

WellChild



Impact Report 2024-2025

WellChild is the national UK charity making it possible for children and young people with complex medical needs to thrive at home.

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As we reflect on another year at WellChild, we are filled with a sense of pride and purpose. Every day, we see the incredible spirit and resilience of the families we support, and we are constantly inspired by the dedication of our team of staff, volunteers, and supporters who stand behind them.

Over the past 12 months, we've made significant strides across all areas of our work. From expanding the reach of our WellChild Nurse network and Better At Home training resources, to developing our Helping Hands programme to enrich the home lives of children and their families. We've continued to push boundaries and find new ways to serve the children and families who need our help.

Behind every statistic in this report is a child with a story and a family that has faced unimaginable challenges. Behind every success, there is someone like you – a supporter, donor, volunteer or partner who has chosen to stand with us. The landscape is difficult. Families are under enormous pressure, and the services they rely on are stretched precariously thin. There are more children and young people living longer with complex medical needs in the UK today and so the need is growing. Meanwhile, charity finances and resources are squeezed.

What gives us hope is the determination of the WellChild network. Together, we are giving families confidence, resilience and the recognition they deserve, whilst enriching their lives at home and in their communities. This report demonstrates how hard we are working to ensure that every child or young person with complex medical needs has the chance to thrive at home with their families.

As we look ahead, we do so with clarity, ambition and growing momentum.

Thank you for being a vital part of this journey.

Matt James
Chief Executive

Craig Hatch
Chair of Trustees



Letter from our Patron

Each year, as Patron of WellChild, I'm humbled by the extraordinary spirit of the WellChild community.

While the challenges facing families caring for children with complex medical needs have not lessened, the strength and resilience of those families, and the charity that supports them, remain steadfast. In the face of immense pressure on health and social care services, WellChild continues to provide a lifeline: advocating, innovating, and ensuring that seriously ill children can be safely cared for at home and in their communities, wherever possible.

One of the greatest privileges of my role is meeting the remarkable winners of the WellChild Awards. In 2024 it was my great pleasure to join the celebrations in person once again; a moment in my calendar that never fails to bring me so much enjoyment. Hearing the stories of these children, their families, and the professionals who support them is a reminder of what matters most: community, connection, and compassion.

I am especially proud of the continued growth of WellChild's Family Tree peer-to-peer support network. It is heartening to see more families joining this vital community, which now stretches right across the UK. In a world that often feels isolating for those caring for children with complex medical needs, the Family Tree offers friendship, advice, and a reminder that no one has to face these challenges alone.

Times remain difficult and there is still enormous strain on families and the charities that support them. Yet through it all, WellChild has not faltered in its commitment. The team has expanded its reach, diversified its programmes to help more families, and continued to provide critical information and services to those who need them most.

To everyone who has played a part in making this possible - the brilliant staff, the board of Trustees, the WellChild Nurses, the supporters, the volunteers, the families - thank you! Your part in our story changes lives every day, and I am honoured to stand beside you in this mission.

Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex
Patron, WellChild

Our Programmes

At WellChild, our vision is for every child or young person with complex medical needs to be thriving at home. To achieve this, we've shaped our work around a clear strategic framework that ensures everything we do makes a meaningful, measurable difference in the lives of the families we support. This framework is guided by four key pillars:

1

Confidence

Enabling quicker hospital discharge and more support at home by empowering parents, carers and communities with the confidence to care.

2

Resilience

Relieving stress by supporting, connecting and helping families to navigate their journey and get the support they need quicker.

3

Enrichment

Creating safe and stimulating places, spaces and opportunities for children, young people and families at home and in their communities.

4

Recognition

Helping to shape a society that recognises, prioritises and celebrates our growing population of children, young people and families.

This Impact Report is structured around these four pillars, showcasing how each area of our work contributes to real, lasting change. From frontline care to shifting societal perceptions, from practical support to enriching opportunities, every page reflects our commitment to the children, young people and families at the heart of WellChild's mission.



1

Giving communities the **Confidence** to care

Breaking down the barriers that keep children in hospital unnecessarily.

It is about building the skills and coordinating the support systems that families and the communities around them need to care for their children at home.

At the heart of this work are our WellChild Nurses, a national network of specialists who provide the practical and emotional support that enable families to be at home and part of their communities.



