



**GoKidsGo!**  
*Independence through mobility*

# 30 Year Impact Report



# Introduction

**Go Kids Go** (The Association of Wheelchair Children) became a registered charity in June 1990 and their core aims and values remain the same as they did over 30 years ago; to empower young wheelchair users and provide them with the skills and knowledge they need to become confident, independent individuals. The training workshops remain inclusive, keeping the needs of the whole family in mind and encouraging shared experiences.

Over the 30 years Go Kids Go have worked with approximately 5,000 young wheelchair users and their families, many of them attending a number of courses over the years. Thanks to support from many funders, in recent years they have been able to expand the training team enabling them to meet the needs of more families' country wide.

Go Kids Go believe in increasing independence and confidence through mobility, providing basic and more advanced wheelchair skills training to wheelchair users to enable them to become more independently mobile. Encouraging young adults to return in a volunteering capacity, they are given valuable work experience.

The team are constantly looking for new ways of working and fresh ideas, using feedback from families and supporters to improve service provision and provide the support families need.

The work Go Kids Go have done over the past 30 years would not be possible without the hard working staff and volunteers, funders, and support of service users. I would like to thank my fellow Trustees for their continuing oversight.

**Jim Miller Whitfield**  
Chair of Trustees



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# 30 Years of Go Kids Go

**Go Kids Go** (formerly known as Association of Wheelchair Children), was founded by Owen McGhee and Kay Owen who both worked for the Newham Health Authority.

Owen McGhee, a Senior Community Paediatric Physiotherapist, identified a national need for specialist wheelchair skills training. Together they began running a local group called the Newham Rollers in the 1980s and it was during this time that our Patron Ade Adepitan MBE first got involved with us as a young beneficiary. The charity registered as the Association of Wheelchair Children in 1990 and began delivering a program of wheelchair skills courses nationwide. Over the 30 years we have worked with approximately 5,000 young wheelchair users and their families many of them attending a number of courses over the years.

In 2007 the charity adopted the name of Go Kids Go and we continue to provide free wheelchair skills training to young wheelchair users so that they can grow and develop into confident, independent adults.

Our workshops remain free of charge to families attending. They are unique, practical and fun and we believe that it is important to allow parents/carers, siblings and friends to join in with the training. To enable this we carry a stock of spare wheelchairs to our workshops and we are always available afterwards to provide ongoing advice and support.

Besides our core workshops the charity also delivers a programme of wheelchair/disability awareness training in schools which allows the peer groups of young wheelchair-users to experience using a wheelchair in a school environment, giving them a better understanding of the obstacles which wheelchair-users face on a daily basis.

We also provide training for professionals working in healthcare and education settings as well as training for Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy students in universities.

## Our Patrons

Our patrons include Ade Adepitan MBE, Eleanor Tomlinson and Ben Shires.

### Ade Adepitan MBE

Having survived polio as a youngster, Ade Adepitan has since succeeded as an international Paralympic wheelchair basketball player and has built up a wealth of broadcasting experience. Ade first became involved with the charity when he was invited by the charity founder Owen McGee to attend a new club he was setting up that aimed to introduce wheelchair skills and wheelchair basketball to young wheelchair users. Ade has travelled the world for his work including the BBC'S internationally known Travel Show. Ade's personal sporting achievements include a bronze in the Athens Paralympics, silver in the European Championships and Gold in The World Championships. Ade received an MBE in 2005. Ade is a well-respected co-host on Children in Need's annual live appeal show and remains an active supporter and patron of Go Kids Go.



### Eleanor Tomlinson

Eleanor Tomlinson is best known for her leading role as Demelza in BBC One's Poldark, she has also starred in Ordeal by Innocence, Loving Vincent, Colette and BBC One's The War of The Worlds. Originally from Beverley, where Go Kids Go are based, Eleanor has been a patron of the charity since 2012.

### Ben Shires

Ben Shires is a British television presenter and comedian. He is host of the CBBC children's show Officially Amazing and has been a patron of Go Kids Go since 2016.



# The Team

The Go Kids Go Team are a small team of professionals, overseen by a board of Trustees.

Our training team is made up of professionals from various backgrounds such as occupational therapy and sports development roles. Extensive in house training is provided to ensure that our trainers are able to deliver wheelchair skills training to the highest standard.

Our head office is in Beverley and we deliver training throughout the UK and Ireland.

Our fundraising manager also works from our Head Office in Beverley, raising all the necessary income needed to enable us to deliver our wheelchair skills workshops across the UK. Currently, our main source of income derives from charitable trusts and foundations, along with some corporate, individual and legacy donations.



