

**WE BELIEVE IN A WORLD
WHERE NO CHILD EVER HAS
TO LIVE ON THE STREETS**

**Our Mission Story
2022-2027**

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND, WHEREVER WE WORK

RAILWAY
children
No child lost to the streets

AROUND THE WORLD HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE ON THE STREETS

Street connected children are amongst the most marginalized on the planet. In many countries, they have become an accepted issue in society and are deprived of access to the most basic services and experience extreme harm before and during their time on the streets.

Wherever they may be in the world, they face violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Across our programmes we can see the huge impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on child development, mental health and social skills as well as the significantly increased pressure on families to provide a safe, nurturing environment for their children.

While the scale of our challenge may be huge and our resources may be limited, we have the knowledge and power to make a deep and lasting impact directly and indirectly on the lives of thousands of children, both now and for generations to come.

We believe in a world where no child ever has to live on the streets – a huge challenge that requires our most ambitious strategy ever. Alongside the development of outstanding practice and services for street connected children, we will help to create an environment of people united to protect vulnerable children, positioning ourselves to influence the UN's post 2030 development goals and ensure no child is left behind, wherever we work.

WHY WE CONCENTRATE ON TRANSPORT HUBS

Our evidence shows that hundreds of thousands of street connected children pass through transport terminals as they try to escape conflict, abuse, poverty and trauma. For many, public transport represents opportunity and the chance of a new start but the dangers they end up facing can be far worse than the problems they left behind.

While public transport hubs can provide safety, shelter and opportunity, they also make the ideal hunting ground for predators, gangs and criminals seeking to exploit and abuse vulnerable children.

Over the last five years, the transport system has been at the heart of all Railway Children's programmes – in Tanzania, India and across the UK.

We recognise that our experience and relationships across transport networks provide a unique opportunity to intervene early and protect children before they come to serious harm. Most children will use public transport to escape, often travelling long distances to a major city where they will become dispersed and lost to the streets forever.

Their time on public transport as they make that journey offers a vital window to find them, build a relationship and keep them safe before they come to serious harm.

**OUR APPROACH FINDS THE VERY
BEST SOLUTIONS AND PRACTICES
TO BREAK THE CYCLES OF ABUSE,
NEGLECT AND FAMILY BREAKDOWN
AND KEEP CHILDREN SAFE.
FOR GOOD.**

WHO WE ARE



OUR VISION

We believe in a world where no child ever has to live on the streets.



OUR MISSION

Create and enable sustainable change for children living alone and at risk on the street.



OUR AIM FOR 2027

We will evidence and demonstrate, effective and sustainable safeguarding solutions for street connected children.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

We stand for children

- The children who don't have a voice.
- The invisible children.
- The children struggling to survive on the streets around the world every day.
- The generations of children suffering repeated cycles of abuse.

WE STAND FOR CHILDREN, THEIR CHILDHOODS AND THEIR FUTURES! WILL YOU?

THESE FIVE VALUES GUIDE OUR WORK



NEVER GIVE UP

Face challenges head on.



HAVE COURAGE

Push boundaries. Think Big.



EARN TRUST

Be Honest. Always act with Integrity.



SHOW COMPASSION

Be kind and show respect to all.



NURTURE TALENT

Encourage growth. Enable others.






OUR CHARTER FOR CHILDREN

All children have the same rights and are entitled to the same protection. Wherever they are and whatever their story, children are children. None of them should ever have to live on the streets. It is unacceptable for any child to be abused, exploited and left alone to survive and we must build a movement of like-minded people who are inspired to stand with us.





We recognise that if we want the world to join together and help us to create systemic change, we must give children and young people a voice. If we want to create a movement of people, committed to our mission, we must amplify these voices and we can't do that alone. We are developing our Charter for Children with children so that they can influence who we collaborate with and how we unite the public to help us ensure no child is left behind.



We want people to passionately believe that:

-  We all have a part to play in protecting our most vulnerable children
-  No child found at risk should ever be ignored or passed by
-  Abuse is simply unacceptable in the family and in communities
-  All children have the right to a safe and nurturing family environment where they are loved
-  All children have the right to an education to help them reach their potential and thrive

We want the public to join us in standing up for vulnerable children by:

-  Not ignoring a child on the streets
-  Reporting any incidence of abuse and exploitation
-  Respecting children's views and listening to them
-  Join our movement by supporting our campaigns and amplifying our voice to as many people as possible

As we develop our charter for children further, we will ensure that children remain actively involved in harnessing support from all our key stakeholders.

