

DOGS  
FOR  
GOOD

# An (everyday) extraordinary year

Annual report | 2022



*For making life possible*

# Contents

- 4** Welcome from our CEO
- 5** Introduction from the Chair of Trustees
- 6** 2022 highlights: an overview of the year
- 8** Putting people first
- 12** Making connections
- 18** Opening up possibilities
- 22** Making the everyday extraordinary
- 25** Our partners and supporters
- 26** Financial summary

**We all know the difference dogs can make to our lives. At least for those of us lucky enough to have them. But for some people, dogs actually make life possible.**

At Dogs for Good, we understand just how much. We train and nurture dogs to enable people to overcome the challenges of disability, autism, dementia and other differences, so they can live happier, healthier, more independent lives.

These are dogs that open doors, that connect people in communities, that bring families together. Dogs that help make everyday life possible in so many extraordinary ways.





# Welcome to the **Dogs for Good** 2022 annual report

Pulling together the content for this report has been a profoundly rewarding experience. For me, just a few months into my new role here, it has also been an education.

I already knew of course that Dogs for Good was a charity doing something very special and unique, and I knew I would be working alongside a passionate and talented group of people. The stories and examples in this report bring that home, highlighting the many ways in which our work enables and supports powerful connections between people and dogs – connections that really do change lives.

Of course, an annual report is also an opportunity to look ahead. 2023 will mark the 35th anniversary of Dogs for Good, and so it seems right to be taking stock of where we are and where we want to be. A new vision and supporting strategy for the charity will help clarify our goals and sharpen our purpose and I look forward to working on this with the team. We have an exciting opportunity now to build on the work Dogs for Good has been doing, to continue raising awareness of the power of dogs and to steer the charity towards a future where dogs impact more lives and do more good.

I hope you enjoy reading this report, and that it inspires you to join us on our journey.

Ed Bracher, CEO



Ed Bracher

2022 was a year in which Dogs for Good built on our learnings from the COVID-19 pandemic to develop and deliver our person-centred approach.

It was also a year of significant change with the retirement of Peter Gorbing, our Chief Executive since 1999. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Peter for the massive contribution he has made to creating the Dogs for Good organisation we have today.

I am delighted that Ed Bracher has joined us as our new Chief Executive. His 17 years leading Riding for the Disabled has great synergy with our work, and his experience and knowledge will help us to grow and develop further.

Ed's arrival, along with that of Olivia Rainford, our new Director of Income Generation, links with

the development of our new strategic plan. Our goal is to support even more people and to ensure that our aims and ambitions are aligned with the impact we want to deliver.

One of our strengths is our people and I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Dogs for Good community, including our staff, volunteers, supporters and donors and, of course, our dogs. This report highlights just some of the ways that community has worked to improve people's lives this year. I am proud of what we have achieved and excited for what is to come. I hope you are too.

John Farrell, Chair of the Board of Trustees



John Farrell

For making life possible

BB  
There are so many ways in which our work enables and supports powerful connections between people and dogs.





# ...making life possible in 2022



**First** organisation in the UK to be accredited by Animal Assisted Intervention International for the **quality** of our AAIs

**201** families helped to work with pet dogs to **support** their autistic children



**42** Assistance Dog partnerships created

Jean Darlston, a **volunteer** of **20+** years standing, awarded an Order of Mercy Medal

**250** adults with dementia, autistic children and people with physical disabilities **supported** to work effectively with their Assistance Dogs



**Škoda** loaned our dog training team 2 cars featured in the Driver's Best Friend ad

Our Quality of Life report found that having an Assistance Dog has a significant **positive** impact on people's lives

TV's **Lorraine Kelly** highlighted the **mental health benefits** of dogs, as part of our collaboration with MORE THAN Insurance



**3** former Assistance Dogs became **Activity Dogs**, supporting our work with people in the community



Sports broadcaster **Andrew Cotter** narrated our first ever BBC Radio 4 Appeal on Christmas Day



**600+** volunteers supported our work, from fundraising to puppy socialising to **community** events

**220** Community Dog sessions helped people with autism, dementia and learning disabilities develop skills, reduce isolation and **connect** with their community



A BBC RADIO 4 APPEAL





# Putting people first

Collaboration – with colleagues, with partners and with our clients – is key to providing support that truly reflects individual needs. 2022 saw a fresh focus on finding new opportunities to share ideas and expertise, and a new flexibility in the way we deliver our services.