**Roy Wild**  
Training Manager



**Vicki Hone**  
Fundrasing and Finance Manager



**Emily Ellington**  
Occupational Therapist



**Steve Conway**  
Mobility Trainer



**Eden Wild**  
Assistant Mobility Trainer



# An interview with our patron, Ade Adeptian

## What is your earliest experience of using a wheelchair?

11 Years old. I came late to it, I had been disabled since 15 months old but I was in a mainstream school system so I knew nothing about disability until I was spotted by Owen and Kay who started off Association of Wheelchair Children which is now Go Kids Go and they were the first ones to introduce me to wheelchair sport and using a wheelchair- and I have never looked back since!

## How did using a wheelchair impact on your everyday life as a child/young person?

Using a wheelchair drastically changed my life because before that I walked around with callipers and crutches but I was quite slow and cumbersome and it was quite painful especially when I got to secondary school going up and down stairs and carrying bags, it was about a mile walk to school and back home- then suddenly I got in a wheelchair and it was so much faster and easier, once I learnt how to get up and down kerbs and stairs I felt like I was released- I was more independent. I was free- I just had freedom.

## What was your earliest memories of Go Kids Go?

Owen and Kay pulled up in this beat up old van- asking, while I was being pushed around in a Tesco shopping trolley, if I would like to use a wheelchair. Yeah, I remember Owen and Kay. They were such characters. What was really amazing about them they showed us so much love- they believed in all of us. It was the first time someone told me, apart from my parents, that I could achieve anything I wanted to. Being free and independent was the most important thing for kids like me.

## What advice would you give to young wheelchair users?

Go to every Go Kids Go club session that you can, because you learn so much. It's not just their great teaching skills and learning how to use a wheelchair- it's meeting other children with disabilities and their families. There is so much you can learn from them, it's incredible. I think some of the parts I enjoyed the most was the friendships that I made.

## In a life full of career highs, what would you say have been the highlights?

Wow- the highlights... Going to the Paralympics and winning the medal- but I would say even more so, being part of the team who went to Singapore and helped London win the Olympic games and bringing it back to east London, where I grew up. Just because I knew that I would tell lots of my friends when I came back from the Paralympics how great it was but I don't think they really understood. It was only when it came to this country that it changed for us. I think because of London 2012 there are so many more kids that have new role models and belief in who they are and more confidence about their disability. Also the abled bodied people, the rest of the population have a lot more respect and perception of disability has been changed because of it.

I think I owe Go Kids Go pretty much everything... that's where it began for me, that's where the spark that turned into this huge flame began here with these guys and without them I probably wouldn't have achieved half the things I have done today.



# Volunteers

Many of our volunteers are young wheelchair users that have learnt their skills with us. By volunteering with us, we can continue to provide opportunity for young wheelchair users to progress their skills and develop confidence and leadership skills when working with large groups of young people.

Who better to support young wheelchair users attending their first Go Kids Go workshops, than adult wheelchair user who were once in that very same position themselves?

**James Connelly**, a young wheelchair user with over 19 workshops behind him commented that 'volunteering for Go Kids Go means a lot to me to be able to give back for what the charity has helped me achieve over the years.'



Another Go Kids Go volunteer is **Rosie Booth**, who has attended 24 workshops to date, here is what she had to say when we asked her about her experiences as a child attending Go Kids Go workshops.

'I was very young (about 3 years old) when I first attended a Go Kids Go workshop and have been attending regularly ever since.

I have always enjoyed learning and practicing my wheelchair skills at the courses as well as helping the younger children and young people to develop their skills and confidence in using their wheelchair now that I am more skilled and attend as a volunteer. I hope that I am a positive role model to other young wheelchair users as that has been a hugely important part of attending Go Kids Go workshops for me – having role models.

My other favourite thing about Go Kids Go is the community of young wheelchair users and families. The community has given me friends for life and always encouraged me to have a sense of pride in my identity as a wheelchair user in a way that I have not experienced in other places. I am very proud of my identity as a wheelchair user and this is something I am very vocal about thanks to Go Kids Go.

When I am using my wheelchair it makes me feel independent and I feel so much more able to do things and participate in everyday life than I would without it. If I had to be without my

wheelchair I would not feel complete as it is an integral part of who I am. It is so much more than just a mobility aid to me.

Go Kids Go has had a hugely positive impact on my life in this area. If it wasn't for the skills I learnt attending Go Kids Go workshops my local area would be completely inaccessible to me. I use the skills I have learnt on a daily basis and would be completely lost without them.

