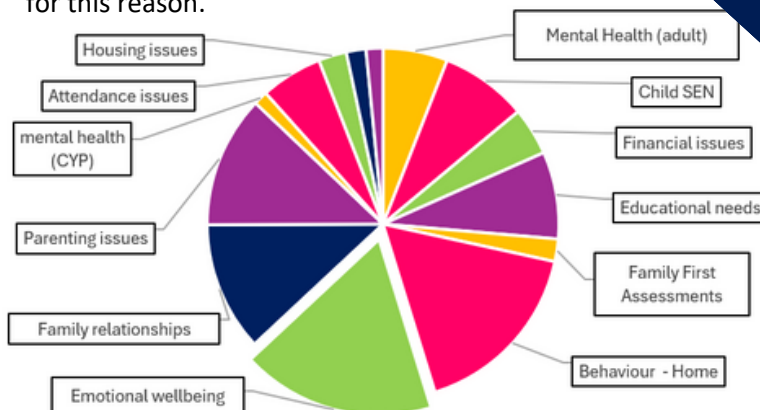
- ➡ Improved mental health
- ➡ Reduced stress levels
- ➡ Increased emotional well-being
- ➡ Essential financial relief

Through this initiative, CHEXS was able to provide timely and much-needed support, helping to ease the burden on vulnerable families during challenging times.



### Reasons for referral

The main reason for referral this year for our family support team was for emotional wellbeing with 18% of parents / carers referred for this reason.



### Increasing our reach

CHEXS has continued to uphold the extended hours introduced last year for our family support team, ensuring we can meet the demand from disadvantaged families whose children are struggling to reach their full potential at school. The need for our services continues to rise, reflecting the increasing challenges many families and children across the UK face.

These challenges range from the ongoing cost of living crisis, severe poverty due to insufficient household income, and parental instability, to poor social networks, lack of positive parenting skills, inadequate emotional resilience, and diminishing community support resources. Our team works closely with parents to address the root causes of family stress, including financial difficulties, unemployment, and housing concerns.

Many of the parents we support have children involved in, or who have previously participated in, our GROWTH programme, so they are already familiar with our work and trust our services.

**CHEXS are proud that our families praise us for our reliability, knowledge and the trusted support we offer.**



"TO ENABLE PARENTS FROM ALL BACKGROUNDS TO DEVELOP THEIR SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE, CREATING A FOUNDATION FOR A HAPPY AND NURTURING HOME."

