

# **Our Impact 2023-2024**

**We're here to fight  
for single parents  
and their children**

**Gingerbread\***





**Gingerbread  
groups helped my  
mum raise me on  
her own. Single  
parent families  
are incredible and  
deserve more  
support.**

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**- Child of a single parent**





# CONTENT

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<b>A welcome from our CEO</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Gingerbread: what we do and how we do it</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Single parent voices</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Raising a family single handed is unaffordable</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Our impact: the numbers</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2023-24: our year in review</b>	<b>14</b>
Providing advice, information and support	
Improving single-parent finances	
Improving single-parent wellbeing	
Building a movement	
Changing the system	
<b>Celebrating Single Parents' Day</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>How our funders and partners make a difference</b>	<b>24</b>
Income	
Expenditure	
Expenditure: Fundraising vs. charitable activities	
<b>Our plans for 2024-25</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Thanks and acknowledgments</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Theory of change</b>	<b>32</b>



# A welcome from our CEO

## Single parents - double the determination

Welcome to Gingerbread's annual Impact Report for 2023-24. The following pages will describe the challenges facing single parents in Britain today, the changes we at Gingerbread want to see and how our work is making them a reality.

But in this introduction, I don't want to talk about Gingerbread at all.

I'd like to take this opportunity to talk about impact – the kind of profound impact that changes lives and lasts from one generation to the next. But it's not Gingerbread's impact.

There are 2 million single parents in the UK today – a quarter of all families with dependent children<sup>1</sup>. And they're doing an incredible job, raising their children with love, patience and dedication.

Of course, parenting in any family structure presents challenges, but raising a family alone requires a whole different level of commitment and determination. It's a journey that often begins in a place of distress, loss or trauma – a break up or bereavement – and doesn't allow much respite.

The dedication of single parents has an impact which cannot be underestimated. As one child of a single parent told us:

**'My mum is my hero. She has been by all of our sides through thick and thin, and fought our battles as well as her own.'**

But the world doesn't work for people bringing up their children on their own. Whether it's the seemingly trivial things, like family tickets for attractions which only benefit two-parent families, or the hours on hold waiting to speak to the

Child Maintenance Service, single parents face additional barriers every day.

Gingerbread exists to stand alongside single parents. We want to see a world where all single-parent families are thriving, not just surviving. And we're building a movement of single parents who are dismantling the barriers stacked against them. They don't need us to do it for them – after all, single parents are perfectly capable of doing pretty much everything themselves! They just need a helping hand.

Together we've made great strides in the last year – but we know there's still more to do. I hope you'll consider joining us. With your support, and Gingerbread's, single parents can beat the odds.

### Victoria Benson

Chief executive officer and single parent



# Gingerbread: what we do and how we do it

**We are Gingerbread.**

**We're fighting to create a society where all single parents and their children thrive.**

## **We challenge**



We challenge the systemic inequalities and injustices faced by single parents every day. And we challenge the stigma and negative perceptions around being a single parent.

## **We support**



We provide expert advice and information to single parents so they have the tools they need to support their families themselves.

## **We connect**



We provide a community where single parents can connect with one another, reducing the loneliness and isolation that many single parents feel. We also work in collaboration with similar organisations who share our values and our objectives.

## **We are brave**



We want to change the world for single parents – to do this we need to be brave with our words and our actions.

## **We are ambitious**



We're a small charity with big ambitions and we frequently punch above our weight.

## **We are trustworthy**



We are experts in our field, we are well known, and we have a proven track record spanning over 100 years.

## **We are inclusive**



We are open, accessible and here to fight for all single parents and their families.



# Single parent voices: Tayyaba\*

Tayyaba is a Gingerbread group lead, connecting and supporting single parents in Camden and Islington, North London.

You can read her full story at: [\*\*'Let me tell my story'\*\*](#)

'I got involved with Gingerbread because I'm a survivor of domestic violence. So many things happened to me during that time, I used to suffer a lot... When I look back to those times when I was struggling, I think it took me longer to get back on my feet because I didn't have any support. If someone had told me about Gingerbread at the time, if someone had said 'you can get out of this abusive relationship, there's support out there' then it might have saved me some years.

I started this group in 2019. I arranged a meeting and only one other parent turned up. But today we have about 40 parents in the group. We have a WhatsApp group, and if parents don't want to be in that group they keep in touch with me by email.

I feel so happy when someone joins, and you can see that they're happy and appreciate your work. But it's sad too, when parents message me to say that they're struggling with maintenance or childcare. Money is an issue for a lot of parents. That's why the support we give each other in our Gingerbread group is so important.

**My son is 13 years old and he's proud of me.**

I've taken him to our group meetings, to the parks, and to the theatre so he can meet other single-parent families. That's made a big difference to him. If children only see families that are a mummy, a daddy and a child, they think that's what the perfect family looks like. But when they go to Gingerbread events, they see other families with just one parent, so they see it's normal.'

**'Let me tell my story so I can help other people'**





# Single parent voices: Lucy\*

Single mum Lucy has always faced a financial juggling act to provide for her 3 children. She writes about the challenges she's faced at: **'I should be the one to provide for my children'**

'After my relationship broke down and I was a single mum to one, I waited for over six months for my first tax credit payment. My ex paid some money each month, but I was living off a part time wage. I had to take money from my two-year-old son's piggy bank to pay for nappies and food. It has since been paid back but I had no idea that I would not be able to really live on my wages, and how much I was going to rely on tax credits.