Being a wheelchair user has definitely impacted on my social life in a variety of different ways depending on who I meet. Often it is positive as people's curiosity gives us something to talk about and this helps me to make friends and talk to new people whilst also educating them on what life is like as a wheelchair user. However, sometimes it can be negative as people can be prejudiced and do not want to get to know me as a person because I am a wheelchair user.

Go Kids Go workshops have definitely helped me to make lots of new friends as well as see old friends from the courses frequently. This has been hugely positive for me throughout my life as it has given me a space to be with and make friends with people who share similar experiences in a way that I am not able to do with non-wheelchair users. That sense of community and shared understanding is vital and I'm so glad Go Kids Go have created this environment for us as young wheelchair users.



I also had many positive role models through Go Kids Go that I would not have had without them as a young wheelchair user and I hope that now I can also be a positive role model for young wheelchair users through continuing to attend workshops as a volunteer.'



# Encourage Independence

On our workshops we aim to get young wheelchair users more independently mobile, we hope that by arming young wheelchair users with key wheelchair skills that they will be able to be more independent in everyday life so that they can go on to achieve all of their individual goals.

**Abbie, age 10, County Durham**

'I think I was 3 or 4 years old when I first came to one of your workshops. My most favourite thing is when we learnt how to play wheelchair bulldog. Using a wheelchair makes me feel weird and sometimes a little special. At the workshops I have made friends in wheelchairs with my type of condition and we always have a chat and a catch up.

Day to day my mum doesn't have to push me anymore because I have learnt to be independent in your workshops, for example I can do ramps, kerbs and WHEELIES!!'



# Encouraging Confidence

We hope to enable young wheelchair users to feel more confident, which is important for mental well-being. We hope that each workshop a young person attends increases their confidence in their own abilities as they learn new skills and achieve their individual goals.

Once young wheelchair users are confidently using their wheelchairs and demonstrating their skills, we encourage more proficient wheelchair users to demonstrate their skills in front of the group.





# An interview with

Ollie, age 12, County Durham

## How old were you when you first attended a Go Kids Go workshop?

3 years old.

## What do you enjoy most about the workshops?

Kerb work, basketball and sharing skills with younger children.

## How does using your wheelchair make you feel?

It's fun to use and makes me feel happy.

## How do you feel using a wheelchair impacts on your ability to complete day to day tasks, has attending Go Kids Go made any difference to your day to day experiences?

Sometimes I'm too low down to see things but I'm confident to move into the best places, the skills I've learned help with this.

## How do you feel using a wheelchair impacts on your social life?

I have lots of friends and can happily play out with them as I have lots of skills in my chair. I like meeting the children at the club each year and now like to show them how to do things in their chairs. I love sport and play basketball and wheelchair racing and like to show my skills at the workshops.

## Additional Comments from Family of Ollie;

Ollie faces many challenges in a world not designed for wheelchair users but we find the skills and confidence he has in his chair helps him to face them. He has an ability to work out how to overcome physical obstacles and he will continue to develop this as he learns more advanced skills – mastering coming down stairs is one he is keen to try out more in the safe environment provided by Go Kids Go.

Mastering skills at an early age has also meant Ollie could join wheelchair sports club at a young age – sport is his passion – so we spend a lot of family time supporting his basketball and racing, both in training and competitions.

We all enjoy attending the workshops as a family and it's great that Ollie can use his experience to teach us how to use a chair. We also realise just how strong he is as he is so independent in his chair and our arms tend to ache the next day! The workshops also give us the opportunity to meet up with other families and chat about issues we all face and swap ideas.

Go Kids Go has been absolutely invaluable to Ollie's development as a confident wheelchair user, his skills are commented on wherever we go and it is thanks to the ongoing support you provide.



"I like meeting the children at the club and now like to show them how to do things in their chairs"





# An interview with

Sophie Joy Case, age 10, Devon

## How old were you when you first attended a Go Kids Go workshop?

4 years old

## What do you enjoy most about the workshops?

They are exciting! I love playing basketball in my chair the most!

## Has attending Go Kids Go made any difference to your day to day experiences?

I loved learning how to do a wheelie. It's made me feel a bit more confident to do more kerbs without help.

## Additional Comments from Sophie's Family;

For the rest of us as a family, the Go Kids Go workshops themselves give us a real insight into the difficulties that our daughter/sister, and other wheelchair users face day to day - while providing a fun family day, full of activities we can all get involved in. They really are invaluable!

As parents, we can see what a huge self-esteem and confidence boost these workshops have given Sophie. Since her first Go Kids Go workshop, and being introduced to basketball when she was just 4, she has been super keen to join a Wheelchair Basketball Club. Now that she is old enough for our local club, she has since joined and absolutely loves it!

We cannot thank Go Kids Go enough for the work they do as a charity, it truly is priceless!