## OBJECTIVE 1

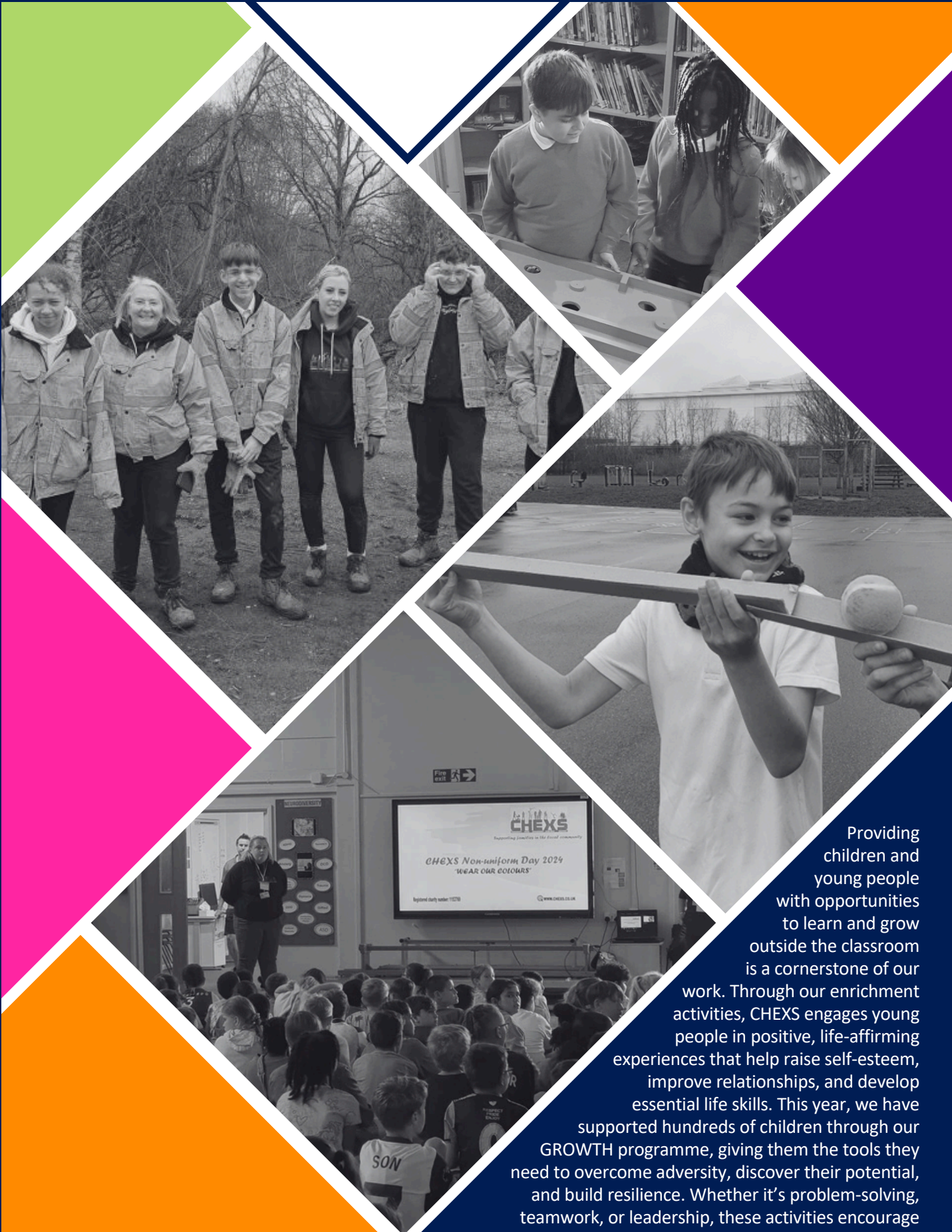


A happy home life starts with **strong relationships** and **open communication**, and this is a key focus of our work at CHEXS. Our family support team is dedicated to working with parents and carers to **create a nurturing home environment**. We understand that the stresses of daily life, especially financial pressures, can strain relationships. **That's why we offer not only practical advice but also emotional support to help families navigate their challenges.**



**TO ENABLE CHILDREN TO DEVELOP SKILLS AND IMPROVE RELATIONSHIPS,  
TO BUILD RESILIENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM WHILST ALSO IMPROVING  
WELLBEING.**

**OBJECTIVE 3**



Providing children and young people with opportunities to learn and grow outside the classroom is a cornerstone of our work. Through our enrichment activities, CHEXS engages young people in positive, life-affirming experiences that help raise self-esteem, improve relationships, and develop essential life skills. This year, we have supported hundreds of children through our GROWTH programme, giving them the tools they need to overcome adversity, discover their potential, and build resilience. Whether it's problem-solving, teamwork, or leadership, these activities encourage children to step outside their comfort zones and thrive





## CHEXS Growth Programme

CHEXS is dedicated to helping young people not only achieve academic success but also develop the confidence and life skills essential for their future. Our focus is on supporting individuals under the age of 18, particularly those who need it most.

Our 30-week GROWTH Programme is specifically designed to inspire children and young people to thrive beyond the traditional classroom setting by boosting their confidence and self-esteem.

The programme is built around 4 core pillars:

- ➡ **Meaning and Purpose**
- ➡ **Resilience**
- ➡ **Expectations**
- ➡ **Aspirations**

This year, we proudly supported 225 young people through this transformative programme.

To learn more, scan the QR code.



## Warburtons Transition project

Our Transition Project has been highly successful in supporting **86** young people as they move from primary to secondary school—a critical period for their development.

By offering targeted support, including one-on-one coaching and strong communication between schools, parents, and CHEXS, we've helped ease school avoidance and emotional challenges.

