

# 75<sup>th</sup> The Mulberry Bush

Transforming Troubled Lives Together



**YEARS**  
*of*  
**GROWTH**



**Charity Impact Report 2022/23**

Hear some wonderful stories from some of our ex-pupils



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*“The Mulberry Bush was like my second home. It was the place I felt safe in.”*

ETHAN, EX-PUPIL

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## THE MULBERRY BUSH SERVICES

### SCHOOL

Specialist therapeutic residential care and education since 1948

### OUTREACH

Training and support for those working with vulnerable people

### RESEARCH

Researching therapeutic practice with children and families

### THIRD SPACE

Our residential conference and event centre

### CONSULTING

Working with organisations and leaders to unlock their potential

# WELCOME

## 75 YEARS OF GROWTH



Welcome to our 2022-2023 Charity Impact Report. I'm delighted to be reflecting on what we've achieved over the last 12 months, but also spanning the last 75 years.

During World War II, our founder Barbara Dockar-Drysdale would gather pupils under a mulberry bush to drink their morning milk. The image of the tree and the name stuck, and The Mulberry Bush was born. 75 years later, our organisation has strong roots, multiple branches and new shoots of growth. It also offers a protective canopy to everyone connected with it. I'm so proud of our powerful legacy, and the dynamic future which lies ahead.

Impact isn't just about statistics and financial data – it's about small wins, shifts in outlook, flashes of understanding and everyday moments of joy. These incremental changes may not be obvious at first but, over time, they add up to significant steps forward, and tangible improvements to the lives of young people and their families.

I want to share some of these stories – many of them expressed in our pupils' and family members' own words – over the following 20 pages.

The Mulberry Bush has a core culture of learning, reflecting, adapting and growing stronger at its heart. As we celebrate our 75th anniversary, it's inevitable that we think about, and share with our supporters what's changed, progressed and improved. But the key to our impact is also about what stays the same. I'm proud to say that our ethos of care, reflection and collaboration is just as strong now as it was in 1948.

**John Turberville,**  
Chief Executive



### WE HAVE BEEN THERE THROUGHOUT 75 YEARS OF CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

**1948**

The Children Act 1948 was passed. This introduced the concept of local authority responsibility for the welfare of children and established the role of social workers in safeguarding their well-being.

**1989**

The Children Act 1989 was established – a landmark legislation that laid the foundation for modern children's social care in the UK.

**2004**

In 2004 the 'Every Child Matters' initiative was launched.

**2014**

The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced reforms to the child protection system.

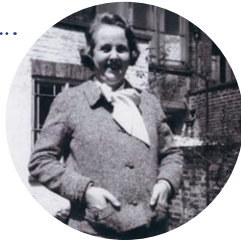
**2017**

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 brought changes to children's social care, including provisions to improve the experiences and outcomes of children in care.

## THE MULBERRY BUSH SINCE 1948

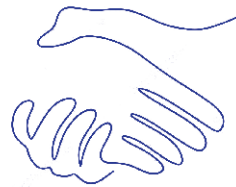
1948

School was founded by Barbara Dockar-Drysdale, her family initially sharing their home with the children who had been referred.



2022

The Mulberry Bush Consulting was established.



2018

The Burrow, our purpose built therapeutic children's home, was built providing step-down care.



1969-1992

New quadrangle building was built, dormitories and group rooms, 36 children in one large group.



2017-2018

The Mulberry Bush Research was established. PETT Archive & study centre was transferred to The Mulberry Bush to become Third Space.



1992-1997

Challenging times financially. The school had 36 children and 36 staff.



1999

Small group living established. Up to 40 children, 90 staff, 4 classes.

