

gleeds  
foundation

# Supporting young people to make positive changes in their lives

Impact Report 2023/24

Supporting our charity partners:

**WILDERNESS** | **resurgo**  
FOUNDATION UK



**“ We believe that every young person deserves to be given the tools they need to succeed. Together with our charity partners, the Gleeds Foundation seeks to create opportunities for them to build their skills, confidence and resilience as they work towards a brighter future.**

**Graham Harle**  
Chief Executive Officer, Gleeds



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# Foreword



**Graham Harle**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Gleeds

## Gleeds gives back: A word from our Chief Executive Officer

At Gleeds, we believe in the power of making a difference. For over a century, as a leading global property and construction consultancy, giving back has been woven into the very fabric of our identity. It's not just our heritage, it's our unwavering commitment and shared responsibility. We're immensely proud of the positive changes we've catalysed within the communities we serve.

In June 2023, we embarked on a new chapter of corporate social responsibility when we launched the Gleeds Foundation, with its purpose to support young people to make positive changes in their lives.

The need is stark. In the United Kingdom, 86,000 young people find themselves without a home, while 22% of our younger generation experience mental health challenges. Meanwhile, 40% of young adults aged 12-25 aren't in education or training and 30% of children live in poverty. These statistics aren't just numbers – they represent young lives facing formidable barriers to success.

It's against this backdrop that last year the Gleeds Foundation was born. We recognised the urgency for concerted action to uplift and empower our youth.

**Through our commitment to young people, we've pledged £100,000 each year to our Foundation.**

We see this as an investment in the leaders, innovators and changemakers of tomorrow.

We've structured the Gleeds Foundation to reflect our values of inclusivity, collaboration and empowerment. It's not just a charitable arm of our organisation; it's a testament to the collective spirit and generosity of our people. Our Foundation is driven by their passion, guided by their insights, and fuelled by their dedication to making a positive difference.

This impact report marks the culmination of our inaugural year – and reflects the impact our fundraising and volunteering has made, working hand in hand with our charity partners, Resurgo and the Wilderness Foundation. I am delighted that – due to the success of these partnerships – we have extended them both for a further 12 months.

Every young person deserves the opportunity to succeed. Our Foundation isn't just about addressing challenges – it's about fostering opportunities for young people to thrive, to shape their destinies and to build brighter futures, together.



**Michelle Regent**  
Chief Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) Officer

## A word from the Chair of the Gleeds Foundation Steering Group

“We're delighted that, through the Gleeds Foundation, we're able to deliver vital funding to transformational programmes that provide life-changing support to the young people who will shape tomorrow.”

At Gleeds, our ESG strategy sets out our vision – “Together for a sustainable future” – as we commit to continuous improvement in responsible business practices.

We've always supported charities, but – with the future very much in mind – we wanted to bring structure and focus to our impact by developing strong, strategic relationships with charity partners so we could see the difference we're making over the long term.

Where better to focus our energies than the young people who will shape the future – many of whom have faced unimaginable challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic, compounded by the current cost-of-living crisis.

Whilst we have initially focused on working with UK charity partners, our aim is to expand the Gleeds

Foundation globally in the future. In the meantime, the flexible structure of our Foundation means that match funding and international relief donations are also available, making sure we're ready to help quickly and efficiently.

It goes without saying that none of this work would have been possible without the Gleeds Partners, our Steering Group and the commitment of our people, who go above and beyond to raise funds and volunteer their time. And let's not forget the real champions – our partner charities doing incredible work, and the young people finding their way to a brighter future.

## Our purpose: Supporting young people to make positive changes in their lives

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The Gleeds Foundation gives financial grants and works with charities that create opportunities for young people to shape their future and build the skills, confidence and resilience to thrive – because we believe that every young person deserves to succeed in life.



### Making a positive change

The Gleeds Foundation has been designed to be independent, flexible and ready to make a difference since its inception.

Every year, we have pledged £100,000 towards the Foundation to empower young people aged 12-25 to make positive changes in their lives. In 2023/24, we decided to support two fantastic charities – Resurgo and the Wilderness Foundation UK.

We're thrilled to announce that our partnerships with both charities have been extended for another year, which means that a grant will be awarded to each of the charity's chosen programmes for 2024/2025.