The project builds positive, trusting relationships with parents and schools, many of whom previously faced anxiety or distrust. The results are inspiring:

- ➡ **Improved attendance**
- ➡ **Academic success**
- ➡ **Greater emotional resilience among participants**

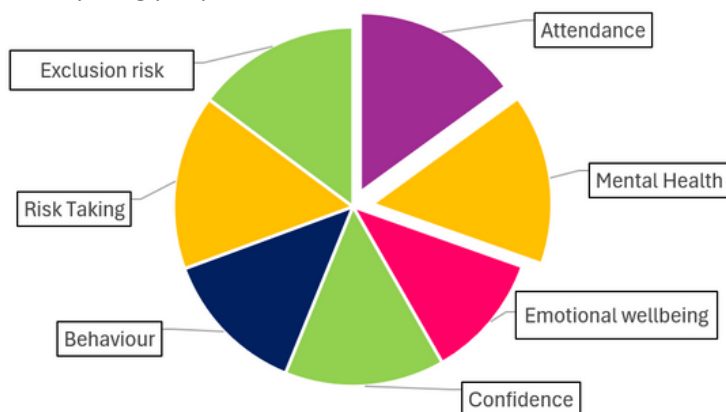
With backing from partners like Warburtons, we've raised awareness of these challenges and built a wider support network.

# ENRICHMENT



## Reason for referral

The main reason for referral this year for our Growth programme was for attendance and Mental health with both 15% of young people referred for this reason.



## Why it works

CHEXS' award-winning GROWTH programme is designed to meet the complex needs of children referred by schools, offering small groups and high staff ratios for more intensive support. Though more costly than typical activities, it delivers meaningful results by focusing on:

- ➡ **Problem-solving:** Teaching children to find solutions and build resilience.
- ➡ **Leadership:** Providing opportunities to develop confidence and unlock potential.
- ➡ **Teamwork:** Encouraging collaboration and boosting self-esteem.

This targeted approach helps children step outside their comfort zones, gain real-life skills, and grow in confidence. Without such inclusive programmes, many children would miss out on these critical opportunities. CHEXS' success comes from a strong commitment to making a lasting impact through supportive, hands-on guidance.

# 574

Children took part in CHEXS Growth, afterschool, holiday & transition sessions



## Difference made

# 83%

Improved team working skills

# 82%

Getting on better with their family now

# 74%

Have better behaviour at home

# 81%

Feel good about their life

# 79%

Feel more confident

# 76%

Are following school rules better

# XTRA MILE

## JASON'S STORY

Recognizing Jason's struggles, the CHEXS team introduced their Growth Programme – a comprehensive 30-week, 10-step initiative designed to support him through one-on-one coaching. With compassionate guidance, they listened as he opened up, building his confidence and resilience. The looming transition to the intimidating secondary school felt daunting, but the CHEXS Transition project was there to ease his fears. Additionally, their Holiday sessions kept Jason engaged, helping him learn to lead and collaborate with others, empowering him for the challenges ahead.

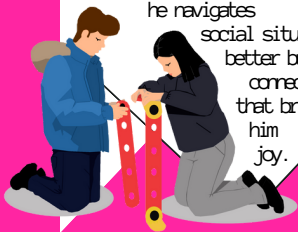


Jason sat in the back of the classroom, a whirlwind of thoughts and energy, his gaze drifting from the teacher's words to the buzzing lights above.

His parents, busy with their lives, dismissed his restless behavior as mere mischief. Unbeknownst to them, Jason's need for attention—whether in laughter or scolding—grew more desperate each day.

As Jason's confidence improves, new friendships flourish.

With newfound tools to express his feelings, he navigates social situations better building connections that bring him joy.



Jason's journey culminated in a renewed sense of belonging. His parents felt heard and supported, while Jason reflected on his behavior and emotions during CHEXS sessions.

He longed to be seen, to be understood, but in a world that overlooked his struggle, he felt invisible, a silent storm waiting to break.

As he prepared for secondary school, his friendships deepened, and he confidently used his tools to express himself appropriately, ensuring brighter days ahead. Together, they embraced a better future, ready to face challenges with newfound strength and resilience.



