



# Reach

life beyond limits

2023-24

(March 23 – Feb 24)

Annual Report





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## 1. Welcome to our 2023-24 Annual Report

This year was all about the amazing people who volunteer their time to help bring the Reach Community together. Volunteer Branch Coordinators, RAW Mentors and Annual Family Weekend Volunteers from all over the UK & Ireland went above and beyond to create a total of **1667 opportunities for Reach families, children and young people** to connect in person. A new Board of Trustees learnt new skills and began work to help Reach **evolve as a charity**, to sustain support for Reach children into adulthood. This year saw adults with upper limb difference (ULD) tentatively beginning to reconnect with Reach, wanting to get involved. This year saw us lay the groundwork for **a new chapter**. We haven't been this active for a while - thank you everyone for helping bring it back!



## 2023 Highlights

- 37 Branch events delivered across the UK & Ireland, 117.5% increase on 2022
- First ever Annual Family Weekend (AFW) in Newcastle, 55.5% attendance increase from 2022
- RAW (Reach Activity Week) 23 see's mentors new and old come together to enable and support 32 young people aged 10-17
- Reach membership increases by 17% - 704 members Feb 23, 822 members Feb 24
- The first ever Reach Retreat for 18–25-year-olds achieves funding
- Facebook engagement grows by 266% and Instagram by 896% with new Social Media Manager, Megan Bacon Evans (BE) at the helm
- Reach Trustees carefully administer the giving of a significant legacy to Reach
- Reach Trustees begin work to renew our Articles of Association.



## 2. Chairpersons Report 2023-24

This Reach year has been focused on managing a change process. We identified that many of our processes were outdated and needed revision.

The primary goal has been to update and replace our Articles of Association, the governing document of Reach Charity. Prior to the enactment of the Charities Act 2006, many governing documents of charities were based on company law. In time lawyers who specialise in Charities Law drew up a new CLA model suited to charities. After specialist training for our Trustees, in-depth consultation with our legal advisors, as well as with our own Branch Coordinators and members, we decided to embrace a new set of Articles of Association based on Charities Law. We will be asking you to vote to support this change this weekend.

Our focus on increased communication and support for each of the branches has yielded very positive results throughout the UK and Ireland. We have seen record numbers of meetups and activities and enthusiastic volunteers stepping up to run branches. Both parents and members with a limb difference run branches of Reach - a big change from the parent support group founded in 1978.

## The Reach Team 2023-2024

### Trustees

Chair - Chris Creamer  
Vice Chair - Gary Phillips  
Treasurer - Phil Robertson  
Safeguarding Lead – Julie Detheridge  
Ruth Lester OBE  
Lee Harvey  
Esther Pounder  
Amber Thacker  
Emily Tisshaw  
Steve Haynes

### Ambassadors:

Alex Brooker  
Claire Cashmore MBE  
Ella Dickenson  
Melissa Johns  
Frank Letch MBE  
Briony May Williams

### The Reach Team (behind the scenes)

Charity Ops Lead – Sarah-Jane Lowson  
Business Support – Ashley Blackburn  
Within Reach Editors: Max & Tom Swinhoe  
Social Media Manager: Megan Bacon-Evans  
AFW Producer: James Jones  
Events Development Volunteer: Sian Brooks  
Reach Team Volunteer: Lesley Goodfellow

### Branch Coordinators 2023-24: Please see P4

### The RAW Team 2023:

RAW Lead: Claire Hermon  
RAW Core Team: Esther Lees, Tony Addison,  
Tom Crow, Emily Tisshaw  
RAW Mentors 23: Fran Moylan, Chris Knox,  
Adam Richardson, Louise Devlin & Max  
Swinhoe

We had a full roster at RAW 23 at Carlton Lodge and enthusiastic feedback from 32 participants. We have already planned and anticipate increased numbers RAW 2025.

Our new young adult trustees elected to the board, as well as the motivated young adults who deliver almost all our communications have been pushing boundaries at warp speed to increase and generate new and exciting channels. The young adult group, energised by their own experiences growing up, have been meeting regularly as a Working Group online, planning new and revised forms of communications with our members and with the broad population of supporters of Reach. Watch this space.