**resurgo**

**WILDERNESS**  
FOUNDATION UK

### Together, we're changing lives

The Foundation may be run independently of the Gleeds business, but it's been designed with Gleeds people in mind. The charities supported by the Foundation are nominated by everyone at Gleeds, and the application process is managed by a Steering Group made up of seven people from across the business; they are responsible for reviewing and shortlisting charities. Through the Gleeds Foundation, we also work strategically with our charity partners to offer fundraising and volunteering opportunities, as well as offering pro bono support to share our skills and make a real difference.

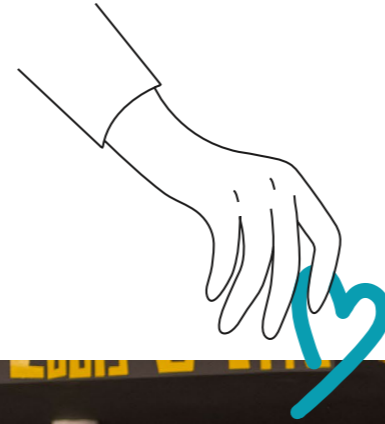
To show our commitment to charitable giving, we also offer match funding to all UK-based Gleeds people. In 2023/24, we were able to contribute a total of £6,310 in match funding to 40 charities.

The Foundation also maintains a dedicated international relief fund, meaning Gleeds is able to respond quickly to international disasters, wherever the need is greatest. In 2023, a donation of £3,000 was made to bolster the Red Cross response to the Israel-Gaza conflict. Going forward, £5,000 will be donated to every eligible international disaster.



## Our 2023/24 highlights

Since we launched in Spring 2023, the Gleeds Foundation has made incredible strides in our pledge to unlock new opportunities for young people across the UK.



### £37,500

We have donated £37,500 to each of our charity partners and their chosen programmes in 2023/24 and have committed to do the same in 2024/25.

### £7,500 each

Thanks to Gift Aid, we were able to make two further donations to our charity partners of £7,500 each as unrestricted funds, as well as increasing our international disaster relief fund and match funding pot.

### £6,310

In 2023/24, we were able to contribute £6,310 to fundraising activities through match funding.

### £3,000

We also made a donation of £3,000 to support the **Red Cross response** to the Israel-Gaza conflict.



### 85 hours

Gleeds volunteers spent a total of 85 hours volunteering for our charity partners in 2023/24.

### £3,280

From June to December 2023, Gleeds people raised a total of £3,280 to further support the purpose of the Gleeds Foundation.

### 78% of candidates

From June to November 2023, 78% of candidates in **Resurgo's Spear Programme** successfully completed their course.

### 83% of graduates

From the **Wilderness Foundation's TurnAround** programme have entered further education or employment.

# Our impact – Wilderness Foundation UK

## Harnessing nature’s potential

The Wilderness Foundation taps into the power of nature to help transform the lives of young people and adults who are often dealing with multiple challenges – ranging from domestic violence to drug and alcohol abuse to mental health challenges.

In June 2023, we partnered with the Essex-based charity to support their inspirational TurnAround programme, which uses wilderness therapy, challenging outdoor experiences, one-to-one mentoring and educational activities to empower vulnerable young people to turn their lives around.

Our grant funding in 2023/24 played a pivotal role in helping the Wilderness Foundation to deliver the 9-month TurnAround programme to young people aged 15-21 who are facing an uncertain future. It helps young people like Sophie<sup>1</sup>, who joined the programme when she was 16 after five years battling with extreme depression that had led to self-harm. Thanks to TurnAround, Sophie gained the motivation to go back to college and went on to university. She has since been invited to become a Wilderness Peer Mentor.

By taking young people like Sophie out into nature, the Wilderness Foundation gives them a second chance and supports them to gain the skills to get their lives back on track – helping them to build a brighter future for themselves.



## Our grant impact

TurnAround’s latest cohort of six vulnerable young people graduated in March 2024, after successfully completing two TurnAround trails – one in Scotland in October 2023 and the second on Dartmoor in February 2024. The physical challenges the young people faced during the two-week trails helped them to discover their inner strength and resilience.

They also joined bi-weekly workshops and social evenings as part of the programme, where they built the confidence and skills to help them thrive in future.

## The Wilderness effect

Over the past 12 years, TurnAround has had a positive impact on young people’s self-esteem, mood, hope and connection to nature. According to independent evaluations carried out by the University of Essex:

<p><b>90%</b> of young people reported increased mental wellbeing</p>	<p><b>82%</b> reported an increase in hope after they finished the programme</p>	<p><b>83%</b> of graduates entered further education or employment</p>
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“We deal with two big issues facing us all. One is how we build a healthy environment for all life to benefit from, and the second is an overwhelming crisis of mental health in society, particularly being felt by the young. We can’t tackle these problems in isolation or without support and therefore partnering with a highly successful company like Gleeds, to help us make a difference, is not only magical but critical. We are very grateful for this relationship and our work together to make change a reality.”