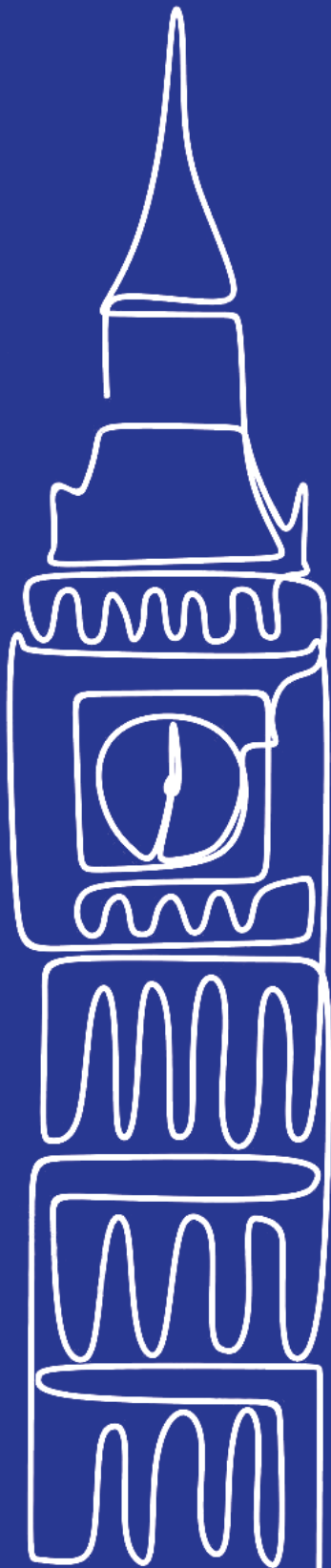


2012

The Mulberry Bush Outreach was established.



OVER THE LAST 75 YEARS, ALMOST **1,000 TRAUMATISED CHILDREN** HAVE SPENT TIME AT OUR THERAPEUTIC RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL IN STANDLAKE AND THE NEED **REMAINS URGENT.**



## THE NATIONAL PICTURE

Numbers of children in care in England have continued to increase, with 33,000 children taken into care last year (source: Department for Education).

The total number of looked after children in England stood at **83,840** at the end of March 2023, or about one child in every 140. This is forecast to rise to **100,000** in the next few years (source: Department for Education).

**20.3%** of 8 to 16-year-olds had a probable mental disorder in 2023 (source: NHS).

**1 in 20** children have experienced sexual abuse.

More than **1 in 4** children aged 8 to 16 years (26.8%) with a probable mental disorder had a parent who could not afford for their child to take part in activities outside school or college, compared with **1 in 10** (10.3%) of those unlikely to have a mental disorder (source: NHS).

**What that means for the children at The Mulberry Bush ►**

# OUR CHILDREN



**68%**  
have an attachment disorder diagnosis



**68%**  
of our children have experienced neglect



**35%**  
have experienced physical abuse



**21%**  
have experienced sexual abuse



**27%**  
have experienced sleep difficulties



**46%**  
of birth parents have a history of substance abuse



**67%**  
of our children, on average have ACE\* scores of 7 or more



**52%**  
have witnessed a significant incident\*\*

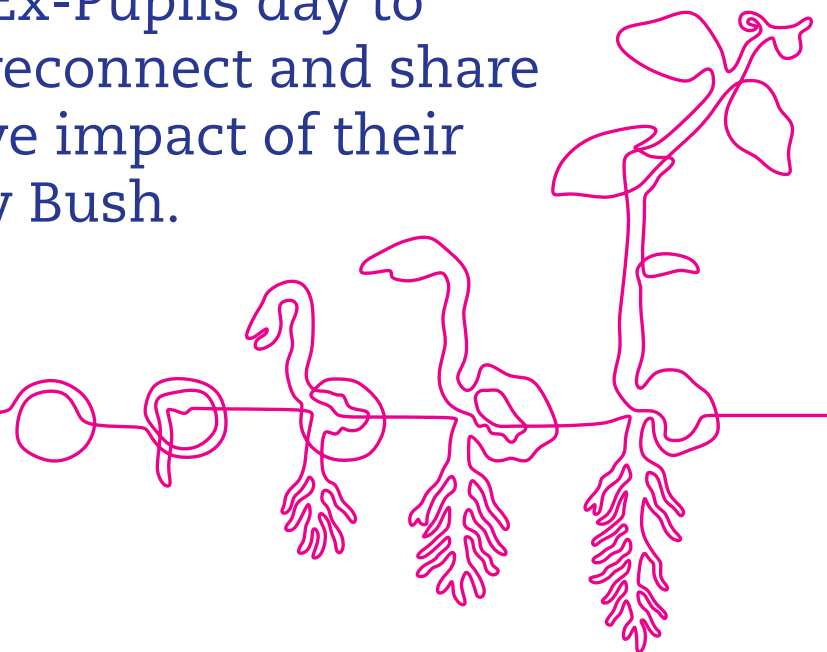


\* Adverse Childhood Experience \*\*Violence or death of another

# OUR ROOTS

At The Mulberry Bush, we think of our roots as our absolute foundation; our first principle. Our primary purpose has always been to support emotionally traumatised children to heal, build relationships and to grow in a safe, structured, highly therapeutic environment.