The move to a more person-centred approach is a theme that runs throughout our work this year, in all parts of the organisation. For example, Kelly Jennings, who took over as Service Manager at the start of 2022, has introduced regular education days, where colleagues can come together to learn more about relevant topics – such as legislation around accessibility – or simply to explore opportunities for closer collaboration and providing more flexible support.

Working with an occupational therapist (OT) is helping our teams gain a deeper insight into clients' needs. Bridget Harper, an OT with more than 50 years' experience and a longstanding connection with the charity, has been working with us on a voluntary basis this year, coming along to assessments to analyse needs and, where appropriate, signposting to other sources of help and support.

Again, it's a learning opportunity for the team, too. "We're gaining so much from working with Bridget," says Kelly, "in terms of knowing what kinds of questions we should be asking and what other help

is out there. In the past it was often the case that if someone presented with certain health issues they'd automatically go down the path towards having an Assistance Dog. Now, we're trying to take a step back and ask: what does the person actually need?

"We might have an Assistance Dog instructor and a member of our Community Dog team work with them for a few sessions to explore the options. We've done that several times this year and one client opted not to have an Assistance Dog. Conversely, one of our Community Dog handlers placed an Assistance Dog with one of her clients. It's about finding the best fit."



Dogs for... getting up  
getting out

BB

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## Focus on Scotland

Our Dementia Dog project in Scotland – which will celebrate its 10th anniversary in 2023 – is a great illustration of how our services are evolving as we become more embedded in the communities we support.

Initially, the project – run in partnership with Alzheimer Scotland – focused on providing Assistance Dogs for people living with dementia before moving into providing Community Dog support (see page 12 for more on this year's work).

Now, the service is expanding to include Family Dog, drawing on our experiences of working with families with an autistic child.

"We were getting applications for Assistance Dogs from families that didn't meet the criteria," says Fiona Corner, Head of Innovation and Development at Alzheimer Scotland. "They were thinking of getting a pet dog instead. We realised there was an opportunity to work with them to help them get the most out of what is potentially an incredibly valuable relationship."

This year saw the team return to face-to-face workshops, adding to a mix of support that also includes online sessions and a series of YouTube videos covering many practical aspects of dog ownership. "At the end of it people might opt not to have a dog," says Fiona. "It might suit them better to arrange access to a friend or family member's dog, or to work with our Community Dog team. The point is that they get help to make the decision that's right for them, and for the dog."



# Looking ahead

Over the next year, we will:

1

### Focus on people

Take a more person-centred approach to service delivery, including through hybrid support, flexible solutions and less structured interventions



2

### Refine rehoming

Make our dog rehoming scheme more person- and dog-centred, ensuring we give dogs the best possible opportunity to succeed



3

### Provide more support

Grow our Family Dog work with people with dementia in Scotland, including three face-to-face workshops plus comprehensive support online



Dogs for...

going to work

going to school



# Making connections

Extending our networks and building new partnerships – with other service providers, with our volunteers and with local communities – is helping us to bring more people and dogs together, making the connections that matter most.

The connection between people and dogs is at the heart of everything we do. With each new connection, a new story is written: see page 22 for just a few examples of how dogs are helping bring down barriers and create new networks for some of the people we work with.

To maximise those connections, though, we also need to collaborate and find synergies between our work and that of other organisations. Two

major new projects, both launched in 2022, are enabling us to explore how local partnerships can help us to reach more people with effective, targeted support. Our proactive approach is helping to position Dogs for Good at the centre of these hubs of expertise, developing effective service models with significant potential for wider roll-out.

