

Summary Information Return 2010 (Online)



Summary Information Return 2010

This return is intended to comprise a summary of key information contained in the Trustees' Annual Report and accounts and in other documents.

All this information will be made public - P

ACTION FOR CHILDREN

Charity Number: 1097940

Financial Year End: 31 March 2010

Submitted on 08 November 2010

This online version of the form shows the information you have entered through Annual Return 2010 Online and has been designed to make it easier for charities to print.

This Summary Information Return was submitted online by MS MARY KEANE on 08 November 2010. You do not need to send us a signed copy.

Question 1 - The Charity's Aims

What are your charity's aims?

Action for Children works with the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children, young people and families in the UK. Our vision is of a world where all children and young people have a sense of belonging, and are loved and valued. A world where they can break through injustice, deprivation and inequality so they can achieve their full potential.

Our values are:

Passion - we are driven by our desire to help children and young people overcome injustice and disadvantage

Equality - we believe all children and young people have equal worth and equal rights

Hope - we believe in a child or young person's potential, no matter what they have experienced or what they have done.

Question 2 - Who benefits?

Who benefits from your charity's work?

We work with children and young people:

- whose families need support
- who cannot live with their birth families
- who are disabled
- who experience severe difficulties

How do you respond to their needs and how do they influence the charity's development?

Our philosophy is to keep the child at the centre of everything we do and we involve children and young people in decisions that affect their lives.

Our services are developed to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable children and young people and we constantly evaluate our effectiveness and the outcomes we deliver. Our campaigning is rooted in the views and needs of children and young people and the experience of our services. Our 'take your action for children' appeal to combat child neglect is a three year programme to raise awareness of child neglect and £17m to tackle it directly.

Question 3 - The Charity's Strategy

What are the key elements of your charity's medium to long term strategy?

We will continue to work with the most disadvantaged children and young people across the four nations of the UK and beyond and will continue to highlight the importance of intervening early to prevent problems getting out of hand. We will be respected for our high quality services and strong brand and for our campaigning work. We will raise voluntary income to enable us to maintain our independence, speak out and innovate for children and young people. We will have excellent and cost effective support services and strong finances. We will be an employer of choice for staff attracted from a wide range of markets.

How does your charity measure the success of the strategy?

We review our success at delivering our corporate priorities across the charity. At a strategic level, we monitor performance through key performance indicators and other financial and non-financial performance measures.

Question 4 - The Charity's Objectives and Achievements

What were your charity's main annual objectives and were they achieved?

Objective	Achievement
We will make a positive difference in the lives of children and young people and ensure all our decisions and actions are governed by this imperative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - launched 'take your action for children' appeal to raise awareness of child neglect and funds to tackle it - our services demonstrate beyond doubt that early intervention works and we have evidence of the transformation that can be achieved
We will maximise our opportunities to increase support to the most vulnerable children and young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - steady growth in fostering placements - 39 new contracts to provide disabled children's services - provided 25 newly designated centres in England - increased the number of young people (8,856) supported into employment, education or training
We will continually improve Action for Children's efficiency, effectiveness and long-term security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improved success in retaining and winning new business - exceeded income targets in most service areas - improved true cost recovery of services - new approach to achieving voluntary income targets and increase profile

Question 5 - The Charity's Income and Expenditure

What were your charity's most significant activities during the year and how much did it spend on them?

Charitable Activities	£ 000s
Supporting Families	86,963
Children in Care	33,011
Youth	32,062
Explanatory Comments	
Most of our costs are associated with the delivery of our services to children and young people and the cost of providing staff to deliver these services. In our supporting families services for example, we provide family support and children's centres where a variety of advice and support is provided.	

What were your charity's three main fundraising activities in the year and how much did each generate and cost?

Fundraising Activity	Income Generated £ 000s	Cost of Activity £ 000s
Legacies	4,270	170
Relationship Marketing including donor acquisition	3,779	3,747
Community Fundraising	3,389	1,930
Explanatory Comments		
Fundraising income remains constant. In the last year, the cost of these activities has borne a proportion of exceptional expenditure, including brand and transformation costs and investment in donor acquisition.		

Question 6 - The Charity's Financial Health

How would you describe your charity's financial health at the end of the period?

The Charity has a strong financial base, but a challenging fundraising period and a decline in the stock market since 2007 have led to general reserves falling below our target range of £30m - £40m, to £26.7m at the year end. The current level of reserves does not present a material risk and work is underway to come back within range over the next three years.

Our legacy income was below target during 2009/10 but there was an increase in our income from other donations.

Overall, whilst we had a net deficit, income from contract and fee based services was up on the previous year and costs were down significantly.

The pension fund deficit has increased following the 2009 valuation with a material impact on the net assets/ funds of the Charity. A recovery plan has been agreed with the Pension Fund which should lead to elimination of the deficit by 2019. The impending sale of our former head office in Highbury and a smaller planned deficit should lead to an improvement overall in 2010/11.

Question 7 - The Next Year

How will the overall performance last year affect your charity's medium to long term strategy?

We are midway through a five year strategic plan and our strategic objectives will continue to be the backdrop for our work. Our performance during the year has provided a solid foundation for our work in 2010/11 and we will be ensuring that we have a sustainable future in a difficult and challenging economic environment. To do this, we will develop a flexible approach to how we configure ourselves and will improve productivity and performance whilst controlling our overhead costs.

What are your charity's main objectives for next year?

Speak out fearlessly to reduce neglect of children, and promote the importance of early intervention to decision makers and to the public.

Ensure everyone in Action for Children plays an active role in safeguarding children and young people.

Wherever possible, retain existing services and maximise income across the UK by responding to funding opportunities that will enable us to continue to meet the needs of children and young people

Maximise the power of our brand for fundraising and increase net voluntary income.

Further develop the opportunities we provide for children and young people to participate in service development, campaigning and other activities.

Be an employer of choice for those who wish to make a difference for children and young people and ensure all our activity demonstrates our commitment to equality and diversity.

Question 8 - The Charity's Governance

How does your charity ensure that its governance arrangements are appropriate and effective?

Our trustees (Council) meet each quarter and are responsible for Action for Children's long-term objectives and for providing overall financial and organisational control. Trustees bring a wealth of experience and expertise from their business and professional activities. Council reviews its own and the Chair's performance on a regular basis.

Trustees have delegated responsibility for specific areas of activity to a number of committees that regularly report to Council. These committees have agreed terms of reference and include specialist co-opted members in addition to trustees. These include three national committees who oversee our activities in Scotland, Wales and England respectively and an Audit and Finance committee.

Question 9 - Further Details

Further details on all the answers given in this Summary Information Return can be obtained from:

www.actionforchildren.org.uk

Declaration

This Summary Information Return was submitted online by MS MARY KEANE on 08 November 2010, telephone number 020 3124 6000.

MS MARY KEANE certified online that:

- the information provided was correct
- it had been or would be brought to the attention of all the trustees

Those who give answers that they know are untrue or misleading may be committing an offence.

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