WellChild Nurses from across the UK met 32 times throughout the year to exchange ideas, develop solutions and share best practice.

This year, with the addition of new WellChild Nurses in Staffordshire and Birmingham, we expanded our reach, delivering high-quality, hands-on training, facilitating hospital discharge and preventing more hospital readmissions than ever before.

Our **Better At Home programme** also continued to play a critical role. These dedicated training resources - including simulation rooms and equipment - help parents, carers, family members and professionals learn the clinical skills they need to safely support children thriving outside of hospital.

Our professional guidance for Complex Discharge, developed in partnership with the Pan Thames LTV Collaborative, received endorsement from the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and was accessed by more than 2,375 users. These principles are a framework to give clinicians the information and tools to ensure that there is a consistent, safe and timely approach to hospital discharge.

But confidence is about more than just getting out of hospital. Through our nurse-led outreach, training resources and work with local services, we are building more skilled, inclusive communities where families aren't just coping but thriving.

"Thank you [WellChild Nurse] Nicky for coming out to school. The workshop you have run for our class has been fantastic. We can't wait to continue our training and get [the child] back into school as soon as is safely possible."



Last year, we trained **6,722 parents, carers and professionals** - enough to fill the away end at Wembley Stadium.



We prevented **16,000 hospital readmissions** in 2024 - that's a full classroom of children kept out of hospital each day.



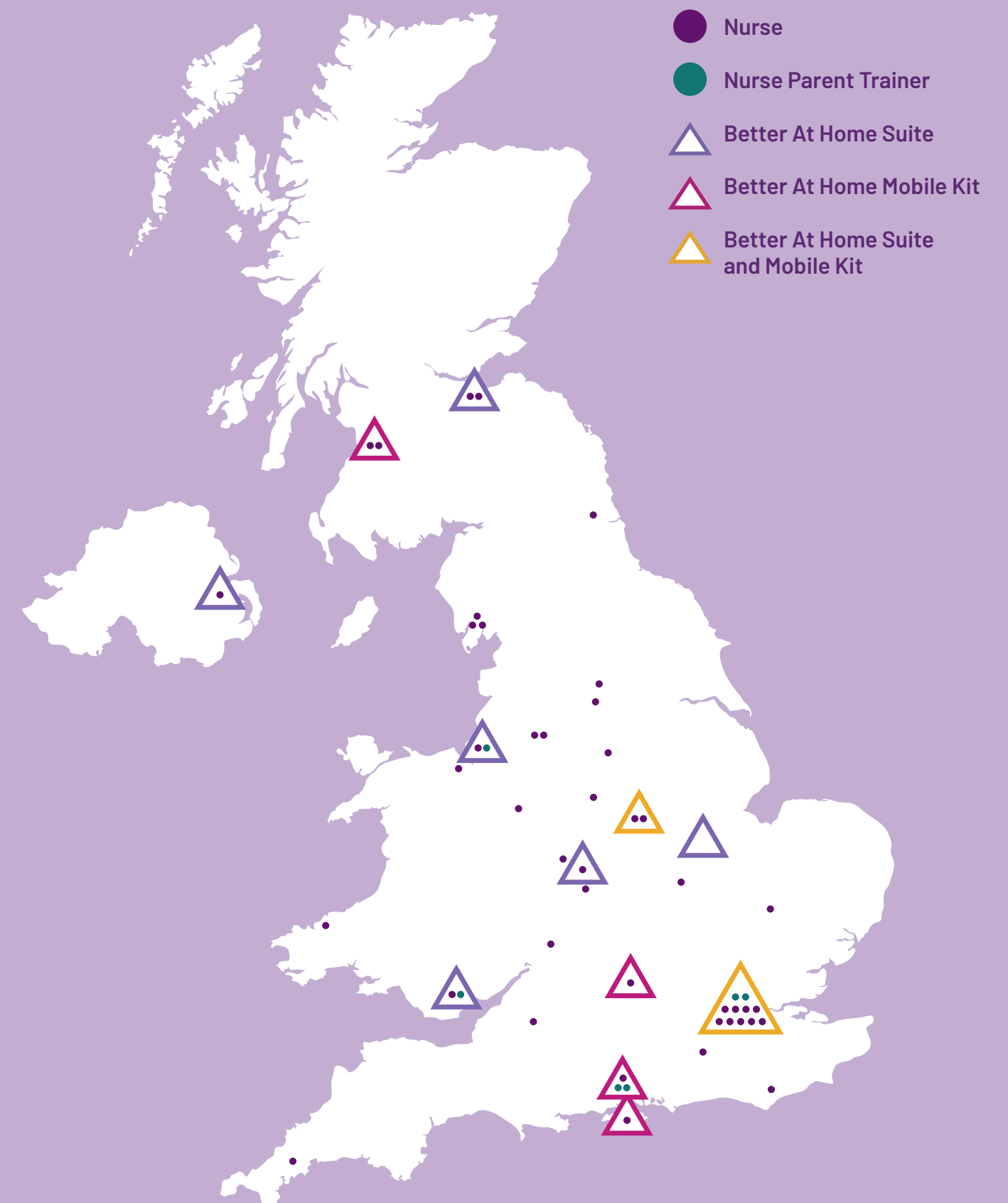
We got **573 children home** from hospital last year, that's enough to fill a jumbo jet.