I cannot close this Chairpersons Report without drawing attention to the economic climate in which we operate. It must be acknowledged that donations are down, not just for Reach but for the charities sector generally. Considering we have a full program of modernisation and development to benefit our members, we must always keep our eyes on the finances of Reach. Suffice to say that these ambitious developments cost money and we need to encourage members to keep funding for Reach in your minds. We haven't simply survived 46 years, we have grown and thrived. Focusing on celebrating 50 years in 2028, let's deliver on the development of Reach as a support organisation for all persons with a limb difference, children and adults. It is already paying dividends having the lived experience of our young adults "giving back" to our children. That is too valuable a resource to lose. As a membership organisation, we depend on donations to continue as a support group. Any donation, all fundraising and every initiative taken by members to generate funds for Reach Activities are greatly appreciated. You can make a difference.





### 3. Local Branches 2023-24:



During this year 26 volunteer Branch Coordinators and 4 volunteers (holding the fort until new Branch Coordinators could be found) enabled **353 individual Reach children** and their families to spend time together.

These people are the Reach linchpin. Without their help organising local meetups in their areas we would, except for RAW & AFW, be an online community only.

This year with their support we have been on tractors & trains, climbing, surfing, skating, balancing, bouncing, picnicking, dancing, swimming, making cupcakes, gingerbread people and... friends - **THANK YOU!**

This is the difference you made 2023-24:

“I am so happy to be a member of the Reach family and look forward to many more events.”

New Reach Parent at Branch Event, January 2024.

Most valuable part of the day?

“Children getting to meet each other”

Parent at Branch event 2023

“Reachtastic!”  
Young person at  
Spring Branch event  
2023

You knocked it  
out of the park!



Scotland: Mags, Iain & Liz

Northern: Suzanne

Northern Ireland: Ruth & Siobhan

Yorkshire: Alexis & Rich

Northwest: Jane & Cheryl

East Midlands: Andrew & Rebecca

Ireland: Marianne, Hilary & James

West Midlands: Tracey & Jason

East Anglia: Jay & Navdeep

Three Counties: Jen

South Wales: Melissa

Gloucestershire: Sophie (with a little bit of help from Lee)

Berks & Wilts: Joanne

North London: Kavita

South London: Hannah & Emily

Kent: Hannah & Lesley (holding the fort)

Wessex: Mei

Southwest: Sarah & SJ (holding the fort)

## 4. RAW 2023



This year with Claires guidance we increased the number of RAW Mentors (adults with ULD volunteering their time to enable Reach young people) to 10. 5 RAW Veteran Mentors joined by 5 newbies, came together at the YHA in the Peak District for training, for the first time this included Young Peoples Mental Health training. Time together helped prepare them as a team for RAW 23.



It was always going to be strange this year because Jo wasn't there, she was missed.

The team were incredible and together, with the help of Carlton Lodge enabled a wonderful 7-day adventure for 32 young people, age 10-17 from all over the UK, some coming for the first time.



## RAW 23 Feedback *the stats*

100% of families surveyed said their young person's confidence increased at RAW

100% of families surveyed said their young people's physical activity increased at RAW

100% of families surveyed said their young person's independence skills improved because of RAW

100% of young people surveyed wanted to come back next year!

## RAW 23 Feedback *in your words*

"Our son has made some of his closest friendships at RAW and we know he feels more confident in himself because of them."

"Very important. Really special extended family - both the other young people and the mentors"

"Gives our son a massive confidence boost. It also means he can try a wide variety of activities (without me having to convince individual activity centres to let him do things if we were visiting just as a family)."

"Sharing some drawings K made on RAW, he came back home very happy and already said he's going next year."