Our charter will help us to build activities with children at the centre and enable us to strengthen conversations and activity with key influencers and partners.

AS WE CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN GOVERNMENT SYSTEMS, INFLUENCE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND ENSURE NO CHILD IS LEFT BEHIND, THIS CHARTER AND THE VOICES OF CHILDREN WILL BE AT THE HEART OF OUR VALUES AND ACTIONS.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Since we were established in 1996, we've worked hand-in-hand with key partners - bringing together transport police, rail authorities, government stakeholders, train operating companies, all of their staff and passengers to help.

Together, over the last five years we've reached and protected almost 70,000 children and in the last ten years, we've achieved landmark changes to protect children surviving on the streets:



We worked with the Indian government and railway authorities to establish child friendly stations, transforming the Indian rail network into places to places of sanctuary for children.



Committed to locally-led development, we have helped establish and nurture two strong independent legal entities, Railway Children India and Railway Children Africa that are now governed and managed locally.



We have worked with the department for transport, British Transport Police and UK rail operators to introduce safeguarding guidance for UK rail stations, and trained them to enforce it.



During COVID-19, our India team completely shifted to a humanitarian response; literally saving thousands of lives and establishing some of the community work that remains a core part of our strategy.



In Tanzania, we worked with the government and UNICEF to develop and sanction National Guidelines on Child Reintegration to ensure the safety of children is at the heart of reintegration in Tanzania.



Over the next five years, it is more critical than ever that we come together from across the international Railway Children group, consolidating our expertise to empower other key players to create maximum, sustainable change for generations to come.

We must build on our success and knowledge to create and evidence programmes that can be replicated **ANYWHERE.**

As the world commits to a decade of action towards achieving the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, it is vital that no child is left behind.

AND SO, OUR AIM AS WE SET OFF FOR 2027 IS TO LEAVE NO CHILD BEHIND, WHEREVER WE WORK.

OUR NEW STRATEGY MODEL FOCUSES ON FOUR KEY ACTION AREAS FOR CHANGE

During the last ten years, our strategy has concentrated on creating change at three levels: on the street; in communities and with governments.

We have made significant progress during that time and delivered compelling results to inform our future work.

During the last year of our previous strategy, we began the process of reviewing our work through a theory of change model. This deep analysis into all our programmes, the contexts in which we operate and the experiences of street connected children, has informed and underpinned the development of our new group strategy. It has enabled us to set shared goals that will lead us to our aim for 2027 – Leaving no child behind wherever we work.

Our ‘three step change agenda’ as it was previously known, has evolved, adding new learning and practice which ties all our actions together and weaves core new elements throughout our work. In addition to our hands on work with children, families and communities and our collaborations with child protection agencies, we are focusing on the development of research and evidence.