Looking Ahead

We are actively looking for funds to establish new WellChild Nurse posts and Better At Home resources in underserved locations across the UK.



We have funded **53 specialist WellChild children's nurses** in communities across the UK, with **18 Better At Home Resources** in key locations.





2

Building **Resilience** and reducing social isolation

Ensuring families don't just survive, but feel supported, connected, and strong enough to thrive.

At the root of this work is the **WellChild Family Tree**, our peer-to-peer support network. This inclusive and ever-growing community offers families a safe space to share advice, experience, and encouragement, online and in person. Whether it's a shoulder to cry on, or a moment to laugh together, the Family Tree helps break down social isolation, build lasting bonds and connections with others who 'get it'.

What began as a small online support group has grown into a nationwide lifeline of information, support, connection, and belonging for thousands of families.

We've also expanded our information and guidance services, including the **Family Information Hub**, In Your Area platform, and Medicines for Children (in partnership with the Royal College of Paediatric and Child Health and the Neonatal Paediatric Pharmacist Group). These resources empower families with practical, trusted advice from condition management and care tips to navigating education, benefits, and legal entitlements.

One of the big successes has been the implementation of our **Family Welfare Service**, which has unlocked more than £625,000 in financial assistance for the families that need it most. This included more than £1,300 in crisis support such as food, fuel and baby bank vouchers. We also signposted 95 individuals to local support services and helped families to access grants for vital mobility equipment to enable their children to thrive at home.

Together, these programmes form a safety net; a community of knowledge, compassion and shared experience, so that no family ever feels like they're facing things alone.

“Support and advice from other families is invaluable. I get very anxious not knowing if I do the right thing but everyone in the group is in similar situations. It gives me the courage to speak out. No one can understand this journey, the prejudices, the changes, the barriers and emotions unless they too are travelling it.”

“Time constraints and the personal stresses I find in filling out complex medical forms, means without WellChild I likely would have missed out on support and aid that we were entitled to, and we will forever be grateful.”



3,635 families connected in our Family Tree Network, that's a human chain long enough to go from Buckingham Palace to the London Eye.



We unlocked **£625,000 in critical support** - enough to cover the average annual electricity bill for around 710 homes.



Last year, our Info Hub, In Your Area and Medicines for Children platforms drew almost **1.8 million visits**, matching one of the UK's biggest TV moments, the Wimbledon Men's Final.

Looking Ahead

Our focus will be on expanding the reach of our Family Welfare Service to families that really need our help. Can you help?





Enriching family life

Creating spaces and opportunities where families can thrive together, not just cope.

For families caring for seriously ill children at home, daily life can be relentless. From managing round the clock care routines, to fighting for access to services and support, finding the time to create happy family moments and memories is challenging. At WellChild, we believe every family deserves quality time for fun and connection.

3

It starts at home. Through our **Helping Hands** programme, we mobilised more than 350 corporate volunteers to transform outdoor spaces into safe, sensory and accessible environments. These garden makeovers give children space to play outdoors, siblings space to connect, and parents space to breathe.

With 17 of these life-changing garden transformation projects completed in homes across the UK and our biggest community project to date for the Mary Rose Academy in Portsmouth, we enriched the lives of more than 460 children and young people.