## FINAL THOUGHTS..

### PARENT :

"I believe this programme has helped with sharing, taking turns and has improved his communication."

### JASON:

"I think I have improved on teamwork and also think I have achieved a lot and I really love CHEXS. Also the progress I have made in CHEXS is good."



## WHAT IS THE XTRA MILE?

The CHEXS team's ability to truly listen and offer empathy is key to our success supporting over 500 families each year. Empathy, a deeply human quality, cannot be replicated—it's what allows us to connect on a personal level with those we help. By actively listening, understanding not only the words but the tone of voice and body language, our team ensures that families feel heard and understood. This attentive approach builds trust, making families feel their concerns are valued. Through this genuine connection, we're able to build strong relationships that lead to meaningful and positive outcomes.



# TO ENABLE PARENTS TO HAVE IMPROVED SKILLS TO MANAGE BEHAVIOUR AND SUPPORT LEARNING, RESULTING IN BETTER RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN.

## OBJECTIVE 2

### CLEO'S STORY

Cleo struggled daily with emotional well-being, her confidence shattered by uncertainty surrounding her special educational needs diagnosis. Battling low self-esteem and mental health concerns, she felt lost in a world that didn't seem to understand her. Her parents, overwhelmed by Cleo's difficulties, faced their own challenges – emotional strain, financial burdens, and a growing sense of helplessness. Despite their love, they were at a loss for how to help their daughter and themselves through these trying times.

The CHEXS team introduced Cleo to their Growth Programme, offering one-on-one coaching over 30 weeks.

This personalised support helped her open up, boosting her confidence and addressing her emotional challenges.

CHEXS Holiday sessions provided her with structure during school breaks, giving her parents much-needed respite. Meanwhile, the Family Support team offered parenting advice and regular check-ins, and signposted Cleo's mum to NHS emotional support, ensuring both Cleo and her mum received the care they needed.

### FINAL THOUGHTS..

#### PARENT:

"Real Talk was good, as it was nice to chat to like-minded people that have similar experiences"

#### CLEO:

"I felt worried when I first came today because I don't like meeting new people. I didn't need to worry because everyone was kind and I actually enjoyed it."

To ease the financial strain, the CHEXS team provided utility and financial support, helping Cleo's parents manage their challenges.

Mum attended "Real Talk" sessions for SEND support and received assistance filling out disability living allowance forms.

At first, Cleo struggled with meltdowns during creative projects, but over time, she became more self-aware and mindful of others' feelings. Regular phone calls encouraged Mum, helping her manage her own emotional well-being and better understand Cleo's behavior.

Now, with greater SEND knowledge, Mum is more engaged with school and open to support and advice, leading to a stronger relationship with Cleo.

APPLICATION FORM



# TO ENABLE THE CHARITY TO BE GOVERNED AND SUSTAINABLY RESOURCED WITH THE BROADEST STRATEGIC CHOICE TO BEST ENABLE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ITS VISION.

## OBJECTIVE 5

*Support is at the heart of everything we do at CHEXS.*

Our team is passionate, enthusiastic, and professional, working year-round to ensure that every family in our community receives the help they need. From emotional support for parents struggling with stress to one-on-one coaching for children facing academic or social challenges, ***we provide a comprehensive and inclusive support system.*** Listening is central to our approach; by understanding each family's unique circumstances, ***we tailor our services to ensure the best possible outcomes.***

### ➡ **Family Support Mission**

Our support helps parents develop stronger family relationships by creating opportunities to improve parenting confidence. We focus on promoting an environment of trust and open communication, enabling parents to support their child(ren)'s growth, confidence and ultimately their individual goals.

### ➡ **Children & Young people Support Mission**

Our approach creates a trusting and honest environment to inspire the next generation by providing projects to challenge and promote growth. Our programme creates goal-driven experiences with clear expectations to build resilience and self-esteem whilst improving wellbeing

### ➡ **VISION**

CHEXS' vision is to be sustainable and resilient, guiding families through rough times. We transform lives by nurturing resilience, inspiring hope, and providing opportunities for children and families. Our growth includes expanding programs, strengthening school and business partnerships, enhancing outreach, investing in staff, securing funding, and adapting to needs.