## Stronger connections

In Bracknell, we are one year into a two-year exploratory project led by Community Dog Practitioner Lucy Purchase.

Alongside running one-to-one goal-oriented sessions and group animal-assisted interventions (AAIs) such as visits to care homes, Lucy's role includes building networks and developing links with individuals, groups and organisations in Bracknell with the aim of understanding the needs of the community and identifying gaps in provision.

Lucy has already set up two walking and wellbeing groups with Community Dogs Lexi and Ned where adults with mental health conditions can engage with the dogs and each other. Other potential focus

areas include working with children with additional needs, and providing activities based on our Family Dog workshops for families in the area with autistic children who acquired a pet dog during lockdown and would like to know more about how their dog can best support their child. For information on the second of these innovative projects, based in Bristol, see page 16.

## Volunteer action

Volunteers have always been a vitally important part of our community, and this year saw our team of 600+ volunteers working with the charity

BB  
**Local partnerships can help us to reach more people with effective, targeted support.**

in a wide range of ways. Two of our volunteers ran an engagement workshop, gathering information from our volunteer team about their experiences of working with the charity and how we could better

support them in the future. Those findings will be fed into our development and training plans, alongside work being done by Volunteer Co-ordinator Liz Stone to explore how other charities work with and engage their volunteers.

In Bracknell, volunteers have been supporting our new wellbeing walks, while in Scotland they have supported our Community Dog handlers in running virtual weekly sessions in partnership with Alzheimer Scotland, including the wildly popular dog bingo. "It's been such a hit!" says Fiona Corner,



Dogs for...

feeling free

feeling more me





Head of Development and Innovation. "These virtual sessions are a great way of keeping in touch with people, particularly those living in remote areas and during the colder months, and the dog bingo is a great morale-booster."

### A new purpose

Also in Scotland, a new initiative – Activity Dog – is creating opportunities for dogs and carers to stay involved with the charity.

"Over time the role of some of the Assistance Dogs we place with people with dementia was changing," says Fiona. "The person might not be living at home any more or, sadly, they may no longer be with us.

Their family is left with a highly trained dog that no longer has an official role; and often the person who has been a carer is looking for a new purpose and an opportunity to give back."

To date, three Assistance Dogs have become Activity Dogs and are now taking part in virtual and face-to-face events aimed at publicising our work and raising funds to support our activities.

Fiona and her team also ran a second webinar aimed at raising awareness of dementia among canine professionals, creating a stronger support network for individuals and families with dogs. The two sessions held to date – which

attracted more than 260 attendees between them – tap into a wider initiative called Dementia Friendly Communities. "We want the people we work with to be able to access the support they need more easily," says Fiona. "We also want the wider community to better understand the benefits that dogs can bring to people with dementia and their family and friends. From the response we've had we can see that there's a real appetite to find out more."



BB

We want the people we work with to be able to access the support they need more easily.





## Focus on Bristol

Our work with partners in Bristol is opening up new ways of reaching people in need – and helping to widen our network of contacts.

In December 2021, we kicked off a pilot scheme in partnership with Bristol Dementia Wellbeing Service (BDWS) to explore how a trained dog and handler could work with people with dementia to improve independence, wellbeing and quality of life.

The project focuses on people in the earlier stages of dementia. "In the past, the model for providing support included a health professional attending the sessions with the dog and handler. In some cases that

acted as a barrier, because not everyone in the early stages will have an allocated dementia health professional," explains Selina Gibsone, Dogs for Good Development Manager. "So we worked with BDWS on a new model where the referral comes through them but support is provided by a family member, carer or friend. It's made our services more accessible."

Another innovative project involves providing training for Alzheimer's Society befrienders with dogs. "We wanted to make sure interactions with dogs were safe and effective, even if they didn't involve our own volunteers," says Selina. "The more we can immerse ourselves in an area, the more valuable connections we can make."

““ The more we can immerse ourselves in an area, the more valuable connections we can make.