I have since ended up having two more children by different fathers, both of whom do not pay maintenance. So I knew that I could immediately discount that as any kind of income to

support my children... Whilst I do have help from my mum, she works two jobs and has already been a parent. I wanted to prove to myself and my children that... I should be the one to provide for them.

I felt so much conflict around whether I could work full time, but I had no options for free childcare. I knew that I was going to be paying £50 to £60 a day for someone else to look after my child. Although Universal Credit helps with rent, childcare costs and some general living expenses, I know that I will be living nose to tail until my children are much older.

The parent guilt is a real thing. I see my married friends taking their children abroad, having family members available to take and pick their children up from school.'

**'I should be  
the one to  
provide for  
my children'**





# Single parent voices: FireLeo77\*

'FireLeo77' shared the long running story of her battle with the CMS on our online forum. Read the full story at: **'When you see a brown envelope come through the door, your heart fills with dread'**

'Like many business owners, my ex-husband had always paid himself primarily in dividends rather than a large salary from his limited company. This is a legal loophole which allows company directors to pay themselves a minimum wage salary in order to pay less tax. When we split up we made a private agreement about child maintenance.

**It's just a constant sense of dread and worry.**

Prices are soaring. I worry about the weekly shop. I buy the supermarket own brands but I'm not even going to be able to afford them at this rate! There's such a long list of things that the kids need, that I've not been able to get over the years. I've never taken them on holiday. And I can't give them pocket money.

**'When you see a brown envelope come through the door, your heart fills with dread'**

Then when my oldest turned 17, his Dad made a comment that he was going to stop paying child maintenance. I realised I had nothing to lose – so I decided to apply to the CMS for help.

**Dealing with the CMS is like purgatory!**

You don't get email updates, you get letters through the post which arrive ridiculously later than they are dated... When you call, the people on the end of the phone can't give you an accurate idea of how long things are going to take. They always say: 'Give it a couple of weeks'. So you wait a couple of weeks, then you phone again.

I'd finish work at lunchtime, and spend my whole afternoon sitting on the phone. And then you're told it'll be a couple of more weeks, so the cycle repeats itself.

Even when the money comes, you're terrified. It's like the cup is half empty all the time – you can see it disappearing. It's been looming over my head for so long ... I've still got that fear. Fear that things can change at any moment and it is out of my control.

I'm better off than I was, so I am glad I went through the CMS. My advice to other people in this situation would be keep hassling the CMS, keep fighting. You're fighting for your babies and that's the most important thing.'



# Raising a family single handed is unaffordable



**After more than a decade of austerity, a global pandemic and a cost-of-living crisis, it's not easy raising a family in Britain in 2024.**

- \* House prices increased by **73%** in the last 10 years<sup>2,3</sup> – average weekly earnings increased by just **32%** over the same period<sup>4,5</sup>.
- \* A part-time nursery place for a child under 2 costs on average £158 per week – up **7%** in the last year<sup>6</sup>.
- \* Only **34%** of local councils in England have sufficient childcare places for parents working full-time. Only **6%** have sufficient childcare for children with disabilities<sup>7</sup>.
- \* Energy prices rose by **75%** and food prices by **30%** between April 2021 and January 2024<sup>8</sup>.

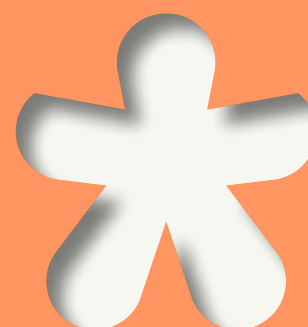
**The 2 million single-parent families in the UK are disproportionately affected by these challenges.**

- \* **2 out of 3** single parents are in work<sup>9</sup>. But single-parent families are almost twice as likely to be in poverty as families with two parents<sup>10</sup>.
- \* More than **1 in 3** single-parent families with dependent children have no savings<sup>11</sup>. Unexpected costs like a broken washing machine can tip families into financial difficulties.
- \* **13%** of single-parent households with dependent children have used a foodbank in the last year – compared with only **3%** of couple parents<sup>12</sup>.
- \* **3 out of 4** single parents are living with debts of over £1000<sup>13</sup>.

## A vicious circle:

Worrying about money can impact our mental health, while poor mental health makes it harder to earn or manage money. Nearly 9 out of 10 single parents are worried about rising prices<sup>14</sup> and 43% have experienced problems with their mental health and wellbeing<sup>15</sup>.

Growing up in poverty can also seriously impact children's wellbeing. Children from lower income backgrounds face increased risk of poor mental health<sup>16</sup>.







## What we see at Gingerbread



Gingerbread's AQS-accredited advice service (helpline and webchat) received over 12,000 calls and webchat enquiries and responded to just over 6,000 of them in 2023-24. The majority of callers contact us about benefits advice. Other key areas of concern are family law and child maintenance.

Money worries affect single parents across the income brackets.

'I have a well-paid job and a mortgage... [but] I've definitely noticed the cost-of-living crisis. I keep the house at 16 degrees, but my energy prices have nearly doubled, and I spend the same amount every week at Tesco's but seem to get less and less food! But I'm lucky – it's so much harder for parents who are stuck in the Universal Credit system.'



'I've worked hard all my adult life. Now, all that feels at risk. Everything keeps going up – food, heating, childcare. I understand why After School Club has had to put the fees up but, without paying for childcare, I can't work. I have had to take out a bank loan to pay our bills.'