Our impact in this area in 2022/2023 has been remarkable. Many of the children in our school have achieved significant emotional, social and academic outcomes, despite negative prior educational experiences and various personal challenges. Parents, carers and families have testified to the positive impact they've seen in their children. Many of our former students have remained in contact. Some visited in July 2023 for our annual Ex-Pupils day to recreate memories, reconnect and share the long term positive impact of their time at The Mulberry Bush.





# SCHOOL REPORT

## 2022/23

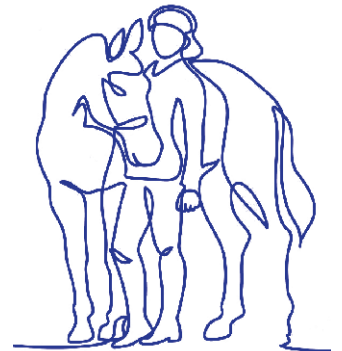


The majority of children have made **good** academic progress



# 100%

of children say they enjoy the activities organised by the school, such as camping and outward bound



# 60%

of children at the end of their assessment period have made 'outstanding' social & emotional progress

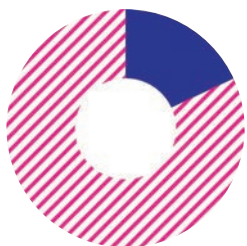
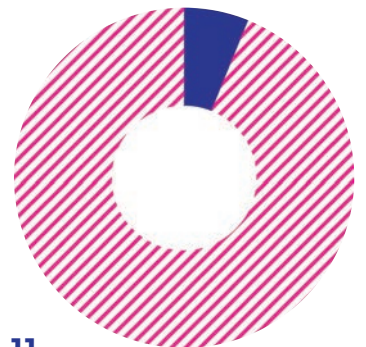
Many children engage in **leisure activities** and hobbies such as Brownies or horse-riding and are encouraged to join in extra-curricular activities



**100%** of children have **96%+** attendance

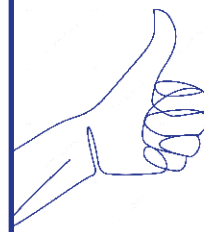
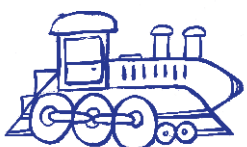
# 94%

of children say adults at the school let them know when they're doing well



# 82%

of children say they are more able to play since coming to The Mulberry Bush



Over **65%** of parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about their experience with The Mulberry Bush

# KEY HIGHLIGHTS

## FIRM ROOTS, STRONG BRANCHES & NEW SHOOTS

Our growth has seen the development of several branches of support – some now very well established, such as our Outreach and Research teams. Others are in the earlier stages such as Third Space and Consulting.

These branches are critical to the continued success of The Mulberry Bush, securing and improving our core work with emotionally traumatised young people, and allowing us to reach as many children as possible – both directly and indirectly.

## EXPANDING OUR REACH AT HOME WITH OUR OUTREACH TEAM

In 2023 we worked with **180+ organisations**, ranging from schools, charities, local authorities and others.

The Mulberry Bush has developed and delivered the country's very first **School Improvement Partner Training** course designed and run at The Mulberry Bush Third Space (supported by NASS).\*

We completed our first year of the Foundation Degree with **Lighthouse Treehouse** children's home in Sutton (London).



# 17

learners from Dorset Council completed the inaugural **Level 4 Certificate in Therapeutic Child Care**

# AND OUTCOMES

In Bristol, we helped avoid a potentially serious outcome by supporting a child (not a Mulberry Bush pupil) with highly complex needs, coordinating a multi-agency approach with **Bristol City Council**.

Five primary schools in the Coventry area have now embedded reflective practice into whole school training and are using The Mulberry Bush's **Emotional and Social Curriculum** with great success.

**The Justice Ministry** has opened the UK's first secure school setting in Rochester, Kent. We successfully bid to deliver our Level 4 Therapeutic Childcare training to over 200 carers at the facility. This will be a three year contract.

\*National Association of Special Schools

## A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING THROUGH LONG TERM RESEARCH

One of our studies – **Emotional Security in The Classroom** which is taking place at The Mulberry Bush School itself – is in its second year of school data analysis. This major and complex paper focuses on improvements to the learning environment, and promises to positively impact more children's lives by helping us reach a wider audience post-publication.