**Clare Martin**  
Corporate Partnerships Manager  
Wilderness Foundation

<sup>1</sup>Not her real name.

“I think you saved the programme this year. I’ll call you the blue birds of happiness that flew in the window... You came in at a critical time. What you’ve helped us do is run the bigger wilderness journeys again... and to have the funding to be able to do the work where it’s needed. We’re eternally grateful.”

**Jo Roberts**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Wilderness Foundation

“My experience in the TurnAround project was 1 in a million... It was one of the most amazing choices I have ever chosen to do, so I thank you ... for giving me this life changing experience.”

**Charlie**  
Turnaround Graduate

# Our impact – Resurgo

## Tackling youth unemployment, together

Youth unemployment is a pressing issue facing communities across the UK. More than one in ten 18-24 year olds faced unemployment at the end of 2023. The work of our charity partner Resurgo – which means ‘rise up again’ – is crucial in helping young people to overcome barriers to work or education.

Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are twice as likely to struggle with finding work or education than their more advantaged peers. Through our partnership with Resurgo, we’re offering a positive future to young people facing difficult times across the UK.

In June 2023, we started supporting Resurgo’s 12-month Spear Programme, which helps 16-to 24-year-olds facing serious barriers to employment to find and keep long-term work or enter further education.

“It has been a privilege working with the Gleeds Foundation this past year in our mutual commitment to transform the lives of young people across the UK. The Gleeds Foundation and its staff have given up their time, energy and resources to help inspire and equip young people facing barriers to get into work or education and for that, we’re so grateful.”

Lily Macdonald - Corporate Partnerships Manager, Resurgo



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The Spear Programme starts with a six-week intensive course, which includes:

- group sessions
- 1-2-1 sessions
- coaching to overcome challenging attitudes
- CV writing
- mock interview practice.

Following on from the initial six-week course, all trainees receive a full year of follow on support.

## Our grant impact

From June 2023 to April 2024, an impressive 77% of candidates in the Spear Programme successfully completed their course. Many of these young participants faced significant hurdles to employment and further education, including deprivation, family involvement in crime, criminal records, caregiving duties and homelessness.

Thanks to our grant funding, Resurgo successfully guided one cohort of graduates through its Spear Programme. We’re thrilled to report that, within three months, 54% of the 145 young people who completed the Spear Programme in Bristol, Camden and Leeds between June and December 2023 secured opportunities in further education, employment or training – an outstanding achievement!

As well as contributing vital funds to this programme, Gleeds volunteers were able to share practical skills with young people through volunteering in various ways, including company visits, external panels and mock interview sessions.

Gleeds has also formed a local partnership with the Spear Centre in Bristol to take part in continuous volunteering opportunities throughout the year.

**74% of young people who completed the Spear Programme were still in work or education one year later.**



“We are not just ready for work. We are actually ready to start making long-lasting, sustainable changes in our lives and in the lives of the people around us. We are ready to take full responsibility for ourselves.”

Spear Participant

# Our fundraisers & volunteers

## Opening the door to new opportunities

The Gleeds community loves a challenge and our people have gone above and beyond to help young people make positive changes in their lives by taking part in various volunteering and fundraising activities over the past 12 months.

Gleeds volunteers from our offices in Bristol, Cardiff, Leeds and London delivered mock interview workshops for trainees enrolled in Resurgo's Spear Programme. These sessions aimed to equip young people with the skills to communicate confidently and tackle typical interview queries, preparing them for success in future job interviews.

In **October 2023**, Gleeds volunteers took part in mock interviews with 13 young people in Leeds. 50% of that cohort were in education, employment or training after six months – including roles with major retailers and at Leeds City Council.

**I went from terrified to adrenaline bouncing from me with such positivity. It's amazing!"**  
**Spear Trainee,**  
**Mock Interviewed by Gleeds Volunteer**

In **November 2023**, Gleeds volunteers mock interviewed 14 young people in Bristol. 71% of those young people were in employment and training opportunities six months later.

Between **January and March 2024**, volunteers also took part in mock interviews in London, Cardiff and Leeds.