# Our impact: the numbers

## Improving the financial situation of single parents

### Advice and information



- \* **6,057** calls and webchats answered by our advice service team.
- \* **96%** of single parents knew what steps to take next after talking to our advice service team<sup>17</sup>.
- \* **£579** per month per single-parent family<sup>18</sup> – the average amount of unclaimed benefits we identified for single parents who were supported with a benefits calculation.

### Website



- \* **629,000** people accessed our website.
- \* **79%** of single parents felt better able to make informed decisions after viewing our website information<sup>19</sup>.

### Emergency financial support



- \* We distributed **£468,700** in short term grants to **279** single-parent families in crisis as part of our emergency financial support pilot.
- \* **78%** of single parents we supported with grants felt less overwhelmed and better able to cope with challenges<sup>20</sup>.





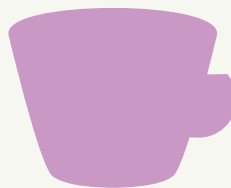
## Improving the mental health and wellbeing of single parents

### Gingerbread community



- \* **55** local groups, with membership growing to **3,400+** members.
- \* **3 in 4** single parents have made positive connections with other single parents thanks to being part of a group<sup>21</sup>.

### Wellbeing Programme



- \* **175** single parents accessed our programme and learnt new tools and strategies to better manage their wellbeing.
- \* **88%** of single parents felt more confident in their ability to look after their wellbeing as a result of the Programme<sup>22</sup>.

### Policy and campaigning



- \* Single/lone parents and the key issues which affect them mentioned over **90** times in Parliament.
- \* **5** key policy changes which we helped to secure have been implemented.
- \* **5** further policy changes agreed.

# 2023-24: our year in review

2023-24 has seen Gingerbread launch our new brand and website, roll out a pilot programme of direct support grants for the most vulnerable single parents and achieve some significant policy changes that will benefit single parents. We've also expanded our local group network, kickstarted the development of our movement for change, developed new partnerships and highlighted the dedication, love and hard work of single parents through an inspiring celebration of Single Parents' Day.

## Our strategic priorities for the year were:

- ✱ Providing advice, information and support
- ✱ Improving the finances of single parents
- ✱ Improving the wellbeing of single parents
- ✱ Changing the system to meet the needs of single parents

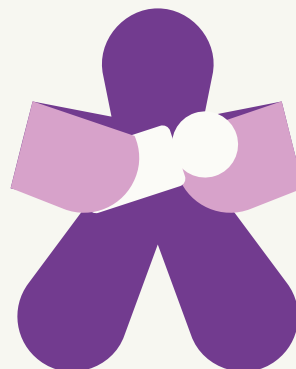


## Providing advice, information and support

The information section on our website continues to be the first port of call for single parents seeking help on topics ranging from childcare and flexible working to dealing with bereavement and separation.

In June 2023 we launched our new brand and website, giving a fresh new visual identity and coherent tone of voice to all our communications, aligned with our 2022-2030 strategy. Our restructured website is easier to navigate and enables single parents to filter and save key information so they can return to it later.

Over the year we have had more than 629,000 unique visitors to the website. The information section continues to see the heaviest traffic of 470,000 visitors with our benefits pages alone receiving over 250,000 page views. Overall, 79% of single-parent website visitors felt better able to make informed decisions following their visit to our website<sup>23</sup>.







## Fostering peer support

Through our local group network, online community and wellbeing programme we bring together thousands of single parents to forge connections and share the wealth of information they have each gathered throughout their single-parent journeys. Overall, 4 out of 5 single parents who joined a local group or attended a wellbeing programme said they received helpful support and guidance from others<sup>24</sup>.

**'[The wellbeing programme was] a chance to hear from others in similar situations. To share experiences, coping mechanisms. To feel understood, at ease. [It is] a big step in the right direction.'**



## Accessible information in a range of different formats

We know that not all single parents find it easy to read the detailed information pages on our website. In the last year we've made key information available in short videos which can easily be shared on social media. Videos have covered Universal Credit, other benefits and financial support, and what to do when your child leaves full time education. This has broadened our reach and helped more people to access our information, with nearly 42,000 impressions on social media and 823 engagements.



## Developing new ways to connect with single parents

Our Next Steps project is continuing to work with existing partners across London, to ensure we develop seamless referral pathways to help single parents navigate the help and support they need. We are particularly delighted to have increased our reach by working with the DWP through local job centres in Camden and Islington so that work coaches can share links to a special landing page on our website via a QR code in a Universal Credit work journal. This was so well received it is now being extended across London.

### Next steps partners in 2023-24

- ✱ DWP Jobcentre Plus
- ✱ Trussell Trust
- ✱ Little Village
- ✱ Choices
- ✱ Solace
- ✱ Scope



## Improving single-parent finances

For more personalised advice and support, single parents can also reach out to our helpline and webchat services. We're proud to say that our advice team have been AQS-accredited for another year – a testament to a dedicated and experienced team, some of whom have been with Gingerbread for 10 years. Together, they answered over 5,000 calls and held 1,048 webchats in 2023-24.

Single parents can contact us about any aspect of their family life. However, welfare benefits, tax credits, child maintenance and family law continue to be the most common reasons for people to get in contact with us, highlighting that family finances and relationship breakdown are major areas of difficulty for many single parents. Our advice team's detailed understanding of the benefits system and how it applies to single parents means that calling our helpline can yield significant results; in the last year we identified more than £202,000 in unclaimed benefits – an average £579 monthly income boost for each single-parent family we supported with a benefit calculation.