RAW 25:  
Sun 03 - Sun 10 Aug  
Kepplewray Activity Centre,  
Cumbria





**BEST BITS:**

- Young Influencers Panel
- Good mix of speakers, nice to see Reach Youth dreaming too!
- Family session at the adventure playground
- Having exhibitors in the same room was good
- Drama Workshop/DJ Workshop
- Making new friends

**WORST BITS:**

- Felt a bit "corporatey"
- Need more for teens in the evening
- Not enough opportunity to spend time with other families on the Saturday
- Didn't love the kid's food options
- Leaving new friends.

**Learning:**

This year we are running the first ever Reach Family Supper Club for families wanting to stay together and play together. This year teenagers have a special evening outing to Playzone. Some things are out of our control e.g. not enough room for exhibitors in the conference room, to compensate we have programmed in a 'Meet the Exhibitors' family session. This year we had to go theatre style for the conference because of numbers.

Thank you to the incredible people who make AFW happen every year, our MC, Mr Alastair Greener and Producer, James Jones, who together keep us on track for the whole of Saturday, our inspirational Guest Speakers who share their stories, their journeys, our exhibitors, who come and animate the space with their ideas and passion, and the people helping behind the scenes; RAW Mentors, Reach Team Volunteers, Event Photographers, Phil & Ste, Workshop Providers, Branch Coordinators, Trustees and of course - Queen of the Gala Dinner, Mrs Sian Brooks!!

**5. AFW 2023**

**Feedback in your words**

"Our First AFW, I'm sure it won't be our last! We feel so welcome"

"It was the BEST weekend! Thank you so much for all the giggles dancing, and emotional moments @brionymaybakes it was so lovely to finally meet you in person! Feeling full of gratitude coming away from our incredible community."  
iampossiblemma

"Felt like Vintage Reach"

"Being able to immediately dive into a deep conversation with someone you have never met before because of the common ground...thank you @reachcharity1 for a truly amazing weekend and for organising a magical space for these friendships to bloom."

"Amazing Weekend with our Reach family. Thanks so much everyone, see you next year."

"The weekend was our best yet (have been attending since 2015) it beat our expectations it was lovely to see new people with very young children."

This weekend was so special in a million different ways. We met families we have been speaking to online for the last 18 months in person and we all greeted each other with the biggest hug like we had known each other for a lifetime. They are just such special connections that can't be described & will last for a very long time."

"We laughed and cried in equal measures all weekend. Our emotional cups were very much filled!"

- AFW 24: Portsmouth
- AFW 25: Swansea
- AFW 26: Manchester



## 6. Fundraising March 2023- Feb 24

**Reach is supported by its community;** what you do makes the difference - from climbing Three Peaks in South Wales to organising a Football Charity Day, **the way you help, is personal, caring, fun, exhausting, inspiring & incredible!**

Here are a few of the things you have been up to 2023-24: Staff at Glasswells in Ipswich paid to wear their Christmas jumpers, Durrey in Birmingham fundraised for Reach during Ramadan, George in Cheshire organised a spectacular Golf event, Theo in London asked his friends and family to donate to us instead of birthday presents.

You have run, climbed, swum, cycled, and yes even flown 100s of miles between you, in epic challenges including: The London Marathon, The Big Swim, Parkrun & a 100 Day Challenge - **Thank you!** Time for a sit down and a cup of tea!

Once you've got your breath back and/or you fancy a challenge 2024-25 click here: <https://www.reach.org.uk/run-for-reach>

You and yours have baked, crafted, raffled, and drunk a lot of coffee!! Thank you for organising all the local community fundraisers in schools, social clubs, community centres, villages halls and at offices across the UK - these events help raise awareness at the same time as raising funds for Reach - so **you are helping in two ways** - Thank you!

We also received gifts in memory of family members, sometimes Reach is named in the persons will, sometimes the family create a memorial fund - **thank you for remembering Reach at this time.**

Some of you are regular givers - your donations **underpin everything we do** - Thank you!

Trusts & Foundations awards (23-24)  
The Dean Close Foundation

Elizabeth & Prince Zaiger Charitable Trust  
CMS Foundation  
Global Make Some Noise  
Awards for All

Other types of donors, some businesses, some faith-based (brought to us by you):

HFF Civil Engineering

Opus Limited - this was a person in Scotland whose little sister was about to have an amputation, her work had a monthly sponsorship scheme for charities, and she named us, asking that the funds could be spent in Scotland - and they were, on a family day out at a water-based adventure park.