## EXPANDING OUR REACH OVERSEAS

We've inspired a new residential school in Chiemsee – the first of its kind in Germany. The **Ein Platz für Kinder** (EPFK) school opened in 2023, and was designed to incorporate many integrated education and living principles taken from The Mulberry Bush model.



We've taken the Emotional and Social Curriculum to the Caribbean, where it is positively impacting children in the **Cayman Islands**.

We've ensured better support for emotionally traumatised children in Ukraine through our Outreach training. We've supported 45 childcare professionals via the **Ukrainian Education Platform**. We've learned a lot about our own training too, and how to work with groups in other languages.



OUR PLANNED ENVIRONMENT  
THERAPY ARCHIVE

## THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF THE MULBERRY BUSH

In 2023 alone, the Archives team hosted 69 visits and retrieved over 1,000 archival items. In addition, we appointed a Mulberry Bush archivist working exclusively on our own rich sources of material.



The Archive team's role in answering the enquiries of ex-pupils continues to be absolutely vital.

Safety of our stored materials is paramount. Therefore, digitisation, and installation of fire retardant systems – funded by generous supporters – helps preserve our legacy.



OUR THIRD SPACE

### A NEW HEAD BRINGS NEW ENERGY

Our facility in Toddington, Gloucestershire, is a huge asset. It's flexibility and beautiful surroundings make it a brilliant place to host courses for many including Therapeutic Care Managers and School Leadership Teams.

The appointment of a new manager, Mike Staines (pictured), has heralded a new chapter in the development of this vital space.

### CONSULTING

## BEARING FRUIT

Highlights included being contracted by the Richmond Foundation in Malta with EU Funds to host knowledge sharing visits with organisations servicing children and young people who need Mental Health Support.

The Mulberry Bush facilitated a Temporary Community of Practice between Malta and the UK.

*“Excellent methodology of sharing experiences of best practice.”*

Source: A Maltese participant from a children's home

### AND TALKING OF ROOTS...

TC Elders now host a regular online forum and we are continuing to develop the International Centre and have exciting plans.



I have a sense of  
achievement: I can do it!  
We all can.

### CHILDCARE WORKER\*

\*From The Harbour Children's Home in Weymouth, part of our Level 4 Certificate in Therapeutic Childcare course pilot.

### NIKKI ARNOLD WINS THE RAHUL MOODGAL PRIZE

Nikki Arnold, a Teaching Assistant in a school in Hampshire, has been awarded the Rahul Moodgal Prize for Therapeutic Childcare 2023. Nikki was given the prize for her Action Research Project on the *Impact of additional aerobic physical activity for regulation and challenging behaviours in a primary school setting* which will be published soon.

Now in its 9th year, the prize is sponsored by Rahul Moodgal: a patron and generous supporter of the Mulberry Bush. A prize of £251 is awarded to a student of our Foundation Degree in Therapeutic Work with Children and Young People. It recognises a contribution to the therapeutic care and education sector and will be shared with other settings.



### UWE BRISTOL

## 15 YEARS OF IMPACT WITH OUR AWARD-WINNING FOUNDATION DEGREE

July 2023 saw 9 Foundation Degree students graduate from UWE Bristol, marking 15 years since the launch of this ground-breaking course. Over 207 students have been awarded the qualification since it was introduced in 2008.

Our award-winning Foundation Degree in Therapeutic Work with Children and Young People is the only course of its type in the country. Run by The Mulberry Bush and validated by UWE Bristol, it is a unique opportunity for childcare professionals to build knowledge and confidence working with children who are vulnerable or have experienced early-life trauma.

This two-year foundation degree covers all the theories underpinning trauma-informed practice. Course content ranges from theories and children's development to the deeper internal workings of children's (and adults') brain processes.

Graduates have gone on to work as Therapeutic Foster Care Managers, Therapeutic Support Managers and Therapeutic Outreach Practitioners.



## OUR IMPACT ON PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Parents have their say on how The Mulberry Bush has impacted their lives:

*“Thank you to MBS for your support and guidance to date – long may it reign!”*

*“The school has helped our understanding at home and how to support also.”*

Source: Parents and Carers Survey Summer 2023

### OUR IMPACT ON OUR CHILDREN AT THE SCHOOL

We want the places our pupils live and learn to be more pleasant and positive places to meet. For example, we’ve sound-proofed the sports hall to cut distracting noise by 50%, and we’ve significantly modernised the children’s living rooms and kitchens.