"I loved learning how to do a wheelie, it's made me feel a bit more confident to do more kerbs without help"







# Supporting the whole family

Go Kids Go have always focused on the workshops being inclusive for all, our training and support is not just for the young wheelchair users but for their families too. We provide a stock of spare wheelchairs on the day of the workshop so that family members attending can get involved in the games and activities alongside the young wheelchair users. This not only gives family members a unique first hand perspective on some of the challenges a young wheelchair user may face, but an opportunity to participate in games and activities as a whole family, on a level playing field. We believe in supporting young wheelchair users and their families, ensuring that everyone benefits from our workshops.

"I have never had the opportunity to use a wheelchair before so the workshop has made me much more aware"

"It was great how the workshop involved the whole family in a fun and interactive way"

"It was such a lovely relaxed family atmosphere"

"It was great how inclusive the workshop was for the whole family."

"I mostly use my wheelchair for outings at the moment as I use walking sticks to get around at home and school. I feel more confident and motivated to use my wheelchair after attending the workshop."

"Go Kids Go was a great motivator, but also invaluable for parents to understand safety and practical issues around manual wheelchairs"





# Awareness Workshops

In addition to our core workshops, we also provide a disability awareness program in schools and to community groups, such as Brownies and Cub Scouts. We provide a stock of wheelchairs for the sessions so that participants can get into the wheelchairs and experience the challenges first hand. We discuss the reasons someone may use a wheelchair and some of the difficulties a young wheelchair user may face completing day to day tasks, such as their journey to school or moving around the school environment. We encourage young people to think about how they can be helpful towards a young wheelchair user, but also how to respect a young wheelchair user's personal space. By opening doors for conversation surrounding disability, we hope to increase understanding and change their attitudes towards disability at a young age, which will stick with them as they grow into young adults. These workshops often take place in a mainstream school where there may be just one wheelchair user and we often get them to help lead the workshop which really gives them a chance to shine and show off their skills to their classmates.

Our healthcare professional/student workshops aim to give health care professionals a deeper understanding of the skills a young wheelchair user may need to be achieve independent mobility in their wheelchair and how different equipment can impact on their ability to achieve these skills. We give health care professionals that first-hand experience of using a wheelchair, to help them better understand the needs of their service users.





# Sport

Go Kids Go are always aware of the value of sport when it comes to motivating young people and since the early days of the charity we have been signposting young people to local sports clubs and encouraging them to participate. The fundamental movement skills that children learn on our workshops are the basis for being able to develop physical literacy, which is the foundation of physical education. Often we give young wheelchair users their first taste of sport, by playing inclusive wheelchair basketball with the whole family.

**Andrew Greer, age 17, County Down, Northern Ireland.**

I first attended a Go Kids Go workshop when I was 7 years old and I was instantly enthralled by its educational, exciting and inclusive nature. It became of paramount importance in my life and I can proudly say that it has positively impacted my day to day life and my progression through sport. The confidence that the workshops have provided me has benefitted me greatly as I have gone on to compete in sports at a high level and it has helped me to access my true athletic potential. Roy and the rest of the Go Kids Go team have been exceptional throughout my experience with Go Kids Go and continue to help many others much like myself each and every day. I am always made to feel very welcome when I attend the workshops and I'm always eager to attend the next year. I completed a 10k "wheelathon" in 2014 to help raise money for Go Kids Go as I felt it was an extremely important cause to be supported and it was very close to my heart. I raised over £7,000 to help support the amazing work that Go Kids Go do all across the UK. Thank you so much for an amazing 30 years, here's to 30 more!



*"The confidence that the workshops have provided me has benefitted me greatly"*





"We had enormous fun and made friends who remain friends to this day"

## Sport

**Lynne Seller, mother of Georgina May Seller, age 16, from Flintshire.**

I can't quite remember how we became aware of Go Kids Go over ten years ago but I'm so glad we found you.

Georgina was 5 and had received her first ever wheelchair. I remember our first weekend (with Go Kids Go) so fondly as it was the first time all the family got into wheelchairs and we had enormous fun and made friends who remain friends to this day.

Over the years Georgina has become a full time wheelchair user and her skills taught to her by Go Kids Go have served her well.

She has been playing Wheelchair Rugby League for the North Wales Crusaders for 5 years now. She also plays Wheelchair Rugby 7s Union for Mold Rugby Club. Her rugby highlight has been being selected to play for Wales in 7s twice.

This year has seen her start a new hobby... WCMX (Wheelchair Motor X). This entails taking your wheelchair into the skate park and doing tricks. She is also an award winning St John Ambulance cadet.