We strive not only to provide single parents with comprehensive and detailed advice, but also to ensure that they feel heard and reassured. We're pleased to say that we achieved a 97% satisfaction rate with our advice services according to our regular end-of-call monitoring surveys. 96% of single parents know what steps to take next as a result of the support they have received from our advice team<sup>25</sup>.

A significant achievement of 2023-24 has been developing our direct support service, which has been piloting an emergency financial support offer. We've made a limited, but nevertheless significant, number of direct grant awards to the most vulnerable single parents who are in financial crisis. Over the year we have distributed £468,700 emergency financial support grants to 279 single parents. We have also been able to enhance this programme with a broader direct support offer by including food bank vouchers, fuel bank vouchers, SIM cards and free data, baby bank referrals and referrals to other grant partners, supporting 42 single parents.

'The support I received from [the helpline] was invaluable today and I feel much better placed to take the next steps to deal with my situation. I felt heard and feel infinitely better after my call today. Thank you.'





## Improving single-parent wellbeing

Joining a local Gingerbread group is a lifeline for many single parents, providing them with a support network in their local community, and alleviating loneliness and isolation. Thanks to the groups, 88% of members have more opportunities to connect with other single parents, and 65% feel less lonely and isolated<sup>26</sup>.

Thanks to a 2-year grant from the National Lottery, we are continuing to support 3,400+ members through our growing network of 55 local single-parent groups. 2023-24 saw us launch new groups in Leeds, Horwich & Bolton and Haverfordwest, with our groups team supporting new volunteers through their training and induction programme and helping them to promote their local group to new members.

Our groups team are also developing a pilot project to scale up the number of groups by working with partners to help them set up and run their own single-parent groups, based on our group model, as part of our Lottery funded work. We have a broad range of partners engaging with us from the public and private sectors – notably focussing either on beneficiaries (the single parents who use their services) or on workforce (the single-parents who work for them).

### Our new delivery partners in 2023-24

- ✱ Newcastle University
- ✱ Gateshead Family Hub
- ✱ Oundle Library
- ✱ St Teilo's Church in Wales High School
- ✱ Co-op
- ✱ Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust
- ✱ Domestic & General
- ✱ Stagecoach

**'It helps to talk to other people who understand the struggles (and the joys!) of single parenthood. To talk to people who do not judge but offer support and encouragement.'**

**'[My group] has given me the opportunity to meet other people who have been through similar things and I have made friends for life. I feel stronger because of them.'**





## Our online community

Our online community (online forum) is a safe place for single parents to connect and give and receive support any time of the day or night. They can ask for guidance, tips and support from fellow single parents – people who have gone through similar challenges and are proof that their situations can improve over time. As a result, they feel part of a single-parent community, and they feel less overwhelmed and better able to cope with their situation.

**As well as our online community, we run three digital groups focusing on:**

- ✱ Single parents with children with additional needs
- ✱ Single dads
- ✱ Wellbeing



**'The forum is a good place to chat as everybody has different experiences but it's nice to talk to people who actually understand the stresses of being a single parent.'**



## Growing success of our wellbeing work

We help single parents to focus on their wellbeing and mental health through a programme of regular workshops, which run online throughout the year and are free of charge for single parents. In 2023-24 we exceeded our targets, running 22 wellbeing workshops which were attended by 175 single parents. Following the workshops, 83% of participants said the wellbeing programme had a positive impact on their wellbeing<sup>27</sup>.

**'I enjoyed the space and taking time to reflect on things that are important for me to implement in order to feel good and manage difficult situations. It encouraged me to know what I was already doing and to see how far I've come and to build on prioritising me.'**

Finding the information you need, receiving the right support at the right time and being listened to also has a big impact on single parents' wellbeing, reducing their stress and anxiety. For example 4 in 5 single parents experienced reduced anxiety after receiving support from Gingerbread's Advice Service or Direct Support Service teams<sup>28</sup>.

**'I paid off all my catalogue debt, paid a big amount off my water bill and set up a payment plan which is affordable for me. I have been able to keep on top of my gas and electric and had a bit left to help towards school clothes. [It made] a massive difference and it took a lot of stress off me, my mental health has been so much better I don't wake up worrying anymore and my children were able to get the school bits they needed.'**

**- Single parent accessing the direct support service**





## Emergency Crisis Support

For single parents experiencing depression or anxiety, receiving support during a crisis is a lifeline. This year, we established our partnership with SHOUT, to ensure we can provide single parents in crisis with text message support from trained volunteers when they need it, no matter the time of day or night. We have promoted it widely on our social media channels and

via our local groups network who are often the first port of call for single parents seeking help in their local community - to make sure single parents know they can turn to us in dark times. As a result, we supported 576 people through this specialist text-based service.

We intend to extend it through 2024-2025 as the pressures experienced by single parents are not lifting.



## Building a movement

Building a world where all single parents and their children can thrive means both providing support for today, as outlined above, and securing change for tomorrow. This year we've been able to expand the capacity of our small policy and campaigns team thanks to the generous support of Fondation CHANEL.

This has enabled us to start to build our movement for change of single parents and help empower them to speak out on the changes we need to see, while also securing significant policy changes that will make a real difference in the lives of single parents. We've established a group of single-parent campaigners and are growing an engaged email list.







## Changing the system

**During 2023-24, 5 key policy changes that we have been campaigning for crossed the line into implementation:**

### ✱ **Childcare element of Universal Credit**

We successfully campaigned for changes in the way the childcare element of Universal Credit (UC) is handled. Now, instead of parents paying upfront and waiting for reimbursement, single parents on low incomes can claim support for childcare costs in advance. Although there are challenges with how this operates, this crucial change can help prevent people from falling into debt when starting a new job and means people are able to take on a new job with the first month of their childcare paid for.