Ultra Tile

Morgan Lewis's London office

St James Church Cambridge

Holy Trinity Church, Rolleston

Finally thank you to everyone who ticked the [Gift Aid](#) box! it's easy to do and for every pound you donated the government gave us 25p!

**Together you raised a massive £111391** that represents a third of our expenditure as a charity for 2023-24 - Thank you!

We know we have a job of work to do to sustain Reach into the future, there is a need now we are back running at full capacity and are wanting to grow as a charity to 'diversify our income streams'. As part of that we want to build on what our community best like to do.



We want to build an annual Reach Challenge Event which raises funds and at the same time raises awareness. We'd like to start in 2025! WATCH THIS SPACE - or better still get involved!

## 7. Reach Charity 5-Year Plan (2024-2029)

In late 2023 Reach was given in trust a legacy to the value of £540000. As a charity this is the biggest award that we have ever received.

The donor wasn't known to us and as such the Trustees needed to undertake careful due diligence and the Charity Commission also.

The gift couldn't have come at a better time, it means we have the capacity to plan for and grow a little as a charity.

Being ever mindful of our primary purpose; to support families with children with ULD, we want to enrich that support in partnership with our branch coordinators by developing a **regional family weekend programme** and widen our support by developing an **18-25 programme** to support young people with ULD into adulthood.

Both projects are being led by our community, both projects are being led by people that have lived experience as branch coordinators, reach parents, children and adults.

Both projects are building on what we do well and both projects are responding to need.

AFW is a much-loved event, but cost, location and event capacity mean it's not accessible to all in the Reach community.

We want to try and capture some of the community spirit that brought us Tyncae in South Wales & Patterdale in the Northwest to build a low-cost regional family weekend programme free of charge for participating families.

In 2023 Trustee and RAW Mentor, Emily Tisshaw brought the idea of an 18-25 Retreat to the Trustees.





The idea was formed by RAW Mentors who as they became young adults looking for sustained support found it wasn't there. They found their own way, and they would like to build a programme of sustained support for young adults to enable them as they find theirs.

With the support of the Trustees, Emily applied to Awards for All in 2023 to run a pilot.

This was the vision:

Reach exists to support families with upper limb difference to connect; learn and grow together as a community. The retreat will give our younger members a touchstone; a safe place to work through issues with their peers; rehearse coping strategies; develop and maintain bonds; overcome struggles and form long lasting and deep relationships with people that look and feel like them as they transition to adulthood.