**“We love our kitchen!”**

A MULBERRY BUSH PUPIL





# FUN, POSITIVE EXPERIENCES FOR OUR CHILDREN

During the summer, the whole school came together for an Aqua Day at Hardwick Park, creating happy memories paddleboarding, kayaking, swimming and eating ice cream.

## OUR IMPACT GOES BEYOND THE SCHOOL

We've also continued to support pupils after they leave The Mulberry Bush. This 'canopy of care' exists through our Facebook groups, enduring relationships between staff and former pupils and our Ex-Pupils' Day.



*It's beautiful to come back and reconnect... I needed it.*

**RICKY, EX-PUPIL**



## LONDON

# THE MULBERRY BUSH AT THE HOUSE OF LORDS

In July 2023, The Mulberry Bush joined the Institute for the Recovery from Childhood Trauma (IRCT) for their Best Practice Forum at the House of Lords hosted by Baroness Butler-Sloss. The event brought together leaders from three therapeutic childcare university courses, Research and The Standards and Accreditation Network as well as practitioners from across the sector.

The conversations focussed on the complexity of therapeutic childcare, the need for policymakers to recognise the skills required, and training the workforce. Attendees placed a strong focus on how to increase the professional recognition of the important work of the sector and its staff teams.

**A worthwhile and inspiring event.**





## OUR YEAR IN PICTURES...



Fundraising carol service at St Barnabas, Oxford



The Oxford Philharmonic music workshop



Our school Open Day, July 2023



Colleagues attending a conference



Outward Bound Day



Our annual research 'SPARK'\* presentation day

\*Speaking About Research & Knowledge Day

HEADQUARTERS

# CHRIS PUGH APPOINTED AS NEW CHAIR OF TRUSTEES



With a background in finance, Chris brought invaluable commercial insights when he joined the Board a number of years ago. Combined with his extensive network of connections, his unique perspective has helped support and shape the charity's recent direction of travel.

Chris' first meeting with a Mulberry Bush student was, in his own words, "*emotionally overwhelming*", and his faith in our organisation and values was established in that moment. We are delighted to congratulate Chris on his new appointment as Chair and look forward to continuing our collaboration.

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**"I go for the hard things...and The Mulberry Bush is hard, make no mistake."**

**CHRIS PUGH**

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## STANDLAKE

# 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY LUNCH

As part of our 75th anniversary commemorations, it was wonderful to welcome guests to our summer lunch, on Saturday 1st July 2023, where we celebrated the incredible work of everyone in The Mulberry Bush.

We were delighted to be joined by Trustees, supporters, members of the wider charity and three of our past pupils. We were also thrilled to welcome Richard and Sarah Cooper, the grandchildren of our founder Barbara Dockar-Drysdale.

The sports hall was transformed into a dining area and each service was able to showcase the positive impact of their work. Headteacher Jess and School Director Lee showed guests around the houses and teaching areas and laid out our many exciting plans for the future, as well as showing guests the impact of their support.



## HAM COURT, BAMPTON

## FOOL'S DELIGHT



The weather gods might not have been on our side, but it did nothing to dampen the spirits of the 90 guests who attended our 'Fool's Delight Circus – The Green'.

Set in the beautiful grounds of Ham Court, Bampton, guests were treated to the most spectacular circus show, involving jugglers, trapeze artists and hair hangers, as well as a stunning 3 course meal and canapés.

During the evening there were various fundraising activities, including a raffle (with a meal for two and overnight stay at Rick Stein's in Padstow up for grabs!) and a game of Heads and Tails.

**IN TOTAL, WE RAISED  
JUST UNDER £2,500  
– A WONDERFUL OUTCOME.**

SOMERVILLE COLLEGE, OXFORD

## WOMEN OF THE YEAR LUNCH RAISES OVER £44,000

We were delighted to mark 20 years of our Women of the Year lunch: an event which celebrates the achievements of remarkable women while raising funds to support The Mulberry Bush.

**THANKS TO A PRIVATE DONATION,  
ALL COSTS WERE COVERED AND  
EVERY PENNY WENT TO THE  
HOUSE REFURBISHMENT APPEAL.**

# SECURING THE NEXT 75 YEARS

The future of The Mulberry Bush relies heavily on diversifying our funding and the critical work carried out by our Events and Fundraising team.