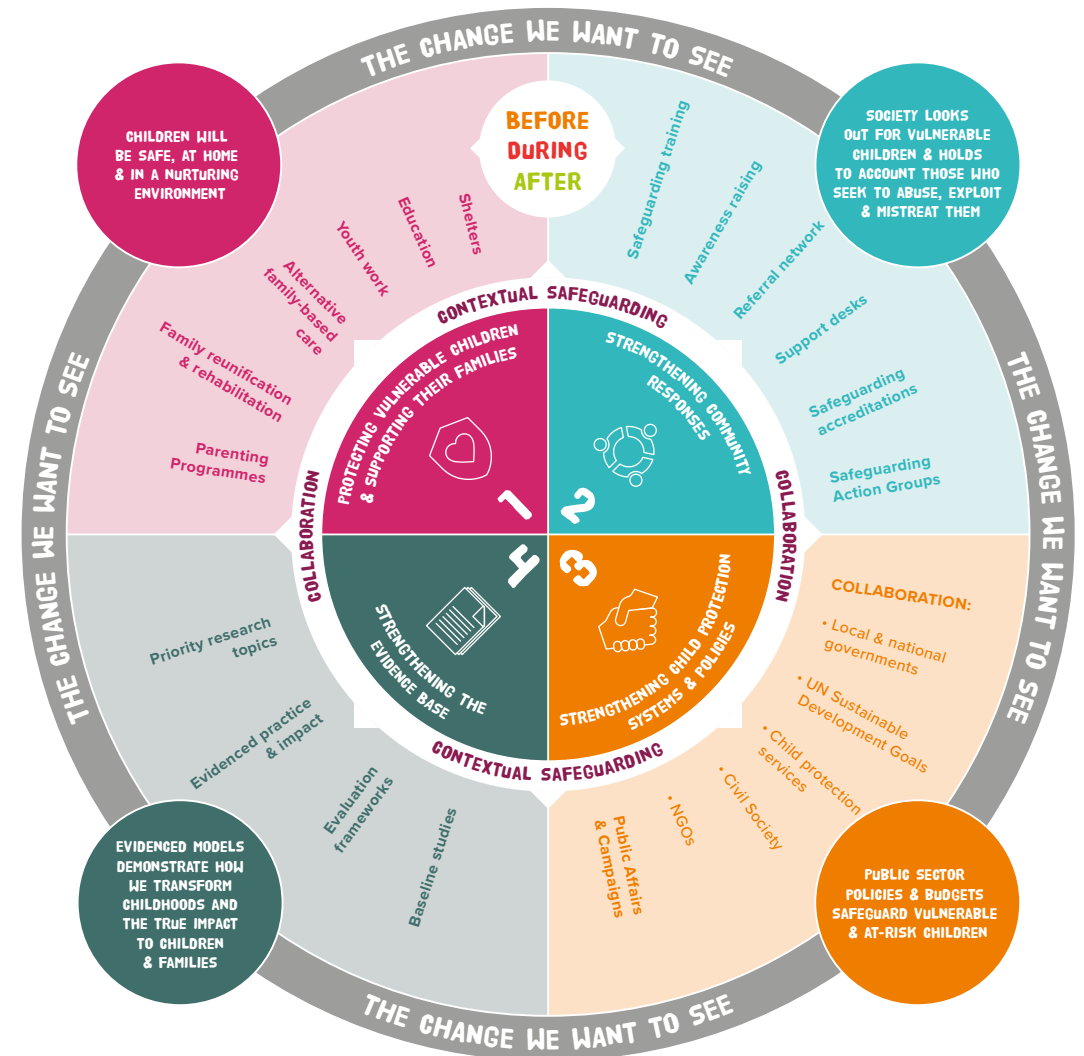
Our aim is to create programme models and practice that can be replicated, evidenced and used to support other organisations as we collaboratively position ourselves to influence the post 2030 development goals.

A strong evidence base will enable us to demonstrate to policy makers, influencers and budget holders the value, impact and need, for coordinated, systemic efforts to protect the most vulnerable children in society.

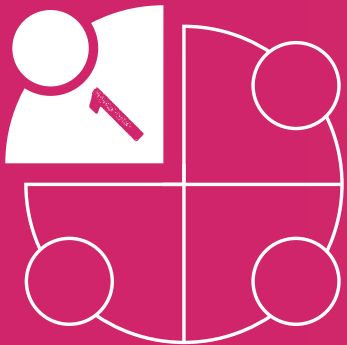
Our new strategy model focuses on four key action areas for change in order to protect the most vulnerable children, before during and after they are lost to the streets:

1. **Protecting vulnerable children & supporting their families**
2. **Strengthening community responses**
3. **Strengthening child protection systems and policies**
4. **Strengthening the evidence base**

At the heart of this is a focus and dedication to collaborating with others and the development of contextual safeguarding solutions, to protect all young people from harm and abuse. This involves addressing the underlying causes, as well as the effects and is therefore prominent in all four of our action areas for change.