## Our volunteers

We are incredibly fortunate to have had the support of 31 dedicated volunteers this year, who have been instrumental in both the GROWTH programme and the day-to-day operations of CHEXS. Special thanks go to Sue, who has been a vital part of our office team, and Bob, who provides invaluable support to our Children and Young People's team.

We also want to recognise two exceptional young volunteers.

Katie has not only supported and shadowed our teams but also regularly attends our our Time for You intergenerational project. Dion has gone above and beyond by assisting across our Family Support, GROWTH, and office teams.

A heartfelt thank you to all our volunteers for their incredible contributions to both CHEXS and the families we serve.

## Thank you

A heartfelt thank you to all our grant funders and donors for their incredible support in making CHEXS' work possible.

Your contributions have directly funded essential services and empowered our teams to continue their valuable efforts over the past year. We're especially grateful to our local County Councillors, Mark Mills-Bishop, Lesley Greensmythe and Steve Wortley for their meaningful impact on our community work.

Your support has allowed us to grow our staff and provide emergency grants to families in need.

A special thanks also to our dedicated partners and trustees — CHEXS is truly grateful for your unwavering commitment!

## Recognition

We are deeply grateful and humbled to have been nominated for, and awarded, recognition for our commitment to early interventions for young people, our dedication to supporting the community, and the continued growth of our family support services. These honors reflect the hard work of our team and our ongoing efforts to meet the evolving needs of the families we serve.



## Our Partners



Stonehorse Finance Ltd



Aylett Nurseries  
The Complete Garden Centre

"We would LOVE to hear any ideas you might have as to how you can help us maintain or improve our services and support for families within Hertfordshire.

Please get in touch."

# SUPPORT

# FINANCIAL



## Financial Review

The charity has had a successful year, and despite challenging circumstances, has increased income for the seventh consecutive year. This financial stability has allowed us to respond effectively to the significantly heightened demand from families and young people impacted by the ongoing effects of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis.

## Income

During the year, the charity reported a total income of **£485,759, marking an increase of £68,473 from the previous year**. This increase was driven by an increased Henry Smith award and other fund raising successes, including a first year contribution from Helping Herts. Expenditure was **£480,713, an increase of £41,168 from the previous year**. This resulted in a **surplus of £5,046**. Our income comes from a variety of sources, with the largest contribution being grant income, which represents 57% (£237,025) of the total income. Key contributors include the National Lottery and the Henry Smith Charity. Further, the return of Children in Need will boost this figure in 2025.

National Lottery funding for our Family Support commenced on the 3rd of March 2023, and we are currently in the second year of this four-year grant, totalling £425,000. This funding has significantly boosted our capacity for family support services, which have experienced nearly a 50% increase in demand.

CHEXS was awarded a Henry Smith Charity Improving Lives Grant of £186,000 to cover three years of running costs for a project supporting families from disadvantaged communities in Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire. This grant underscores our commitment to providing essential support and expanding services to meet the needs of children and their parents.

Our board has remained dedicated to our staff's wellbeing, approving salary inflation adjustments and additional support to address the cost-of-living crisis. Staff costs have risen from £364,397 to £388,236, a total increase of £23,839, reflecting increased staff hours and our commitment to supporting both our employees and the wider community. The organisation remains in a strong financial position, with **overall funds of £145,788, comprising £24,274 in restricted funds carried forward and £121,514 in unrestricted funds**. Including deferred income receipts, the cash balance was £230,939, providing a solid foundation to address future challenges.

## Reserves Policy

The CHEXS board diligently monitors the charity's reserves and actively works with the Operational Senior Leadership Team to diversify and strengthen funding streams. While using reserves is not preferred, the board recognises that the exceptional challenges faced this financial year justify their use. Ensuring the charity's ability to continue supporting families during difficult times is our priority. We are committed to rebuilding and increasing our reserves to secure future stability.