Recently this year Georgina has volunteered to help out at a couple of Go kids Go sessions and to demonstrate skills to the new generation of wheelchair users and has given talks on her wheelchair hobbies.

I would like to thank Go Kids Go for all their help and support over the years and also to all the amazing children, parents and carers we have had the pleasure to meet over the years. Here's to many more years of Go Kids Go helping empower children and helping them fulfil their full potential!

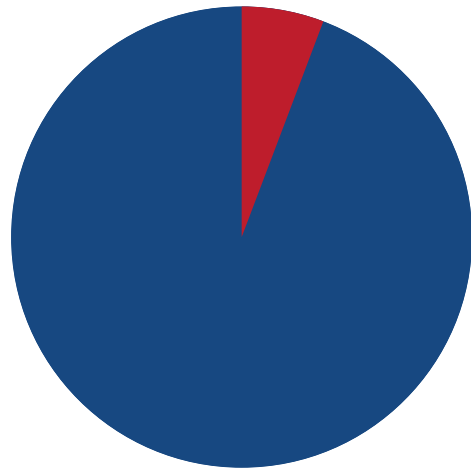




# Income and expenditure

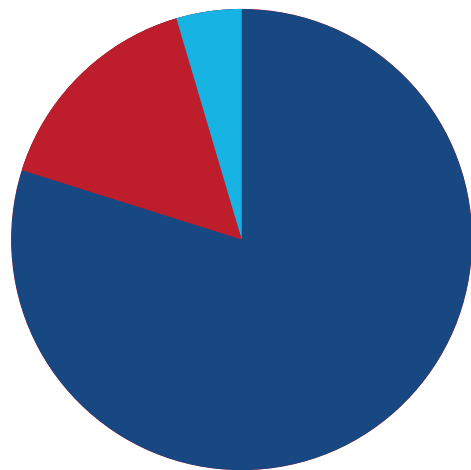
2019/2020 income **£151,690** and expenditure **£158,221**

## Income



- Trusts and Foundations
- Corporate

## Expenditure



- Charity Activity
- Fundraising
- Governance







## Comments

"Roy and the Go-Kids-Go team have, for many years, been making a massive positive impact on the children and families who attend their wheelchair skills training sessions. I am delighted to work with Roy and the team every year and look forward to their continued involvement in our summer programme. I would recommend Roy and the Go-kids-Go team to anyone who was considering working with them or who could support their ongoing fantastic, high impact work."

**Emma Regan BEM**, Regional Clinical Specialist Occupational Therapist, Wheelchair: Training, Research and Service Development (Northern Ireland)

"It was great to watch my son becoming confident in his wheelchair."

**"My child loved having the opportunity to socialise with other wheelchair users."**

"The kerb work was excellent as it is not easy to practice otherwise."

**"It was great how inclusive the workshop was for the whole family."**

"I was really proud to see my daughter, who is 13yrs, have the confidence to demonstrate her wheelchair skills to the whole group."

**"I will always remember the excitement and joy on my child's face at each stage of the workshop."**

"The staircase training was excellent, it was lovely to have new ideas on how to deal with stairs if you are a wheelchair user."

**"It was good to be able to chat to other families in a similar position."**

"It was really useful for my daughter to see other wheelchair users in action - it helped to increase her confidence."

**We are a small charity  
with a big impact**



# Fundraisers and Supporters

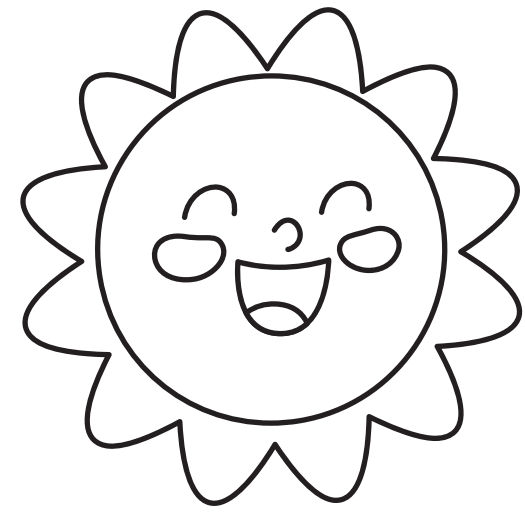
We would be unable to continue our work without the support of many trusts, companies and individuals across the UK. We would like to thank **Children in Need** for their support, enabling us to expand and maintain our training team, and **The Wolfson Foundation** and **The Clothworkers' Foundation** whose funding allowed us to purchase our training van, essential to our work.





# Go Kids Go!

Independence through mobility



Colour me in!





## **Go Kids Go**

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