Beyond the home, we developed our portfolio of WellChild approved **family events and experiences**. Thanks to partnerships across the UK, we're creating more inclusive opportunities for families to enjoy, from relaxed days out, to online get togethers. These experiences gave more than 100 families the chance to meet others in similar situations, feel supported and make happy family memories together.

"We have had such a beautiful day thanks to WellChild. To have a safe space full of other families means the world to us. We struggle having days out but you've made it possible."



Last year, we transformed **17 gardens for 468 children** and young people. That's enough children to fill a giant Ferris wheel 20 times over.



Our Helping Hands garden transformations were powered by over **350 corporate volunteers** from 8 partner businesses.



Last year, **388 people attended our Family Events**, with a further 364 receiving free tickets to events. Combined, that's enough people to fill more than 3 football pitches with players standing shoulder to shoulder.

"Thanks to the Helping Hands project, our two disabled children are more able to access our outside area now. This has been a godsend, especially during the summer break. Their disabilities limit our chances to visit certain places, and the transformed garden means they still have the opportunity to enjoy the sunshine."

"Wow. Watching James be wheeled into the garden without any issues was incredible. He was so happy to be out in the back garden and with his little sister. I actually had a few tears at seeing them together! He was very excited to have new toys and opportunities to be fully included, and that was how we all felt, fully included, a powerful emotion and realisation."

Looking Ahead

Our ambition is to deliver 50 Helping Hands projects every year. We are looking for new corporate partners to provide the funds and teams to make it happen.

4

Giving families the **Recognition** they deserve

Shaping a society that not only understands the needs of families but celebrates, values and prioritises them.

Thanks to advances in medicine and technology, the numbers of children and young people living longer with increasingly complex medical needs is only growing. Meanwhile, health and social care services are under increasing strain.

Too often, children and young people with complex medical needs are let down by the systems and structures that are supposed to be there to support them.

This year, WellChild has continued working with partners across the sector, such as the Royal College of Nursing (RCN), Disabled Children’s Partnership (DCP) and the University College London (UCL) to work for a fairer system of support for disabled children and their families.

Powerfully, through the **WellChild Awards**, in association with GSK, we brought these issues into the national spotlight, by celebrating the stories of the children we support and the dedication of the professionals and carers who support them. The Awards continued to challenge stereotypes, inspire change, and remind the world what’s possible with the right support.

Recognition is more than visibility; it’s a foundation for action. With your support, we’re building a future where our families are not just supported, but seen, heard, and celebrated.



The WellChild Awards created **2.8 billion opportunities to hear the stories of our families**, that’s enough eyes to cover over a third of the world’s population.



The WellChild Awards generated over **3,000 media articles**. That’s enough to stack into a newspaper tower as tall as Big Ben.



The WellChild Awards generated **over 1.4 million social media impressions**. That’s enough to light up every person’s phone in the city of Birmingham.

Looking Ahead

We are looking for new WellChild Awards category sponsors. We also want to strengthen the voice of families through robust research into the key issues that matter most.

Making **Impact** happen

As a charity that relies entirely on voluntary donations, we are deeply grateful to every individual and organisation that stood by us this year.

In a challenging fundraising climate, your support, commitment, and belief in our mission made everything in this report possible.

Whether you are a corporate partner or a runner, we pride ourselves on delivering the first-class experience that our supporters deserve. This year more than **530 Team WellChild participants** ran, swam and cycled at events across the globe – from the London Marathon, to Berlin, Chicago and Tokyo – pushing their limits to raise vital funds for seriously ill children and their families.

8 companies enabled our Helping Hands garden transformation programme through funding, volunteers, materials, equipment and plenty of elbow grease.

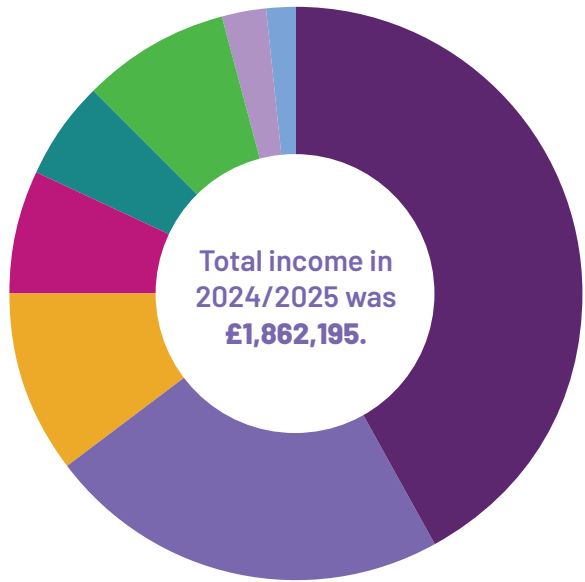
Together we transformed the lives of more than 468 children and young people by giving them safe, accessible, secure and sensory outdoor spaces for them to thrive.