In 22/23, a newly-expanded team has been hard at work ensuring that this is the case, building relationships and raising the profile of the charity while raising much-needed funds for our work.

Our school house refurbishment, for example, has been supported significantly by events and appeals such as the Women of the Year Lunch and Big Give Christmas Challenge. In our 75th year, we've also seen our supporters

raise funds by organising their own 'Hands On for The Mulberry Bush' events, such as the launch event at Oxford Downs Cricket Club at Standlake. Thanks to these events and others, we are delighted to have reached almost 75% of our refurbishment fundraising goal of £1 million. However, there is still some way to go.

We continue to forge links with corporations such as Sophos, as well as independent schools in the local area. As in so many aspects of our work, we know that relationships will be key to our continuing success.



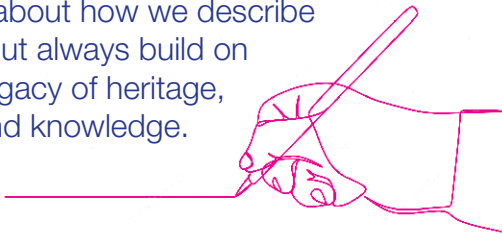
Ricky, Rich Rollinson, Ray Burrows and John Turberville at our 2023 Ex Pupils' Day

## Looking Forward

THE YEAR AHEAD WILL BE ABOUT EMBEDDING LEARNING & RESEARCH AT THE CENTRE OF THE MULBERRY BUSH ORGANISATION, BUILDING A STRONG CORE FOR FUTURE GROWTH, INVESTING IN SERVICES THAT SUPPORT OUR WORK SUCH AS MARKETING, FINANCE AND HR.

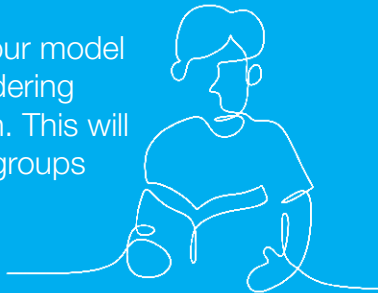
### LEGACY FOUNDATIONS

We will continue to think differently about how we describe our work but always build on a strong legacy of heritage, learning and knowledge.



### SCHOOL

We will be reviewing our model of practice and considering more flexible provision. This will include smaller living groups (6 to a house).



### OUTREACH

We are ambitious to grow our breadth of courses and work across new sectors.

For example extending into secure youth settings and even more schools and organisations working with children and young people.

We will be continuing to work with Dorset.

### RESEARCH

Funding has been allocated for a pilot study of longitudinal research into ex-pupils, the results of which will provide a vital insight into what happens after pupils leave us.



### THERAPEUTIC CARE JOURNAL

The TCJ website is now showing huge potential and will undergo a programme of development over the next year.



### THIRD SPACE AND ARCHIVES

We are busier than ever with bookings, including residential reflective courses. Our aim is for further growth. Also at Third Space, our new archivist will continue work on our own archives – 75 years of material and counting!



### CONSULTING

Working with an inspiring leadership team in Latvia to help them develop the first Residential Therapeutic School for traumatised Children in the country. We will also be growing our Executive Leadership Coaching service.



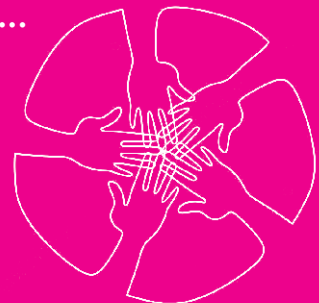
### AND MORE FUTURE PLANS...

Learning and research projects and growth of our services, which, in time, could include Secondary provision for older children.



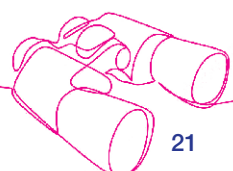
### SHARING & INVOLVING...

Vital to this is that we share more information across the charity through newsletters and strategic review days aimed at including all staff members so that we are all united in purpose.