### ✱ **Increased levels of the childcare element of Universal Credit**

Alongside the above, we also helped secure an increase in the levels of financial support that you can claim for your childcare through Universal Credit, so that the amount you receive better aligns with today's childcare costs.

### ✱ **Child Support (Enforcement) Act**

The financial year 2023-24 also saw the implementation of the Child Support (Enforcement) Act, a Private Member's Bill which we supported. This will allow the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) to more quickly sanction parents who repeatedly fail to pay child maintenance. Improved enforcement of child maintenance is a key priority for us, and this is a big step forward in ensuring children receive the support they're entitled to from both parents.

### ✱ **Abolition of the £20 CMS Fee**

The £20 fee to apply for child maintenance through the CMS has been abolished. We've been fighting against fees in the CMS since it was established in 2012, and while this doesn't mean all fees are gone, it's a significant victory that eases the financial strain on single parents.

### ✱ **High Income Child Benefit Charge Changes**

Working alongside Martin Lewis and Money Saving Expert, we successfully campaigned for the Chancellor to raise the thresholds for the High Income Child Benefit Charge. This means that higher earning parents can hold on to more of their child benefit. This is of particular concern to higher earning single parents, because currently a couple household can be earning significantly higher amounts collectively before the charge comes in. That's why we are also pleased that there was an additional commitment to review how this charge is assessed, with the potential to evaluate it based on household income rather than individual income. It is important to note, however, that this review is now uncertain following a change of Government.

**During 2023-24, the following policy changes have been made or committed to but were not yet implemented by the end of the financial year:**



### **Flexible Working Bill**

The Flexible Working Bill will make it easier for employees to request flexible working arrangements from the first day of a new job. We've been part of a coalition working on this for years, and this legislation is a major win for single parents who need flexibility to balance work and family life. This has now come into force.



### **Child Support Collection (Domestic Abuse) Act**

This new law aims to ensure that victims of domestic abuse can use a safer payment route within the CMS, reducing the risk of further abuse. We worked closely with a backbench MP on this private member's bill. However, we believe there will be substantial additional work to see this implemented, despite it passing with cross party support.



### **Household Support Fund Extension**

We successfully campaigned alongside Barnardo's and others to extend the Household Support Fund for another six months, ensuring that struggling families can continue to access essential support through local councils. This extension came into effect in April 2024.



### **Increases in Local Housing Allowance and Universal Credit**

Thanks to our advocacy and in partnership with a range of other charities and campaigners, both the Local Housing Allowance and Universal Credit were uprated in the Autumn Statement in 2023, providing crucial financial relief for single parents.



### **Commitment to Closing CMS Loopholes**

The Government has committed to closing loopholes in the CMS by including unearned income, such as rental income, in child maintenance calculations. This is a long-standing issue we've campaigned on, and this is a step towards fairer child maintenance assessments. We are working with the Government to make sure these commitments become a reality.

These achievements mark significant progress in our fight for single parents, and we'll continue to push the new government for the full implementation of these changes to ensure every single parent and their children can thrive.



# Celebrating Single Parents' Day

Quite simply, Single Parents' Day which takes place **every March 21st** is a chance to celebrate the hard work, love and dedication of the many people raising a family alone. It offers a welcome antidote to the ongoing challenges and structural inequalities faced by single parents, which are rightly the focus of our campaigning for the rest of the year.

**Gingerbread has celebrated Single Parents' Day every year since 2018.** It's a day to bring attention to the challenges faced by single parents. But more importantly, it's an opportunity to celebrate the amazing achievements of the **nearly 2 million single parents across the country**, and to show single parents how much they're valued.

For Single Parents' Day 2024 we invited our supporters to nominate their single parent superheroes. This feel-good campaign gained huge traction on social media, with over **70** nominations, **116,000** impressions and **3,049** engagements.

'Thank you so much for your email. I'm stunned to see Ruby has done this, as I just see it as an honour and a privilege to call myself their mum!

I have to admit, I looked a bit odd with tears running down my face in Primark!'