Elsewhere, companies of all shapes and sizes partnered with us as sponsors for events such as the WellChild Awards (alongside our headline partner, GSK), London Marathon, Christmas At Sudeley, The Christmas Cotswold Fair, or kindly selected WellChild as their chosen charity partner.

With heartfelt appreciation and sadness, we must acknowledge the generosity of those who named WellChild as a beneficiary in their will. Their thoughtful decision, often made many years previously, has had a profound impact on our ability to deliver life changing help to thousands of children, young people and families this year.



Income Sources



Challenge Events.....	42.10%
Fundraising Events.....	22.60%
Corporate Partnerships.....	10.30%
Legacies.....	6.90%
Trusts & Foundations.....	5.70%
Charitable Income.....	8.20%
Investments.....	2.70%
Other Trading Income.....	1.40%

Total Expenditure



Helping Hands Programme.....	15.66%
Family Support & Welfare Services.....	14.99%
Information & Engagement.....	13.20%
Charitable Events.....	11.89%
Clinical Programmes.....	5.15%
Raising Funds.....	39.11%



Our **Ambitions** for the future

Our mission is to shape a society in which every child or young person with complex medical needs is cared for at home wherever possible, has the right care and support around them, enjoys a happy family life, and is recognised, empowered and celebrated.

Advances in medicine and technology mean that children and young people with round the clock complex medical needs are living longer – often into adulthood. While this is a testament to progress, it also brings new challenges.

More families are spending time in hospital unnecessarily; more families are delivering clinical care single handedly; more families are struggling to make ends meet; and more families are socially isolated, behind closed doors.

At a time when the economic climate is uncertain and demand for support is rising, our commitment is unwavering. We are determined not only to secure a sustainable future for our charity, but to grow our reach and deepen our impact for families across the UK.

To achieve this, our ambitions for the year ahead are to:



Expand the reach and impact of our **WellChild Nurse programme**, to ensure more families have expert practical and emotional support to thrive at home.



Partner with forward-thinking businesses to create more **safe, secure, and accessible outdoor spaces** where children can play, connect, and grow.



Find opportunities to build greater family resilience and enrichment in difficult times through **welfare support, family events** and **digital inclusion programmes**.

This is our mission and we invite you to be part of it. Together, we can ensure every child, or young person with complex medical needs is thriving at home.



Special Thanks

Apple · Advent of Change · Barclays · Bentley Systems
Berkhampstead School · BGC Partners · Bloomberg LP
Boodles · Brayleys · British Gas
Carrs Billington Agriculture · Chester Zoo
Christmas Cotswold Fair · Creed Foodservice
Dukes Foundation · Dullingham Park
Endeavour Gold · Eurowines · Family Fund
Forvis Mazars · G M Morrison Charitable Trust
Google · GSK · Hilti · Homes England · Howden Insurance
HSBC · Innerplace · Irwin Mitchell
Jockey Club Racecourses · Kingsley Napley LLP
Knight Frank · LAVA Advisory Partners · Lloyds
Microsoft · N Foundation · Parnell Properties
Propp - Firmitas Financial Services Ltd · Salesforce
Sky Betting & Gaming · Speedy Hire Plc
Spirax-Sarco Engineering · Spond · St James's Place
Stitchfinity · SSY Global · Talbot Underwriting Ltd
Tetra Tech · The Ann Jane Green Trust
The Cecil Rosen Foundation · The Cyril Shack Trust
The Farrer-Brown Charitable Trust
The Freda Batt Will Trust
The Hospital Saturday Fund Charitable Trust
The Mason Samaritan Fund
Trussel Trust Food Bank · Toad Hall Nurseries
Total Merchandise · TP ICAP · TRAFIK Productions Ltd
UltraDecking · VISA · Warners Retail · Yorvik Homes



Patron: Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex

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Sunningend Business Centre, 22 Lansdown Industrial
Estate, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL51 8PL



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