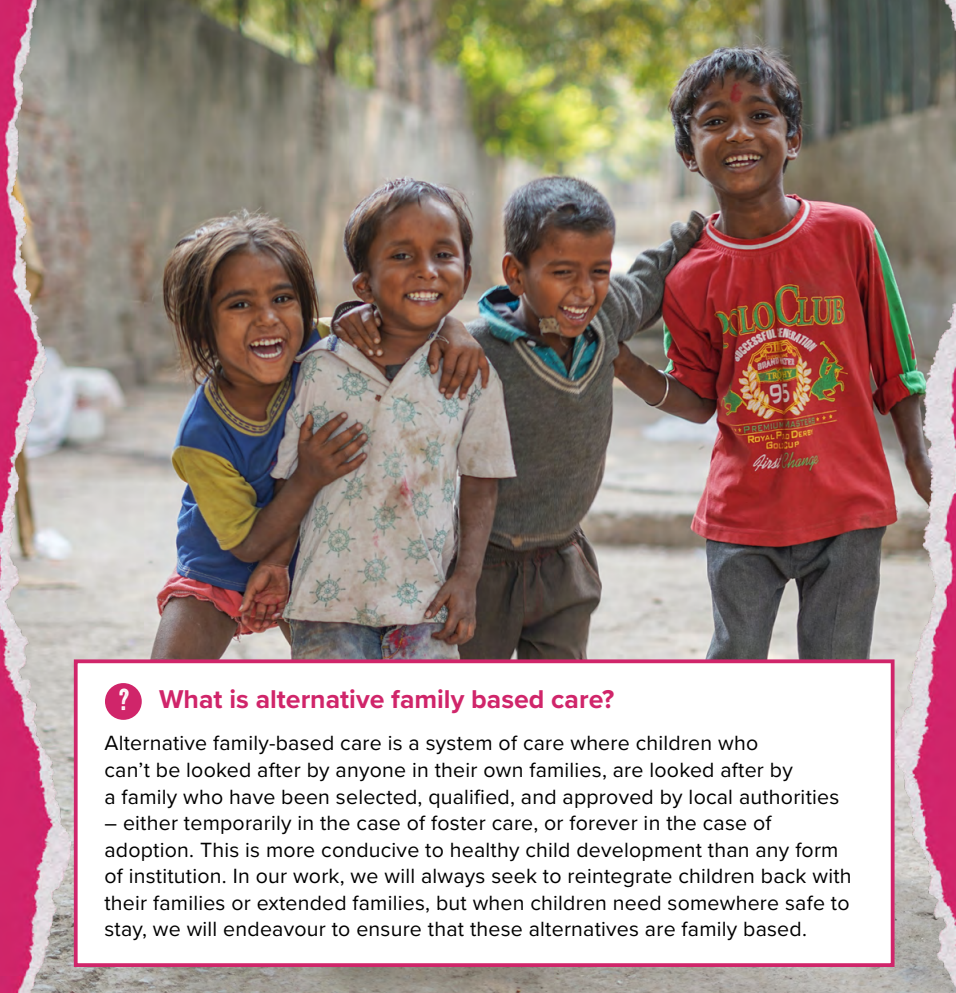


The following pages explain in more detail how each element of the model will combine to achieve our goal for 2027, leaving no child behind, wherever we work.



CHANGE AREA 1: PROTECTING VULNERABLE CHILDREN & SUPPORTING THEIR FAMILIES

We will keep children safe and enable them to stay in a nurturing family environment where they can attend school and thrive. We will build safety nets and develop programmes and services to the highest standards to protect vulnerable children, at risk of running away or being lost to the streets.



? What is alternative family based care?

Alternative family-based care is a system of care where children who can't be looked after by anyone in their own families, are looked after by a family who have been selected, qualified, and approved by local authorities – either temporarily in the case of foster care, or forever in the case of adoption. This is more conducive to healthy child development than any form of institution. In our work, we will always seek to reintegrate children back with their families or extended families, but when children need somewhere safe to stay, we will endeavour to ensure that these alternatives are family based.

Across the group, we will work with children and their families before, during and after they are on the streets and by 2027, we will:

- Support parents and families where children are at a heightened risk of separation, helping them to build resilience and tackle the issues that drive children to the streets.
- Work with the transport sector to identify and protect children early in their journey to the street and before they come to serious harm.
- Ensure children are moved to the best possible environment to keep them safe in the short-term and for them to flourish in the long-term.
- Support families to address the issues that lead children away from home.
- Strengthen alternative, family-based care options for children in need of short or long-term shelter.

In India, this means:

- 39,000 children arriving alone and at risk at rail and bus stations are protected and restored to a safe family setting.
- Family reunification processes improve within 15 Government childcare institutes in our programme areas.