**- a single mum explains what receiving a nomination meant to her.**





# How our funders and partners make a difference

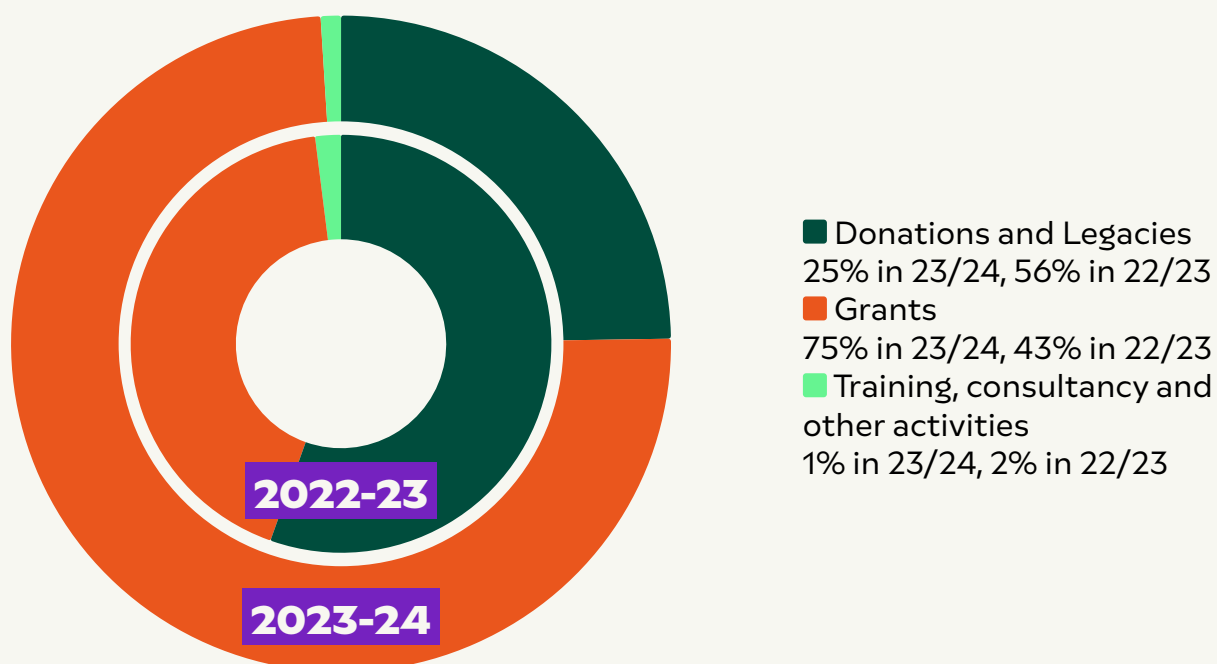
In 2023-24 our income was £2.51m and our expenditure was £2.17m. We have a small fundraising team which we intend to expand in 2024-25.

For every **£1 spent**  
**on fundraising,**  
**we turn it into**  
**almost £6**

which pays for all we do to support single parents.

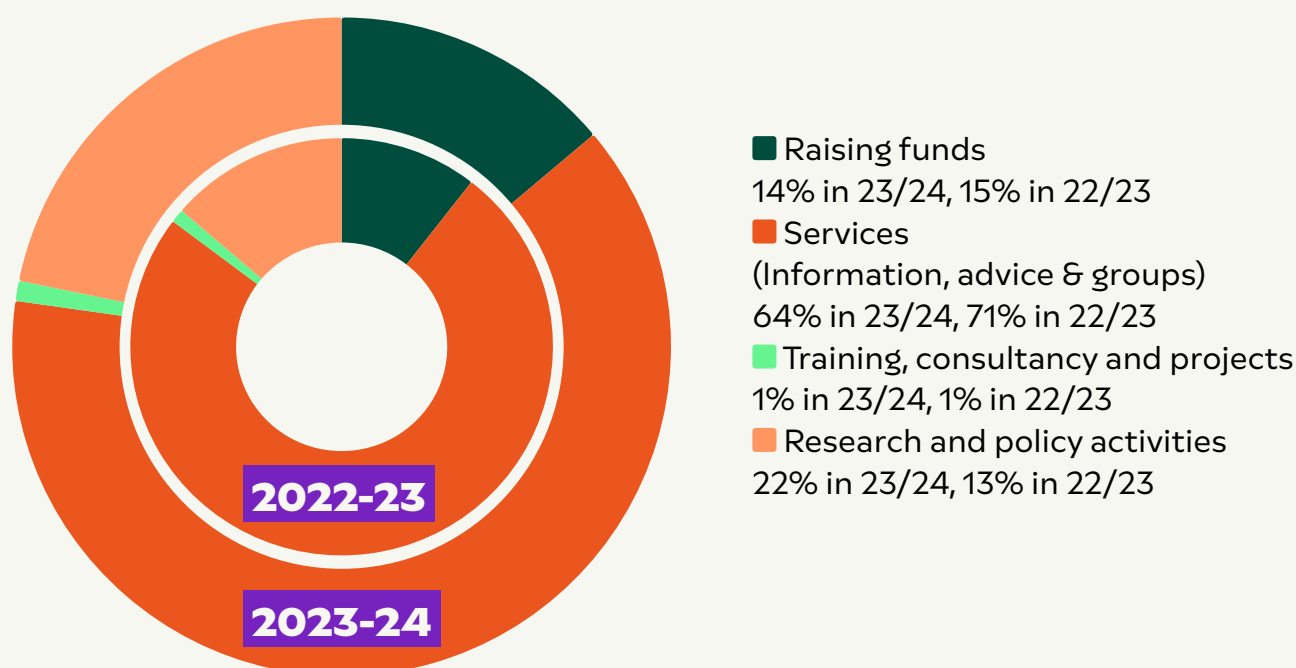


# Income



Income	2023/24	2022/23
Donations and Legacies	£0.62m	£1.00m
Grants	£1.87m	£0.76m
Training, consultancy and other activities	£0.01m	£0.03m
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2.51m</b>	<b>£1.79m</b>