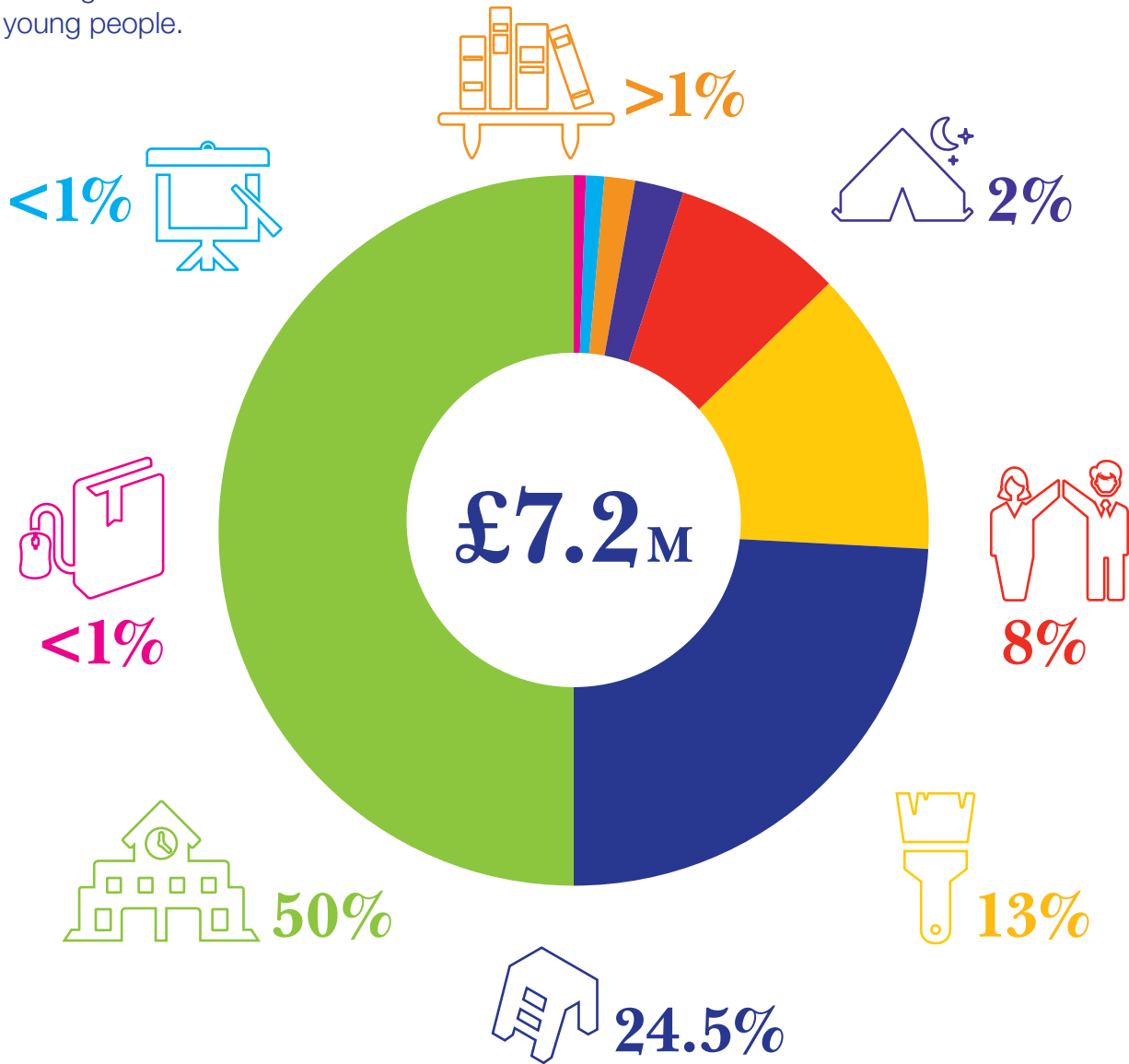


### IN CONCLUSION...

All of these plans are built around supporting our work with children, young people and their families and we remain determined to meet the challenges of delivering that need, wherever it is.



In the last financial year, The Mulberry Bush invested the following funds in undertaking its vital work with children and young people.



Residential schooling  
**£3,589,264**



Third Space  
**£140,104**



Step-down provision  
**£1,762,782**



Research  
**£113,296**



Investment in service development and sites  
**£927,180**



Staff training  
**£62,265**



Support for other schools, children's homes & organisations  
**£565,013**



Archives  
**£22,460**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
SUPPORT! **TOGETHER**  
**WE WILL TRANSFORM**  
**TROUBLED LIVES**



Please visit our website to see the different ways you can support us. Alternatively please get in touch if you would like to know more.





Registered with



FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR

## Contact

### The Mulberry Bush School

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### The Mulberry Bush Learning & Research Centre

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Transforming Troubled Lives Together



[mulberrybush.org.uk](http://mulberrybush.org.uk)

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