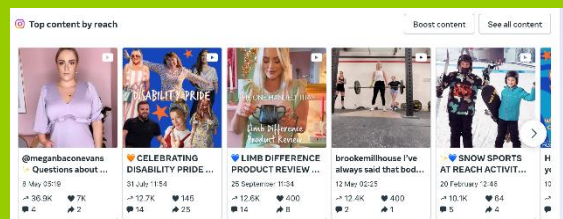
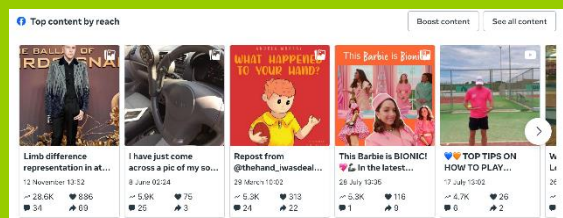
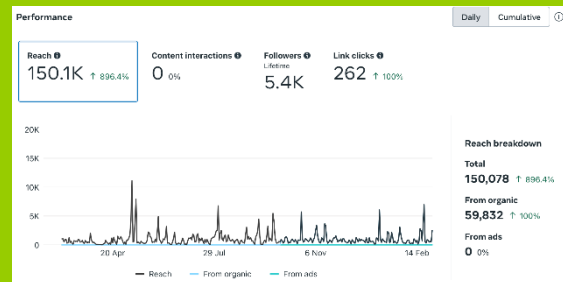
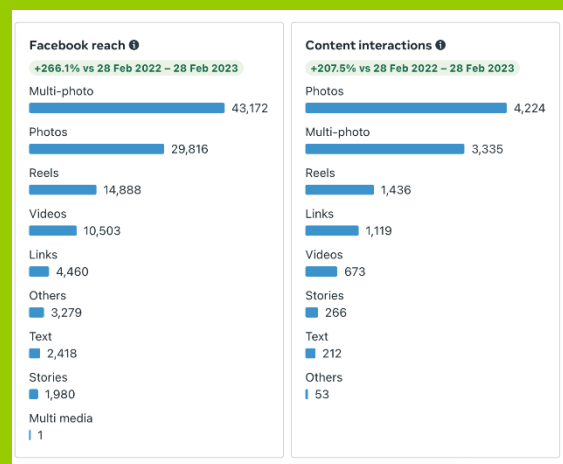
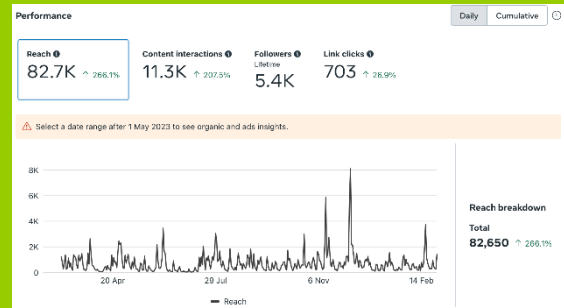
Emilys bid was successful, and the first Retreat ran April 2024.

We are currently applying to the VTCT Foundation to realise the aspirations of the Project Founders 2025-2028.

To compliment this evolution we want to **build our presence on social media** and become relevant and useful to young people with ULD in that space. Do more of what we do well, create a sense of community, a sense of belonging.

To that end Megan BE joined the Reach Team in 2023. With Megan at the helm we have seen our presence grow in 'new to us' spaces Instagram and Tik Tok, we are connecting with adults with ULD who want to join the Reach community, some were part of our community as children but then grew away and some are coming to us for the first time as adults.

# Social Media Growth Stats (2023-24)



And what about your experience as **parents when your baby is born**? As we learnt with the [Early Parental Experience Survey](#) undertaken 2022, published 2024, there are still inconsistencies and gaps in terms of support and sign posting pre-birth and as babies are born.

In January 2024 we went to the Midwifery Festival in London. Thanks to Trustee Ruth Lester OBE and Research Surgical Trainee for the Early Parental Experience Survey Dr Andrew Clelland we were given the opportunity to run a workshop. Ruth was amazing in her efforts to connect with the right people to share about Reach!

During the year we circulated posters, leaflets and copies of our magazine, *Within Reach*, to midwifery units and Limb Centres across the UK upon request.

But it feels a bit like a drop in the ocean, so we need to think about how we sign post and help families find support.

One idea we hope to begin developing 2025-26 is to support the piloting of a new role within the NHS - a liaison nurse who can 1. Help share information across NHS Trusts 2. Support families as they find out about their babies ULD.

Another lovely idea in the very early stages of development: RAW ARTS! **A Creative Summer Camp** for young people with ULD. Using a similar model to RAW, led by Mentors with ULD, developed and delivered in partnership with organisations like [OHMI](#), and wonderful creatives who are part of our community e.g. Melissa Johns.

All great ideas to help:

- Reach more people
- Help more families
- Support our community

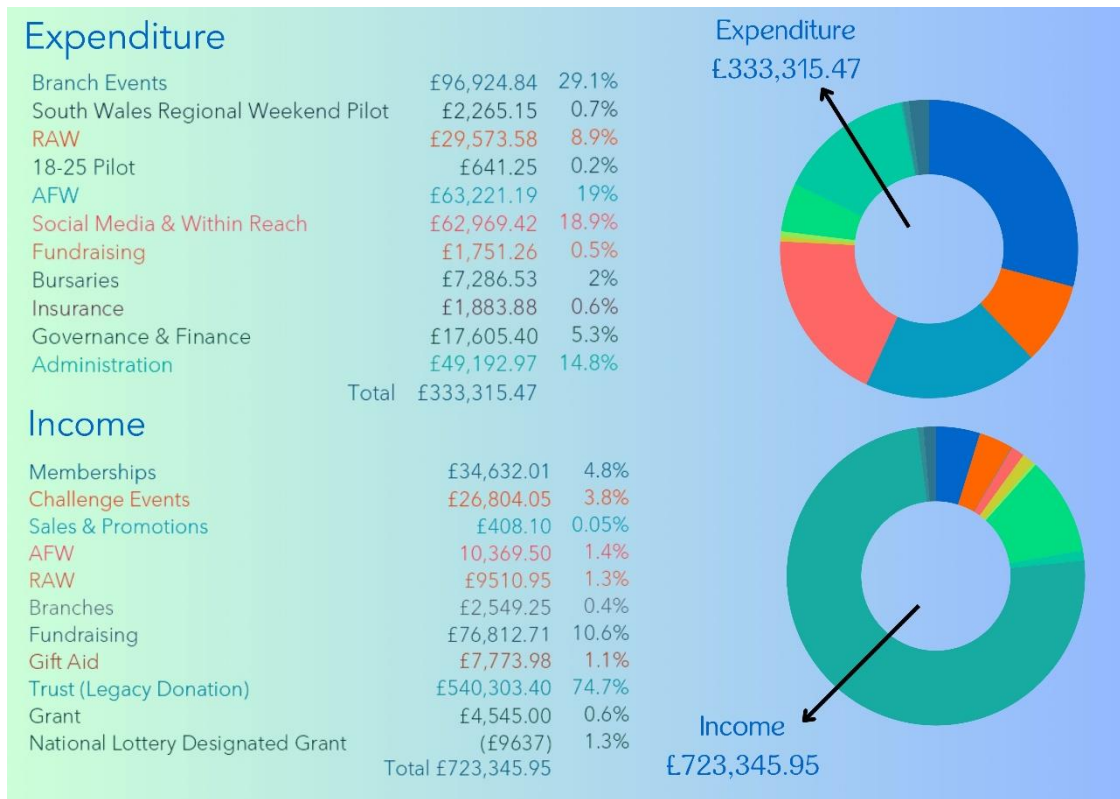
Finally - We are looking toward our **50 Year Anniversary** in 2028 - how best to celebrate?

As a charity we are led by our community and want always to be responsive and inclusive - please reach out if you want to get involved.





## 8. Reach Finances 2023-24



Income 2022-23: £200018  
 Income 2023-24 (minus Trust):  
 £173,405.55 (13.3% decrease from 2022-23)

Expenditure 2022-23: £175918  
 Expenditure 2023-24: £333315  
 (89.5% increase from 2022-23)

Fundraised income 2022-23 = £140364  
 Fundraised income 2023-24 = £108057  
 (23% decrease from 2022-23)

Deficit (minus Trust) 2023-24: £160000

The Legacy given to Reach in trust in 2023 is providing ballast, but Reach like all charities across the UK is experiencing a dip in donations and we need now to diversify our income streams to sustain.

### Our Plan:

Our priority is to sustain and grow branch delivery & support our online community.

We will designate funds from our reserves to this delivery.

£325000 is being deposited in 12 month and 6 month fixed term accounts 2024-25. Interest will be used for new project work.

All of the project work described pages 7-9 is subject to funding. We are seeking support from Trusts & Foundations to help us realise this work.

We have a working group looking to increase Corporate Social Responsibility funding of Reach.

We are actively supporting members fundraising on our behalf.

We aspire to build a new annual Reach challenge event to generate income for AFW and the 18-25 Project.



Reach Charity Ltd  
Company Limited by Guarantee: 07054164  
Registered Charity in England & Wales: 1134544  
Registered Charity in Scotland: SC049805

Registered Address:  
Office 4, The Library Rooms, 1st Floor,  
59 High Street, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5PB