

## PRESS RELEASE

### BBC CHILDREN IN NEED LAUNCHES ITS 2023 SPOTACULAR FUNDRAISING APPEAL WITH SUPPORT FROM JILL SCOTT MBE, LAURA WHITMORE, JOE WICKS MBE, BIG ZUU AND MANY MORE

- *BBC Children in Need launch their 2023 Appeal as they continue to face rising demand. In the last year alone, the charity received eight times the number of applications that they could afford to fund*
- *To help make a difference, Jermaine Jenas, Alex Jones and Roman Kemp are calling on the public to Challenge Yourself and be SPOTacular with The One Show and Morning Live*
- *Joe Wicks MBE is calling on the nation to Challenge Yourself and be SPOTacular by taking on the Pudsey Bearpee challenge, uniting to do 100 million Bearpees together to help vital funds. Joe will officially launch the challenge on The One Show this evening before challenging Morning Live on Tuesday 19 September*
- *BBC Radio 2 will once again be supporting BBC Children in Need and will be announcing a plethora of exciting plans in the coming weeks*
- *To support the launch, [a host of celebrities](#) including Dame Kelly Holmes, Christine McGuinness, Oti Mabuse and Rachel Stevens have shared their personal memories of the positive relationship that inspired them and gave them hope in their own childhoods*
- *A Censuswide poll on behalf of BBC Children in Need has shed light on how positive children and young people feel about their futures to highlight how vital money raised this year will be in enabling the charity to invest in more positive relationships that will help strengthen children's wellbeing*
- *Harry Pinero voices the charity's [2023 SPOTacular film](#) to showcase of the power of fundraising, whilst highlighting the magnitude of the issues faced by children and young people across the UK*
- *Join BBC Children in Need for The Great SPOTacular Appeal Show on Friday 17 November at 7pm on BBC One and iPlayer*

**Monday 18 September 2023** - A host of stars including Dame Jessica Ennis-Hill, Dame Kelly Holmes, Dr Alex George, Jermaine Jenas, Alex Jones, Roman Kemp, Oti Mabuse, Christine McGuinness, Harry Pinero, Katie Piper, Jill Scott MBE, Rachel Stevens, Laura Whitmore, Joe Wicks MBE, Big Zuu and others have come together to launch BBC Children in Need's 2023 fundraising Appeal. The celebrities have joined forces to inspire the nation to show their support for children and young people facing disadvantage across the UK, and demonstrate that together we can make a difference to young lives.

The last few years have seen an unprecedented rise in children with mental health problems. Covid, then the cost-of-living crisis have increased feelings of anxiety, depression, and hopelessness. In the last 3 years, the likelihood of young people having a mental health issue has increased by 50% (2021)<sup>1</sup>, and 75% of children and young people who experience a mental health issue aren't getting the help they need<sup>2</sup>.

Thanks to the ongoing support of the British public, BBC Children in Need are able to fund thousands of project workers across the UK who provide the positive relationships needed to help children navigate through the challenges they face and provide the everyday magic that every child deserves. In light of rising need and to inspire the nation to show their support, celebrities have come together to powerfully share their personal stories of childhood to shine a light on the importance of the positive relationships provided by project workers in grass roots organisations as they work to help children and young people across the UK to thrive and be the best they can be.

**Christine McGuinness** said: "I know how important it is to have someone in your life that believes in you and supports you to be the best you can be. During my school years I struggled to make

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<sup>1</sup> [Good Childhood Report](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Mental Health Foundation](#)

friends, socialise and fit in with the other children in my class, it was at home where I felt most comfortable and where I could really be myself. My mum made me feel like she loved me no matter what, she made home life so positive and gave me the structure and routine which made me feel secure. Home and my mum are my positive childhood connection, and I'm so thankful. This year, please support BBC Children in Need's 2023 Appeal and give young people the opportunity to thrive in a secure and positive environment where they can be supported to develop as individuals."

[Dame Kelly Holmes](#) commented: "The key figure in my childhood who I felt really believed in me, was my PE teacher Debbie Page. She recognised my talent and helped me to believe I could do whatever I wanted, if I put in the hard work and never gave up on my goals. I remembered all her advice and that was instrumental in me achieving my dream of being an Olympic champion. Every child deserves the chance to thrive and be the best they can be, and so I am calling on the UK public to get fundraising for BBC Children in Need and help more children and young people to achieve their dreams."

[Laura Whitmore](#) said: "I grew up in a single parent household and the person who believed in me and made me feel happy and positive during my childhood was my mum. My mum is an incredible woman and has worked so hard to allow me to do all the mad things I have wanted to do. She's always been there to support me and is still supporting me now through my adult life. Every child deserves a positive relationship in their life that champions them and gives them the support they need to be the best they can be, so I hope everyone up and down the UK gets behind this year's BBC Children in Need Appeal to help make a difference when it is needed most."