# Looking ahead

Over the next year, we will:



Dogs for...

meeting people

keeping families together



# Opening up possibilities

Embracing technology and new ways of working – including tapping into external sources of information and expertise – is helping us to streamline our own operations and maximise our reach and impact.

Hybrid models – using a mix of online and real-life provision – are the new paradigm for much of our service delivery. Following the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, this year has given us an opportunity to review and reflect and to adopt new methods that deliver demonstrable benefits on a more permanent basis.

The Family Dog team carried out a survey over the summer with a view to better understanding the needs of the people they work with. Since then the team has revamped its learning materials and is now looking at developing a hybrid model based on a blend of virtual and “real life” workshops.

“We’re exploring the idea of using virtual workshops for basic training,” says Family Dog Instructor Hannah Beal,

“while real-life sessions will focus on higher value activities such as loose lead walking and recall. It’s really about providing more flexibility and expanding our reach. People can pick and choose what suits them, and we can also use our virtual sessions to re-engage with previous cohorts.”

## Virtual impact

A hybrid approach is also working well for the Community Dog team. “I think we’ve all been pleasantly surprised at how well it’s worked without the dog being in the room,” says Service Manager Kelly Jennings. “We’ve found the same benefits and impact from the virtual sessions.” Fiona Corner of Alzheimer Scotland agrees. “Post-COVID we’ve seen an increase in anxiety, and people being reluctant to



It’s really about providing more flexibility and expanding our reach.

go out. We’ve been getting people to go out on walks and having them command the dog by phone, or asking them to take a picture of something they’ve seen while they’re out and then training the dog to react when they see it on the laptop. It’s amazing how creative the Community Dog handlers have been. And it’s been a major learning curve for us, seeing the tangible impact these dogs can have through virtual activities.”

## Tech transformed

Another important way we’ve been using technology over the past year is to continue the process of streamlining our own operations. Moving from onsite to cloud-based servers is reducing risk, and supporting collaboration and hybrid working. Using the Microsoft Dynamics customer relationship management platform we can now capture data at the same time as processing donations, while another application aims to simplify the process of finding temporary boarders for our dogs.

In 2022, the Family Dog team successfully migrated all its data on to Dynamics, enabling more accurate reporting, and easier booking, scheduling and management of events. “All that used to take up a lot of our time,” says Family Dog Instructor Hannah Beal. “Now it’s handled by our admin colleague. That frees me and [fellow instructor] Cari to focus on supporting the families we work with.”

We’re also using Sharepoint to bring together all information and guidance for our volunteers in one place, reducing duplication and improving access. This year we completed Sharepoint sites for general volunteering information and for our puppy socialisers, and work is now under way on a site for our temporary boarders.



Dogs for...

when I can't

when I can





## Focus on breeding

Investment in our dog breeding programme is opening up possibilities for delivering a more consistent supply of high quality dogs and improving our understanding of which dogs are best suited to which roles.

This year we continued to run our own internal breeding scheme alongside our European Breeding Cooperative (EBC) programme. We also started to fully realise the benefits of our membership of the International Working Dogs Register (IWDR).

"The IWDR database contains a huge amount of information that's incredibly valuable to us," says Dog Supply Manager Vicky Mark. "We can see health scores and test results for any dog we might be considering breeding from and we can also see what's happened to all their puppies

– how many are active, how many have had health or behavioural issues and if so what kind and how serious. That's going to enable us to start breeding for certain characteristics in a much more meaningful and targeted way. It won't happen overnight, but in the next three years or so we should be making progress towards a properly purpose-led breeding scheme."

BB

We'll be able to start breeding for certain characteristics in a much more meaningful and targeted way.

# Looking ahead

Over the next year, we will:

1

### Maximise use of tech

Use technology to streamline donation paths, develop a recruitment portal for volunteers and use case management to handle enquiries and contacts more efficiently



2

### Engage online

Revamp our website to provide a more engaging experience for visitors, including by delivering more personalised and location-based information



3

### Expand our facilities

Move forward with plans for a puppy development suite at our HQ in Banbury



Dogs for...

when life's too much

when it's not enough



# Making the everyday extraordinary

**Freedoms regained, lives reclaimed:** here's just a small selection of stories showcasing the positive impact dogs have had on people's lives this year.