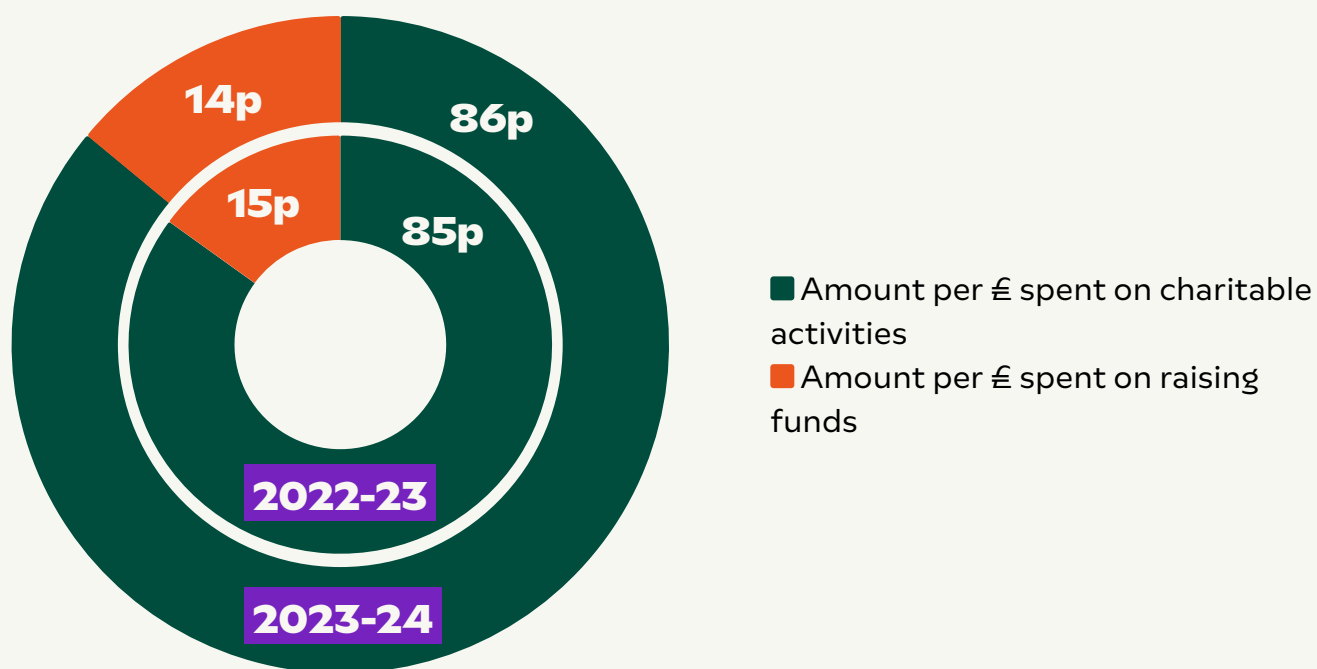
# Expenditure



Expenditure	2023/24	2022/23
Raising funds	£0.30m	£0.29m
Information and advice services	£1.38m	£1.34m
Training, consultancy and projects	£0.02m	£0.02m
Research and policy activities	£0.47m	£0.23m
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2.17m</b>	<b>£1.87m</b>



# Expenditure: Fundraising vs. charitable activities



Expenditure	2023/24	2022/23
Charitable activities	£1.87m	£1.59m
Raising funds	£0.30m	£0.29m

# Our plans for 2024-25

## Gingerbread's mission is steadfast:

**to ensure that every single parent and their children not only survive but thrive.**



**As we move into 2024-25, our focus remains rooted in our strategic priorities as follows:**

### **Providing advice, information and support to help single parents improve their finances and wellbeing**

Moving into the 2nd year of our 2-year National Lottery grant, we'll continue to support our amazing network of volunteer group leads, and review our group model, exploring new ways to help single-parent families connect and thrive. This will include working with new partner organisations to extend and adapt Gingerbread's local group model in different settings.

We're committed to ensuring that all single parents can access the advice and information they need. As well as working to increase our call answer rate, we'll increase the number of people who see our digital advice products, and will include developing new animations, interviews and infographics which can be shared on social media.

We recognise that our website is an essential resource for many single parents, and 2024-25 will see us launch our new online community space, making it easier for single parents to connect with and support each other. And we'll roll out our new hybrid wellbeing course, which single parents who aren't able to attend regular Zoom sessions can work through at a time to suit them.

We'll continue to collaborate and work in partnership with other organisations where it will increase our ability to reach and engage with single parents. This will include developing the initial scoping work funded by Pears Foundation, around single parents who identify as disabled. We will be exploring how Gingerbread can take a resilience-based approach to this and future work in 2024-25.

## Continuing to punch above our weight

Having achieved some significant policy changes in the last year, in 2024-25 we'll be working hard to ensure that that legislative victories are implemented effectively so that single parents see the benefit in their daily lives. We've increased capacity in our policy and campaigns team which will enable us to scale up our activity in the coming year. We'll keep up the pressure on areas such as reform of the Child Maintenance Service. We'll also be focusing on building fruitful relationships with new MPs and government ministers following the 2024 General Election.

## Building a movement

We want to ensure that we amplify the voices of single parents rather than simply speak for them. This is essential as we aim to build a movement of single parents. We've taken the first steps towards this by establishing a group of single-parent campaigners who have worked with us on establishing our priorities, writing our 2024 manifesto and meeting MPs to highlight the issues facing single parents. We'll be recruiting more single-parent campaigners in 2025.

## Changing the narrative

We're laying the foundations of an exciting research project looking at how single parents are portrayed and the stigma they face in all walks of life. Changing the narrative around single parents is essential if we're to secure systemic change for single parents and we're delighted to have been supported by Fondation CHANEL with this work.







# Thanks and acknowledgments

**We couldn't achieve all that we do without the generosity of our amazing supporters:**

- \* Our 57 amazing volunteer single-parent group leaders
- \* Those who shared their stories with us to let other single parents know they are not alone
- \* Those who shared their stories with MPs
- \* Gingerbread donors and fundraisers
- \* Special thanks to Angela Roldan for running the London Marathon in April 2024, raising over £2,000 for Gingerbread, and Aman Kataria who also ran the London Marathon and raised over £1,300!