To mark today's launch, the charity also shared the results<sup>3</sup> of a **Censuswide**<sup>4</sup> poll on behalf of BBC Children in Need which has shed light on how positive children and young people feel about their futures and explores issues relating to children's mental health. In a stark comparison, the poll highlighted that whilst 1 in 5 parents surveyed (20%) believe their child's overall happiness and wellbeing has worsened in the last year and almost a quarter of children surveyed (24%) say they regularly feel worried about their future<sup>5</sup>, the top most important thing for children's futures, was to be happy, with 69% of children surveyed saying it was important to them.

The UK wide survey commissioned by BBC Children in Need of 2,501 parents<sup>6</sup> and 2,501 children and young people<sup>7</sup> aged 11-18, also reveals that:

- Almost a third of young people surveyed (30%) regularly feel anxious or worried<sup>3</sup>
- One in seven children surveyed (14%) regularly feel sad<sup>3</sup>
- One in seven children surveyed (14%) regularly feel lonely<sup>3</sup>
- Just over one in eight children surveyed (13%) regularly feel lost<sup>3</sup>
- Just over two thirds of parents surveyed (67%) believe children from more affluent households are more likely to achieve their goals in life

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<sup>3</sup> [https://charts.censuswide.com/CW12108MP/CW12108MPv2\\_VIbox.html](https://charts.censuswide.com/CW12108MP/CW12108MPv2_VIbox.html)

<sup>4</sup> <https://censuswide.com/>

<sup>5</sup> Combination of always and often

<sup>6</sup> Total sample size was 2,501 parents who have children aged 11-18. Fieldwork was undertaken between 25.08.23 - 01.09.23. The survey was carried out online. Censuswide abide by and employ members of the Market Research Society which is based on the ESOMAR principles and are members of The British Polling Council.

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Commenting on the launch, **BBC Children in Need's Chief Executive, Simon Antrobus** said: "Like every child across the UK, the children and young people we support want to thrive and be the best they can be, but they are constantly held back by the deep impact of poverty, mental health and family challenges – and the need is only rising. Through my own experience as a young person and here at BBC Children in Need, I know that the power of positive relationships with trusted adults and project workers can help children navigate these challenges successfully. Thanks to the ongoing support of the British public, BBC Children in Need are able to fund thousands of project workers across the UK but, we urgently need the public's support once again so that we can continue to be there for the children and young people who need us most.

"I'm confident that the great British Public will once again get behind our Appeal and help us make a difference when it is needed most. Together, we can show children and young people that we believe in them and we are there for them."

This year, BBC Children in Need have teamed up with **The One Show** and **Morning Live** to launch something extra special. The One Show and Morning Live are asking supporters up and down the UK to *Challenge Yourself and be SPOTacular* for BBC Children in Need. Championed by Jermaine Jenas, Alex Jones and Roman Kemp, further details on what audiences can expect will be shared on air tonight, 7pm BBC One, and in the coming weeks.

**Alex Jones** said: "We're really excited to be helping Children in Need kick start this year's appeal by asking people to '*Challenge Yourself*'. Whether it's climbing a mountain or learning your favourite dance routine anyone can get involved by taking on a challenge big or small. With the help of a very special '*One Show Challenge Squad*' we hope to inspire people and raise as much money as we can for this incredible cause."

The charity says there are plenty of ways for the Great British public to Challenge Yourself and be SPOTacular for BBC Children in Need, including through a brand new fundraiser for 2023 - Pudsey Bearpees - led by the charity's ambassador, Joe Wicks MBE. Joe will be challenging the nation to undertake 1,000 Bearpees over the course of a month in the run up to the charity's 2023 Appeal. Joe will kick start the challenge on The One Show sofa this evening!

**Joe Wicks MBE** commented: "Thanks to the amazing generosity of the UK public, BBC Children in Need are able to fund thousands of project workers across the UK who provide the positive relationships needed to help children navigate through the challenges they face and provide the everyday magic that every child deserves and that's why I am so proud to be supporting this year's campaign. I really hope the nation get behind the Pudsey Bearpees to help us make a difference when it is needed most... 1000 Bearpees does sound like a lot but I promise you can do it, whether you take on the seated Bearpees or the ultra-hard ones, together we can raise vital funds to continue to be there for the children and young people across the UK that need us most."

The SPOTacular campaign also includes a bespoke range of merchandise including official t-shirts designed by bestselling children's author and illustrator of the Tom Gates series, Liz Pichon, created by George at ASDA. The t-shirts are available in sizes for children and adults and can be a colourful addition to fundraising efforts across the nation.

Money raised over BBC Children in Need's 2023 Appeal will enable the charity to invest in more positive relationships that will help strengthen children's wellbeing and help them navigate the challenges in their lives.