It can be difficult to explain to people why I might need more help with things and difficult for people to see things going wrong. But Albert makes me feel more visible.

Whether I'm stood on a train platform or in a supermarket, when I need help with something I can just ask for it without having to explain why. People see Albert beside me and recognise that I might need more help with something whether it's as simple as holding a door open for me or getting on the right train.

**Jemima & Albert**



I've got plans, I've got aspirations, I see people, I leave the house and it's all enabled because of Rumba.

Whether it's the physical side of things or the emotional and psychological side of things, of knowing I've got her there and being able to overcome anxieties about going to new places or going to familiar places and worrying about getting too tired or my pain getting too high, I know that Rumba's there to mitigate that. No human can do that in the way that Rumba can.

**Isabelle & Rumba**



I used to wear oversized, functional clothes because anything else was impossible for me to put on in a wheelchair.

But now, because Sheila can help me get dressed, I can wear dresses that fit and suit me. Sheila's enabled me to be more myself.

**Zoe & Sheila**



He seems to know when Noah needs comfort, or when to leave him alone. When he is seeking deep pressure Ralph will offer a friendly head rest or lie over Noah's legs.

Ralph's also been an amazing help with road safety and has lessened the need for the repetitive learning that we always had to do when leaving the house. We thoroughly enjoyed our Family Dog training, learning so much. And we know it's only the beginning of this duo's journey together.

**Noah & Ralph**





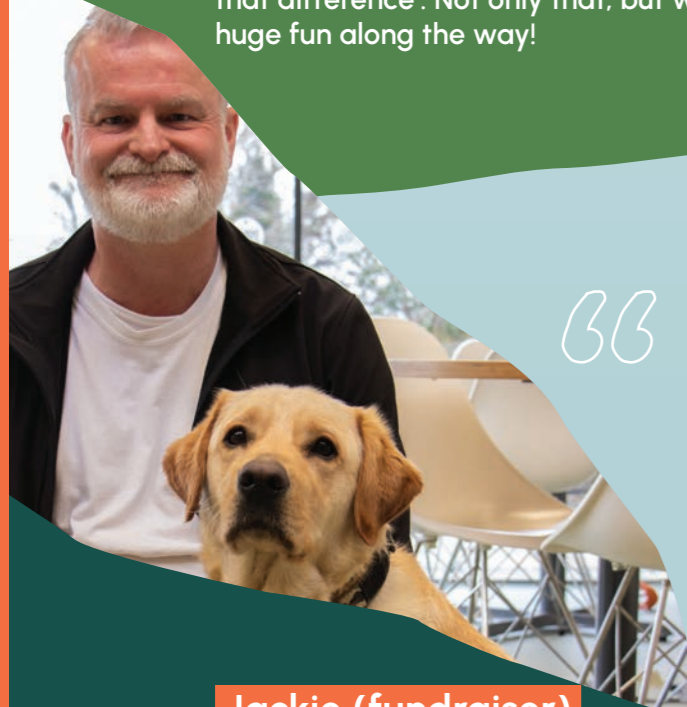
## Our volunteers



### Sue and Mike, puppy socialisers

BB When we hear first-hand about how a puppy we have raised has transformed someone's life, it fills us with great happiness.

We give ourselves a little pat on the back and say to each other 'we helped to make that difference'. Not only that, but we had huge fun along the way!



### David (temporary boarder) and Studley

BB Studley was with us for about four months during his training. He was an absolute superstar, everybody loved him.

We know he's going to make an incredible difference to his client's life but also for us, it's the difference it makes having a dog to look after. Getting us out, walking a dog, making us go out every day.

### Jackie (fundraiser)

BB As a community fundraiser you do all sorts of things. We do tin collections, standing outside supermarkets, we do quite a lot of fairs, you're mixing with lots of people, it's superb.