In East Africa, this means:

- 11,200 at risk families will be reached through parenting programme and 2,200 vulnerable children are at reduced risk of ending up on the streets.
- 10,400 children and youth living or arriving alone and at risk on the streets in 3 cities are protected and transition to a safe setting.
- 7,800 children enjoy improved physical and emotional well-being and are supported to attend school.

In the UK this means:

- 50,000 children and young people alone and at risk on the rail network are identified and engaged positively and appropriately by BTP officers and TOC staff.
- 800 vulnerable children get the ongoing support they need after being identified and engaged on the rail network.

Working with children and their families before, during and after they are on the streets is complex but by collaborating and empowering others, we can create life changing outcomes

**TOGETHER, WE WILL KEEP
CHILDREN SAFE AND IN
A NURTURING FAMILY
ENVIRONMENT WHERE THEY CAN
ATTEND SCHOOL AND THRIVE.**



CHANGE AREA 2: STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY RESPONSES

We will work in partnership with communities and the transport industry, helping them to create environments that are hostile to abuse and where people are equipped to play their part in protecting all vulnerable children.

We will build a public movement where it is unacceptable for any child to be abused, exploited and left alone to survive and where people feel compelled and equipped to challenge this where they see it.

Over the past five years our work in communities has progressed and evolved significantly. Initially there was a need to change public perceptions of street connected children, who were seen as a nuisance, and in many cases treated inhumanely by the authorities that should protect them. As a measure of our success in this space and the appetite and commitment we have seen from our community partners, we are now working with many groups to strengthen skills, increase awareness, build safer environments and create a movement of people united in their commitment to play a part in keeping children safe from harm. We call this 'contextual safeguarding'.



? What is contextual safeguarding?

Contextual safeguarding focuses upon protecting all young people from harm and abuse within the environments outside of the family home, such as on public transport, in retail settings or on the streets. It relies on partnerships between public sector services, civil society and local communities including; retailers, transport providers, and individuals, so that everyone is aware of possible warning signs and how to report or respond to them. Those with influence over the physical environment are able to make improvements, including changes to how and when spaces are used, so that those settings become safer and young people are better protected.

Across the group, our efforts will concentrate on strengthening safeguarding responses around the transport system where we know high numbers of children are at risk. We will work in partnership with the community to identify and protect vulnerable children before and whilst they are on the streets, and by 2027, together we will:

- Increase the capacity of communities to protect their children by training transport staff, police and others who work on and around rail and bus networks.
- Make physical transport spaces safer for vulnerable children by bringing together key stakeholders to collaborate on safeguarding.
- Enhance communication and awareness across the transport networks to ensure vulnerable children are referred to us for support swiftly and appropriately.
- Collaborate with fellow agencies to explore and pilot safe and effective alternative family-based care arrangements.

In India, this means:

- Key stakeholders will coordinate across the Howrah-Delhi network of 64 major railway stations and protect an estimated 20,000 children.
- Officers from the Rail Protection Force and the General Railway Police will be trained in child safeguarding responses.
- Railway staff, Child Welfare Committees, District Child Protection Units and other Non-Government Organisations will provide a coordinated response to safeguarding children in their protection, reunification and rehabilitation.

In East Africa, this means:

- We will mobilise the early intervention and protection of children arriving alone and at risk at bus terminals by developing a community safeguarding model for stations that can be evidenced and replicated.

In the UK this means:

- The protection of vulnerable children across the rail network will be enhanced as 10 train operating companies achieve and retain their national Safeguarding on Rail accreditation.
- Safeguarding Action Groups will be established and operating effectively at the top ten UK stations identified by British Transport Police for children with severe vulnerabilities.

Strengthening the capacities of communities around transport settings will create a safe environment where society looks out for vulnerable children and holds to account those who seek to abuse, exploit and mistreat them.

**TOGETHER, WE CAN
TRANSFORM THE LIVES
OF STREET CONNECTED
CHILDREN AND ENSURE THAT
NO CHILD IS LEFT BEHIND.**



CHANGE AREA 3: STRENGTHENING CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS

We will work closely with policy makers, public servants and civil society to find and implement ways to strengthen and better resource child protection systems so that no child is left behind.