To find out more, please go to [bbcchildreninneed.co.uk](http://bbcchildreninneed.co.uk)

~ENDS~

For further information, please contact: [henni.cardy@bbc.co.uk](mailto:henni.cardy@bbc.co.uk)

- SPOTacular talent images can be found [here](#)
- Positive Relationship videos featuring the celebrities launching BBC Children in Need's 2023 Appeal can be found [here](#)
  - Behind the scenes video can be found [here](#)
- Harry Pinero's SPOTacular voiceover and animation can be found [here](#)

### Notes to Editors

Total sample size was 2,501 parents who have children aged 11-18, and 2,501 children aged 11-18. Fieldwork was undertaken online between 25.08.23 - 01.09.23. The survey was carried out online. Censuswide abide by and employ members of the Market Research Society which is based on the ESOMAR principles and are members of The British Polling Council.

### Full list of celebrities launching BBC Children in Need's 2023 Appeal:

Saffron Barker, Dame Jessica Ennis-Hill, Formz, Dame Kelly Holmes, Dr Alex George, Ravneet Gill, Jermaine Jenas, Alex Jones, Roman Kemp, Oti Mabuse, Christine McGuinness, Ore Oduba, Louise Pentland, Harry Pinero, Katie Piper, Richard Sales, Jill Scott, Dr Ranj Singh, Dr Julie Smith, Rachel Stevens, John Waite, Laura Whitmore, Joe Wicks MBE, Owain Wyn Evans and Big Zuu.

### Additional quotes:

**[Dame Jessica Ennis-Hill:](#)** "My childhood was spent growing up in Sheffield surrounded by my family and my grandad was a positive influence in my early sporting journey. He really encouraged me to pursue my athletic career and he was always there in the background cheering me on. I remember him always saying come on Jess, keep pushing on, you can achieve more than you think you can, and this really encouraged me to stay positive and achieve my goals. Every child deserves someone in their life that believes in them like my grandad did, so let's all do everything we can to help raise money for BBC Children in Need's 2023 Appeal."

**[Dr Alex George:](#)** "The positive figure in my life was my mum. Every night when we went to bed she would say you can achieve anything you want in your life, as long as you put your mind to it. Looking back this gave me a lot of self-belief and a positive attitude, encouraging me to believe I could achieve whatever I wanted as long as I put my mind to it. Children and young people across the UK have had an unimaginably hard couple of years, and they need us now more than ever, so please do all you can to help even more children and young people achieve their goals and simply know that we are there for them."

**[Ore Oduba:](#)** "When I was growing up I was either on the sports field or on stage. I remember my drama teacher had such a positive impact on my life and still does today. He gave me my first role in a school production and being on stage was where I really found my voice as a young person. I'm still in contact with my drama teacher to this day and we have an amazing friendship. Thanks to him I get to do the thing that I love most as a job! Get fundraising for this year's BBC Children in Need Appeal and give children and young people the opportunity to thrive and be the best they can be."

**[Owain Wyn Evans:](#)** "My mamgu, that's grandmother in Welsh, was an amazing woman and such a positive light in my life, she had a tough upbringing, but never let her own childhood experiences reflect on mine. Mamgu always gave the best cuddles, she was the most wonderful, positive role

model in my life, and taught me that positivity is a thing you choose to do - no matter what you've been through. I'm so pleased to support this year's BBC Children in Need Appeal and I want to encourage the British public to raise funds anyway they can to give young people the vital support they need."

**Rachel Stevens:** "When I was 10-years-old I met my best friend Nikki at a local youth club and we clicked instantly; we've always been each other's biggest cheerleader and to this day we still are there for one another. Nikki is always so positive and supportive and I'm so grateful for our relationship. I'm thrilled to be supporting BBC Children in Need, they make a huge difference to the lives of children and young people across the nation and encourage and inspire them to achieve their goals."

**Dr Ranj:** "I think developing positive relationships when you're young is key to every child's growth as individuals and in supporting their mental health and wellbeing. The person in my childhood that believed in me was my school teacher, Mrs Page, she made me feel seen and heard, and as if I could accomplish anything I put my mind to. I hope the UK public all get behind this year's BBC Children in Need Appeal so that we can help even more children and young people reach their full potential."

**Dr Julie Smith:** "Someone who really inspired me during my childhood was a teacher called Mr Hayward, I remember him being so positive and enthusiastic about his job, he inspired me to want to really enjoy whatever I did when I grew up and to find something that I loved and had a passion for. It's so important for children and young people to have someone to look up to – BBC Children in Need supports hundreds of project workers across the UK, who inspire, support and encourage vulnerable young people to reach their full potential. Get fundraising and help make a difference."

### **About BBC Children in Need**

BBC Children in Need believe every child and young person deserves the opportunity to thrive and be the best they can be.

BBC Children in Need's ambition is to create lasting, positive change across the UK for the children and young people who need it most. Together with the BBC and partners, BBC Children in Need aim to inspire the nation in support of their work.

BBC Children in Need's 1,800 local charities and projects work tirelessly in every corner of the UK to help children & young people overcome the additional challenges they currently face, including supporting children and young people living in poverty, providing emergency support to families in crisis, providing comfort to children feeling sad, lost and alone, helping children overcome social injustice and supporting children to feel safe and secure again.

Further information can be found at [www.bbcchildreninneed.co.uk](http://www.bbcchildreninneed.co.uk)