Our reserves policy is regularly reviewed to ensure it meets our operational needs. The goal is to maintain approximately three months of operational costs (£90,000) and up to £30,000 for staff redundancy costs. This ensures we have sufficient reserves to address unexpected income shortfalls and fulfil our financial obligations.

Looking forward, we anticipate higher expenditure to meet growing demand. This will necessitate increased reserves to protect our services from short-term financial disruptions and, in extreme situations, to cover redundancy costs if operations were to cease.

Currently, **our unrestricted reserves stand at £121,514, with £30,000 designated for redundancy and £91,514 in unrestricted free reserves**. We are committed to maintaining and growing these reserves in line with our policy to ensure the charity's sustainability.

## EVENT INCOME



Easter Trail event  
**£1,678**



Wreath workshop  
**£564**



CHEXS non-uniform day  
**£3,054**



Walk & Run events  
**£1,125**



Other Community Events  
**£1,158**

## Account Detail

	Year Ending 2024	Year Ending 2023
Annual Income	£485,759	£417,286
Annual Expenditure	£480,713	£439,545
Surplus / (Deficit)	£5,046	(£22,259)
Fixed Assets	0	0
Restricted funds balances at year end	£24,274	£38,241
Unrestricted funds balances at year end	£121,514	£102,50
Total Funds	£145,788	£140,742
Unrestricted Free Reserves	£91,514	£72,501



“ We are deeply grateful for the trust and support we’ve received, and we remain committed to building an environment where positive change can flourish. ”

➡ *Reflecting on the past year, we recognise both the incredible strides we’ve made and the significant challenges that remain.*

The cost-of-living crisis, compounded by the impact of the pandemic and years of state school budget cuts, has left many families struggling to provide basic necessities like clothing, food, and heating. The statistics are sobering: **91% of families report difficulties meeting clothing needs**, and **41% now rely on food banks to make ends meet**. For children from financially insecure backgrounds, the **education gap is widening—by 10 months in primary school and a staggering 19 months by secondary school**.

This growing inequality is creating a tiered system where vulnerable families are increasingly excluded from opportunities that wealthier families can afford. If we look at CHEXS data from the families we have supported, we could categorise needs into 4 tiers:

- ➡ **Tier 1: Families struggling to clothe, feed, and keep a home warm.**
- ➡ **Tier 2: Families unable to cover the cost of enrolling their children in extended learning opportunities, from music and drama lessons to sports clubs and extra tutoring to help catch up with age-related learning in subjects like maths and English.**
- ➡ **Tier 3: Parents unable to pay for private assessments for an Education, Health Care Plan (EHCP). Families that can afford private assessments can reduce wait times from over 70 weeks to about 20 weeks.**
- ➡ **Tier 4 (Proposed): How have additional barriers in state education further excluded your child? What challenges have you faced as parents/carers?**

CHEXS remains committed to addressing this divide. Our data reflects the tiered nature of need among the families we serve, from those struggling to afford basic necessities to those unable to cover the cost of extracurricular activities or vital educational support.

Despite these challenges, we are optimistic. **CHEXS, together with our partners, continues to provide vital support to families**, helping them navigate these difficult times. Our bespoke framework for building resilience and fostering aspirations in young people has made a lasting impact, and the trust we’ve built with families enables us to continue delivering meaningful support. We are deeply grateful to our partners, funders, and volunteers for their unwavering belief in our mission.

**Together, we will keep transforming lives, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive, no matter their circumstances.**

# FINAL THOUGHTS



“ Instead of focusing on interventions, we emphasise meaningful opportunities that allow young people to discover their strengths and thrive, with peer support playing a vital role in this process.

A national strategy is needed to ensure early opportunities equip young people with life skills and academic knowledge to succeed in today's evolving world, including helping families stay connected through a listening ear and support. ”



## *Supporting families in the local community*

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**Contact us:** 07970 498966 / [www.chexs.co.uk](http://www.chexs.co.uk)

**Head office:** CHEXS, Theobalds Enterprise Centre, Theobalds Business Park, Innovation Place, Platinum Way, Cheshunt, Waltham Cross EN8 8YD

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**Registered Charity number: 1153769**