Whilst social and government structures and public policies are in place to protect the most vulnerable, we know that – despite the best intentions – there are many gaps in the system that allow children at risk to repeatedly slip through the cracks and into serious danger.

Limited capacity, overstretched resources and organisations working in isolation from each other are all factors that make it difficult for child protection systems to function as well as they should.



We cannot create the change we are determined to achieve, at the scale it is needed, alone, so we will collaborate with key partners to galvanise global action and lead the case for change.

By combining efforts, resources and expertise from fellow agencies, rail partners, local governments and authorities, we will:

- Collaborate with fellow agencies to amplify the voice of street connected children.
- Develop and evidence effective safeguarding solutions that can be replicated and adopted on a system-wide level.
- Advocate for improved policy and provision of children's services at a national and international level.
- Reduce the number of children in institutional care by drive the case for safe models of alternative family-based care.

In India, this means:

- Children around the station networks will be protected when the Ministry of Railways agrees to replicate the child friendly railway network model across all of the 64 major stations on the Howrah-Delhi network.

In East Africa, this means:

- We will work with government partners in 3 districts to help implement and strengthen existing laws and evidence robust child protection responses that can be replicated elsewhere.
- We will lead the formation and development of a national coalition for alternative family based care in Tanzania.

In the UK this means:

- Children are more protected at UK stations when the government makes the 'Safeguarding on Rail Scheme' a compulsory criteria within train operating contracts.

We can't change the world by ourselves but by uniting others to work more effectively, in collaboration, we can strengthen the system and our case for support.

**TOGETHER WE WILL
BE STRONGER AND
WE WILL LEAVE
NO CHILD BEHIND,
WHEREVER WE WORK.**



CHANGE AREA 4: INVEST IN EVIDENCE BUILDING

We will evidence effective and sustainable safeguarding solutions for street connected children, demonstrating how we transform childhoods and the true impact of these interventions on their lives and their families. Building outstanding evidenced services will enable us to establish programme models and practice that can be replicated.

The data available about children in street situations is extremely limited. National data collection systems are not designed to capture these children as they do not live in households. Consequently, they are too easily overlooked by policy makers as they allocate public funding and develop programmes.



Whilst data collection tools for counting children on the streets are helpful in amplifying conversations at government level, it is vital that we understand the issues that drove them there and their experiences whilst on the street.

For us to influence change at a national level and to achieve real impact at scale, it is also critical that we can evidence the impact of our services on the well-being of children and their families.

By 2027 we will:

- Collaborate with other organisations working with street connected children to share, align and combine our respective data about street connected children and their experiences.
- Collaborate with academic researchers to help grow understanding of what works.
- Ensure children's views and voices sit at the heart of our research and evaluation in a way that they feel protected and empowered.
- Identify and measure gaps and opportunities in child protection systems.
- Evidence effective safeguarding solutions, demonstrating their impact and how they can be replicated or adapted.
- Ensure that a robust evaluation framework covers every element of our programmes.
- Collaborate on a comparative study of contextual safeguarding approaches in the three countries where we operate.
- Collaborate with key partners to galvanise global action and lead the case for change.

BUILDING A STRONG EVIDENCE BASE WILL PROVIDE A PLATFORM FOR US TO INFLUENCE AND ENSURE THAT GLOBAL AND LOCAL ACTION LEAVES NO CHILD BEHIND.

TOGETHER TO LEAVE NO CHILD BEHIND

No matter where they come from all children are entitled to the same protection and have the same rights - the right to a nurturing family environment, an education and the chance to fulfil their potential.

No child should face, danger, abuse, exploitation or violence. Children are children and no child should ever have to live on the street.

We are totally committed to our mission, and we will push the boundaries to overcome the challenges that will face us along the way.

Our collaborations and efforts with other passionate people and agencies are strengthening all the time and together we will ensure no child is left behind.

**IF YOU BELIEVE NO CHILD
SHOULD EVER HAVE TO
LIVE ON THE STREETS AND
ABUSE IS UNACCEPTABLE,
PLEASE JOIN US.**



Railway Children

1 The Commons, Sandbach, Cheshire CW11 1EG.

T: 01270 757596

E: hello@railwaychildren.org.uk

W: www.railwaychildren.org.uk

Registered charity number 1058991

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No child lost to the streets