And seeing a client with a dog is fabulous, it just puts everything in perspective. And you think, yes, that's why we're stood outside Tesco in the cold. It's to make this happen. It's a community that you're part of. It's like a family.



## Our partners and supporters

A special mention for their generous support throughout the year must go to:

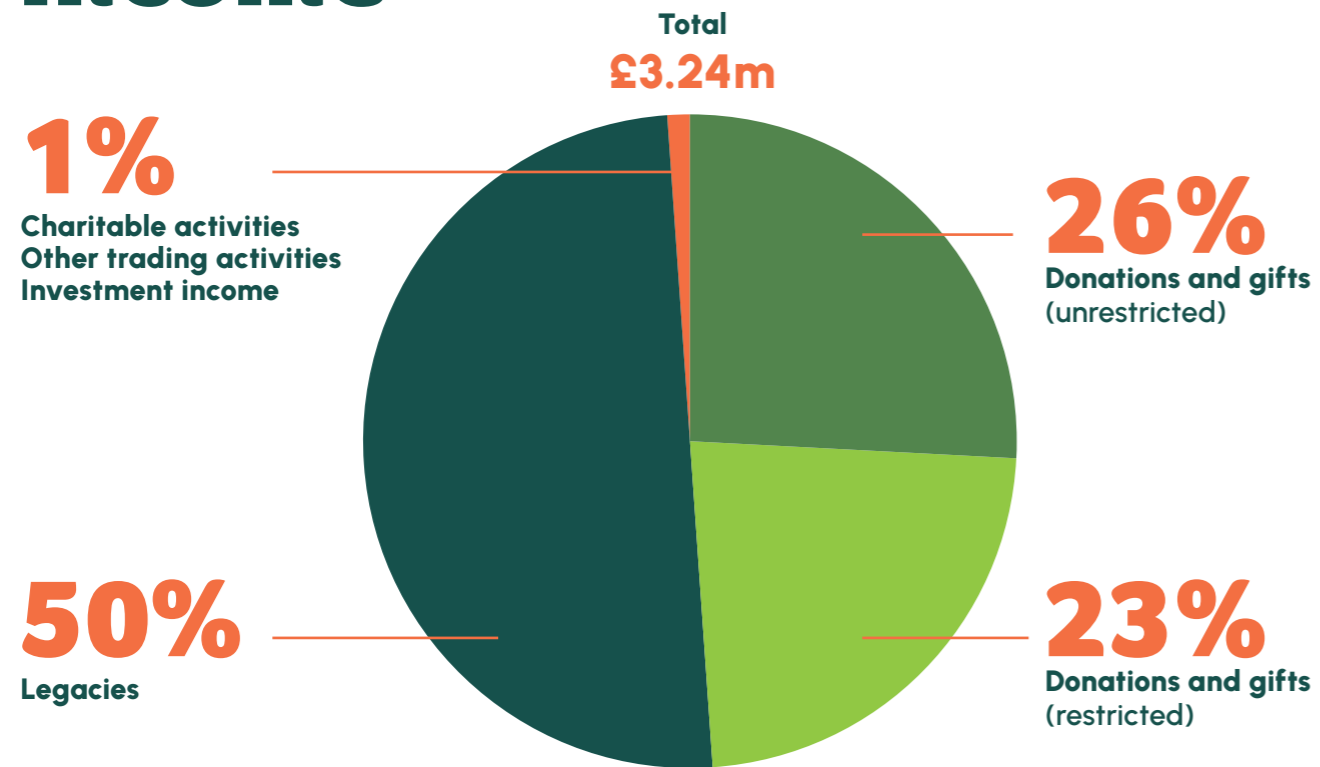
- MORE THAN Insurance
- Pets at Home Foundation
- No Fear Bridge
- Ceva Animal Health Ltd
- AJN Steelstock
- Škoda
- Oasis Fashion
- The Harry and Mary Foundation
- Wheelwrights' Charity