We also hosted a company visit at our London office in February 2024 for 15 aspiring young people who are part of Resurgo's Spear Programme. The group engaged in presentation workshops and a panel interview, as well as enjoying a tour of our building.

Activities like these have proven to make a real difference in the lives of the young people supported by Resurgo.



And this work wouldn't be possible without the invaluable time and dedication contributed by volunteers like our people.

**A special thank you to all of our fantastic Gleeds volunteers!**

# Meet Spear Trainee: Jacob

**Meet Spear Trainee: Jacob**  
*Jacob is one of the young people who took part in the Spear Programme in Leeds in June 2023.*

"When I graduated from sixth form well over a year ago now, I planned on getting into work as soon as possible. But I just couldn't help but take the easy route and I didn't really put any effort into my applications and CV. I ended up not working for months.

Eventually, my mum told me I should go sign up for Universal Credit. I had to go and speak to a work coach every week and eventually they referred me to Spear. At first, I was apprehensive, because the idea of meeting new people and doing things and committing to a six-week course was a little bit daunting.

I was a little bit surprised when I got to Spear because I realised it was actually helping my life. I'm more confident now.

The day when I really realised that I've grown was probably when we did the CV handout. We just printed off a few CVs and walked around Leeds for an hour and just handed them out. I did a much better job than I ever expected. After Spear is done, I'm going to apply for jobs. I've actually been applying every day for a week now."

**We're thrilled to hear that Jacob has since found work as a Clerical Officer for the NHS.**

**"I found the entire experience eye-opening. I was especially struck by the varying backgrounds of the candidates and listening to their stories was a humbling experience. I hope the candidates got as much out of it as I did and I am confident that the day itself was useful to each of them in their own way."**  
**Charles**  
**Gleeds Volunteer**



# Going the extra mile to help young people

We always knew that our people were generous, but our Gleeds people have been going the extra mile for the Gleeds Foundation charity partners over the past 12 months – raising more than £3,000 to help turn young people's lives around.

- In **September**, our Infrastructure South team took on a 12-mile walk along Essex Way from Chelmsford to Braintree – and raised more than £1,000. The walkers were able to visit the Wilderness Foundation site on the way, where CEO Jo Roberts gave an inspiring talk about the difference we are making by supporting the charity's TurnAround programme.
- Not to be outdone, our Newcastle team walked more than 16 miles along the Tyne River path to celebrate Resurgo's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary – raising £915 for our charity partner.
- In **September**, we brought together 19 teams from

across the UK for a nail-biting 5-a-side football tournament at PowerLeague's grounds in Shoreditch – raising more than £1,000.

- In **December**, we reimagined the traditional Christmas jumper day and launched our own 'Festive Jumper Day' to brighten up our offices across the UK. We raised more than £300 for the Wilderness Foundation.

We were able to contribute £6,310 to fundraising activities through match funding – helping to give our people the boost they need to make a difference on a local level.

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From June to December 2023,  
Gleeds people raised a total of  
£3,280 for our two charity partners.

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## Our future plans

We have some exciting plans on the horizon for the Gleeds Foundation. We're delighted to be extending our partnerships with our two partner charities for another year – committing grants of £37,500 to Resurgo and the Wilderness Foundation in 2024/25 to help young people thrive.

We want to be there for young people for the long term, which is why we're in talks with the Resurgo team to develop a comprehensive work experience programme that aims to set young people on the path to success in the world of work.

We're also launching a local partnership with Resurgo's Bristol centre to provide more focused local support, where young people face significant barriers to finding employment opportunities.

We're increasing our commitment to international disaster relief – we have pledged to make a donation to every international disaster declared by the UK Disasters' Emergency Committee over the next 12 months.

Meanwhile, we're also planning to expand opportunities for volunteering and fundraising, providing more ways for our people to engage meaningfully with the causes that are close to their hearts. We're also looking at how we can grow the Foundation globally, to support charities outside of the UK.

We're looking forward to working together with our partner charities, our people and our supporters to provide life-changing support to the young people who will shape tomorrow.



“It was great to hear about the lives that had been helped by the TurnAround programme as well as how transformational and how important it is to get out and about in nature.”

Gleeds Fundraiser

Thank you for helping us to support young people to make positive changes in their lives. We're looking forward to continuing to create opportunities for young people to thrive, to shape their destinies and to build brighter futures, together.

Supporting our charity partners:

**WILDERNESS**  
FOUNDATION UK

**resurgo**

Find out more at [gleeds.com](https://gleeds.com)