## **Our funders, including:**

Aura Financial  
City Bridge Foundation – London's biggest independent charity funder  
Department for Education  
The Dulverton Trust  
Fondation CHANEL  
Garfield Weston Foundation  
John Armitage Charitable Trust  
Joseph Rowntree Foundation  
The Linbury Trust  
Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales  
The National Lottery Community Fund  
Pears Foundation  
The Volant Charitable Trust



**You helped me so much when I became a single parent. I was distraught about my finances - the helpline was invaluable and gave me the confidence to get through it.**

**Gingerbread groups helped my mum raise me on her own. Single-parent families are incredible and deserve more support.**

**I love the work that Gingerbread do. When I became single, I looked up the charity online and couldn't believe how much support was offered. I have used the website a lot and think the support Gingerbread gives to people is amazing.**

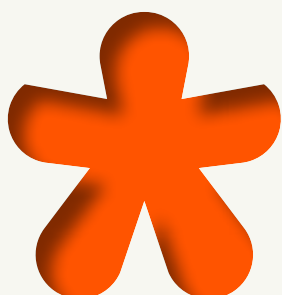
# Theory of change

## Our vision:

All single parents and their children thrive.

## Our Mission:

We stand with and support single parents to overcome disadvantage, inequality and injustice.



## The main drivers of the problems faced by single parents:

- 1 Government, public, private and third sectors exclude or ignore single parents. This leads to impoverishing welfare policies, disadvantage in employment, difficulties with well-being and stresses on single-parent family relationships
- 2 There are disproportionately more single parents who are mums on low incomes, living with a disability and/or from Black, Asian, Mixed or other minority ethnic backgrounds
- 3 It's inherently difficult parenting alone: a single parent is doing the work of two parents
- 4 Harmful myths and stereotypes about single parents are the dominant perception and are not based on lived experiences

## How Gingerbread makes an impact

A thematic focus on **money & wellbeing**, delivered through:

- 1 **Offer advice & support**
  - Advice including helpline and online
  - Direct support
- 2 **Connect single parents**
  - Local & digital groups
  - Online forum
- 3 **Resilience programmes**
  - Wellbeing workshops
  - Mental health programme
- 4 **Policy & campaigning**

Movement-building, policy change, partnering, sharing & inspiring

## Support for today



## Change for tomorrow



## Long term impact

### Increased access to information, advice and support

Single parents:

- have increased knowledge & understanding about how to manage their situation
- are more aware of support available
- make more informed decisions
- receive the right benefits & maintenance

### Societal change

- Increased awareness and support for single-parent families among key stakeholders e.g. civil servants, MPs and employers
- Creating a movement of single parents and supporters

### Improved mental health and wellbeing

Single parents experience:

- reduced isolation & loneliness
- increased agency & control over their lives
- increased confidence & self-esteem
- increased resilience
- reduced stigma & discrimination

### Improved financial situation

Single parents:

- receive sufficient benefits & maintenance
- have increased agency & more control over their finances
- have work which is flexible and pays enough for a decent standard of living and/or to pursue further education & training
- have affordable & flexible childcare
- can provide for their family

### Systemic change

- Improved attitudes and behaviours towards single-parent families from society
- The policy environment and legal system change to better meet the needs of and support single-parent families

**Single-parent families have improved emotional, social and financial wellbeing**

**Single-parent families have enough income and more stability in their lives**



# Endnotes

- 1 Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 8th May 2024. Families and household dataset, using 2023 Labour Force Survey data, Tables 1,3 and 4. <https://tinyurl.com/2r68uwvr>
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- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Gingerbread (2022), Gingerbread poll of 1,016 single parents in 'Our Strategy 2022-30'. <https://tinyurl.com/5yrjb7nx>
- 16 Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition (2024), 'A Dual Crisis: The hidden link between poverty and children's mental health'. <https://tinyurl.com/yzut6zk4>
- 17 Figure based on 113 responses collected throughout the financial year 2023-2024 using an end-of-call survey.
- 18 Figure based on 350 benefits calculations completed for single parents in the financial year 2023-24
- 19 Figure based on 91 responses collected in February 2024 as part of our annual evaluation survey.
- 20 Figure based on 90 responses collected throughout the financial year 2023-2024 using an end-of-support survey.
- 21 Figures based on 93 responses collected in November 2023 as part of our bi-annual evaluation of local groups.
- 22 Figure based on 25 responses collected throughout the financial year 2023-2024 following the completion of the Wellbeing Programme.
- 23 Figure based on 91 responses collected in February 2024 as part of our annual evaluation survey.
- 24 Figure based on 118 responses collected throughout the year 2023-2024 either as part of the Wellbeing Programme evaluation or the evaluation of local groups.
- 25 Figure based on 113 responses collected throughout the year 2023-2024 using an end-of-call evaluation survey.
- 26 Figures based on 93 responses collected in November 2023 as part of our bi-annual evaluation survey of local groups.
- 27 Figure based on 25 responses collected throughout the year using a 1-month follow-up survey sent out to workshop participants.
- 28 Figure based on 165 responses collected throughout the financial year 2023-2024 using end-of-support surveys.





# Gingerbread\*

**Find out more about us at**

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**[www.gingerbread.org.uk](http://www.gingerbread.org.uk)**

@Gingerbread

@gingerbreadcharity



## **Ways you can support Gingerbread**

We're here every step of the way for single parents.

To help us support more single parents you can:

**Make a donation** – give a one-off gift or set up a regular direct debit.

**Join a challenge event** – raise awareness and vital funds as part of #TeamGingerbread

## **Donate here!**

