

Summary Information Return 2011 (Online)



Summary Information Return 2011

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 period end: 31 March 2011

Submitted on 22 November 2011

This online version of the form shows the information you have entered through Annual Return 2011 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 22 November 2011. 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 is committed to helping the most vulnerable children and young people in the UK 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. We deliver a broad range of services across the UK. We know that acting early is one of the best ways of tackling neglect and our 'Take your action for children' neglect appeal has continued to raise both public and stakeholder awareness of child neglect and the importance of early intervention.

Question 3 - The charity's strategy

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

Action for Children will be successful and thriving across the four nations of the UK and beyond. We will be respected for our high quality services and strong brand and for our campaigning work with children. 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 wider range of markets than is currently the case.

Action for Children is needed more now than for several years. Our services for the most vulnerable children, young people and families are witnessing daily an increase in need and a decrease in resources available to meet it. This means that for the medium term, we will continue to focus on our appeal and campaign on neglect, raising awareness and money, and taking action to reduce child neglect in the UK.

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.

We constantly monitor how well our services are delivering successful outcomes for children and young people by assessing what we do against a matrix of indicators which provide benchmarks to compare performance across a range of services.

We also undertake research to measure the success of our strategy and during 2010/11, we worked with the University of Salford to measure the impact of our services on children affected by neglect.

Question 4 - The charity's objectives and achievements

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

Objective	Achievement
Speak out fearlessly to reduce neglect of children, promote the importance of early intervention to decision makers and to the public, and support our service development targets	Our 'Take your action for children' neglect appeal has continued to raise both public and stakeholder awareness of child neglect and the importance of early intervention to make a difference in children's lives.
Wherever possible, retain existing services and maximise income across the UK by responding to funding opportunities that fall within our strategic priorities	We offered more services for disabled children and increased fostering households by 8.5%. We expanded employment options for young people with 'Youthbuild' and 'Challenge'. We work with 30% more children through our children's centres portfolio.
Maximise the power of our brand for fundraising and increase net voluntary income	Action for Children achieved its net income target of £9,300,000. Corporate partnership fundraising has grown year on year, high value (corporate and major donor) fundraising is static and we have enjoyed strong growth in regular giving.

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	We developed a human resources strategy to create an environment where people develop skills that benefit them personally and equip them to deliver our mission and values. We launched a three-year equality scheme and ran a staff engagement survey.
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Question 5 - The charity's income and spending

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

Charitable activities	£ 000s
Supporting Families	99,511
Children in Care	33,986
Youth	33,348
Explanatory comments	
Our children's centres, a key element of 'Supporting Families', help young children to get the best start in life. They provide practical support to families before they reach a crisis. Working with disabled children and children in care, our services give children safety and stability and help them achieve their full potential. With increased funding, we have been able to increase our expenditure on these services in the year.	

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	4,698	251
Relationship Marketing (Direct Marketing)	4,554	3,055
Community Fundraising	3,279	1,473
Explanatory comments		
Although there has been a small drop in fundraising income, restructuring and analysis of expenditure has led to a much lower cost base. We continue to look at the focus of our fundraising, align with our charitable activities and work to increase donations, such as through the My Action for Children web portal.		

Question 6 - The charity's financial health

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

We expected 2010/11 to be challenging and put pressure on our finances, but with increased income achieved a result in line with budget, a deficit, but much improved from the previous year. The balance sheet total at 31 March 2011 increased significantly with the large reduction in the pension liability.

Achieving a break-even or better position remains a key objective, although it is a difficult challenge, which we expect to achieve by 2012/13. The general reserves fell below the target range of £30m-£40m, but with the sale of the old offices in Highbury, London moved back to the bottom of this range in April 2011.

The pension liability reduced by £30m in the year with ongoing contributions and investment income receiving a boost from increased investment values. But pension fund valuations continue to be very volatile and the agreed plan to eliminate the liability is long-term.

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 in 2010/11. Our performance during the year has provided a solid foundation for our work in 2011/12 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?

By supporting those most vulnerable to spending cuts by improving outcomes for the most vulnerable and neglected children and young people. We will use our neglect appeal to provide extra support for neglected children and those at risk of neglect.

We will aim to increase the services we offer and will focus our resources on areas where we feel we can deliver the most value. We will aim to support more children through our fee-based placements.

We will offer best value as well as best quality, and aim to achieve best practice in cost efficiency. We will improve our budgets and obtain and demonstrate evidence from our partners, that we are seen as providing efficiency and value for money.

We will increase our voluntary income and more accurately define how we operate.

Question 8 - The charity's governance

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

Our trustees (Council) 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 performance on a regular basis. Trustees have delegated responsibility for specific areas of activity to a number of committees which regularly report to Council. These comprise three committees which oversee our activities in Scotland, Wales and England respectively and specialist Audit and Finance committees.

We review our governance arrangements to ensure that we comply with relevant codes of practice and recently updated our Articles of Association.

Question 9 - Further details

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

www.actionforchildren.org.uk or the Annual Report and Accounts 2010/11

Declaration

This Summary Information Return was submitted online by MS MARY KEANE on 22 November 2011, telephone number 0203 124 0639.

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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