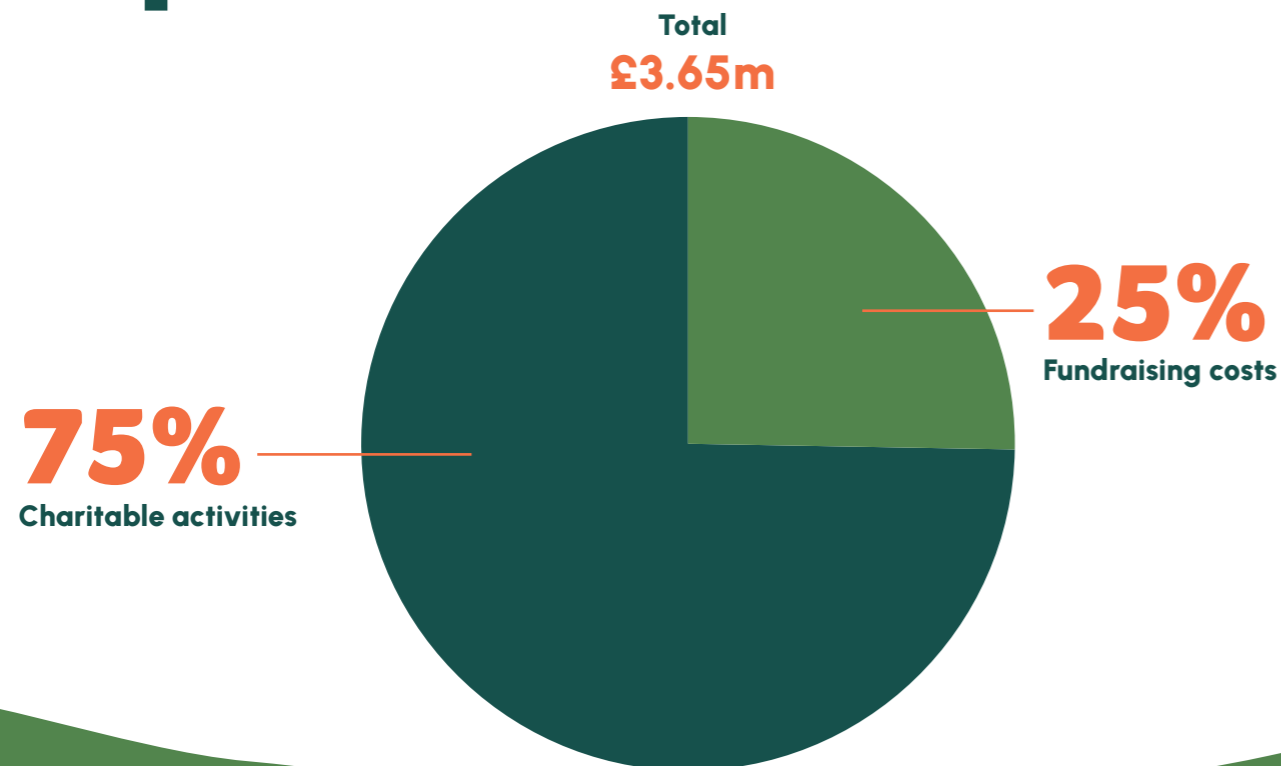
*For making life possible*



# Income



# Expenditure

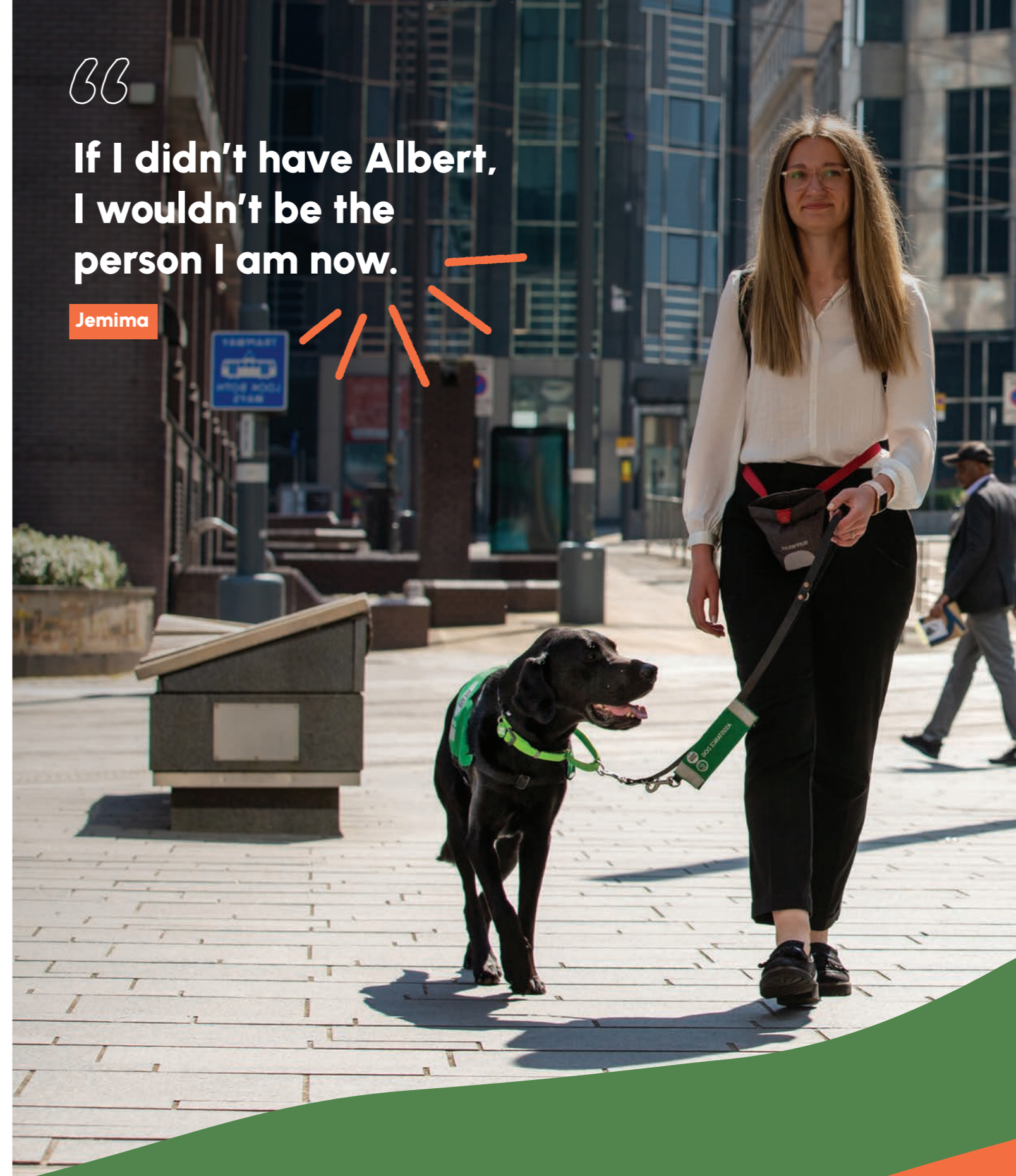


These figures are based on our unapproved 2022 annual report and financial statements at time of print. Our approved figures can be found in full from June 2023 at [www.dogsforgood.org/about-us/annual-report](http://www.dogsforgood.org/about-us/annual-report)

“

If I didn't have Albert,  
I wouldn't be the  
person I am now.

Jemima







*#MakeLifePossible*



@DogsForGoodUK



@dogsforgood\_uk



@dogsforgooduk



linkedin/dogsforgood

*For making life possible*

**DOGS  
FOR  
GOOD**

The Frances Hay Centre,  
Blacklocks Hill, Banbury.  
Oxon OX17 2BS

01295 252600  
info@dogsforgood.org  
dogsforgood.org

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