



December 2024



Dear everyone, we support and carers,

I hope you have some nice plans for Christmas and New Year- whether you celebrate these days or not.

It is important that we see how lucky we are despite the issues we may have in our own lives. It is never perfect for any of us, in life, but as I look across the world, I can see how much more difficult it is for people in places where there is conflict or war, or with severe weather changes (rain, flooding and high temperatures etc). Challenges that many of us are lucky never to have had to face. Hopefully, it helps us realise how safe we are, relative to others across the world. And how some of the problems we have- although important- could be much worse.

It was great to see so many of you at our AGM at Edinburgh Zoo in October- it was a great day. And I look forward to seeing some of you at the various Xmas events that are planned in December: see the link here for some of these:



As always, we are trying to make sure there is lots of information about free or affordable activities and events either ran by The Action group at the Prentice centre or in the communities where you live. See the Community pack for some of these activities.



### Cost of Living help:



A Reminder again as we move into the cold weather that we have put a little money aside for a **Hardship/Crisis Fund** for anyone who is really struggling financially. To apply, please contact our advice team at: [advice@actiongroup.org.uk](mailto:advice@actiongroup.org.uk).

As well as some money to help with **Digital equipment** to help you be part of this digital world- where you do not have the money to afford these yourself, we might be able to help. To apply, please ask your staff member to fill out the Digital Equipment Fund Form or contact [advice@actiongroup.org.uk](mailto:advice@actiongroup.org.uk).

TAG Digital Equipment Fund [Application Form](#):

### TAG Evolve:



TAG EVOLVE changes happened 5 months ago now. We need your feedback to see what has worked well and what else we need to do so TAG EVOLVE achieves all of what it set out to achieve- which was improved services and stronger leadership etc.

- **TAG Evolve Feedback Survey** Click here: <https://survey.sogolytics.com/r/OHjRnF>

This has been a huge change for the organisation and in life changes are part of positive growth. if The Action Group always stayed the same over the last 48 years, we would not have survived. But I know that change can be hard for me and many of you- so I look forward to 2025 when the changes have had more time to settle down and even more benefits can be seen.

The evaluation information will be shared with you next year once all the feedback sessions and questionnaire feedback has been gathered up. And then any improvements you suggest will be actioned.

### The Action Groups Budget plans for April 2025 to March 2026



It is that time of year when we start to look at our budget for next year and try to make sure we can afford all of the things we need to do: pay your staff more now that the living wage hourly rate has increased from the current rate of £12 per hour to £12.60 per hour from April 2025; afford the increased costs of things we need to pay (Heat and light at the prentice centre; Insurance ; staff Disclosures etc). Just like in your life, everything we do

gets more expensive each year and we cannot put our prices up as Councils will only pay what they have been funded by the SGovt to pay.

This year there is a new cost that the UK Labour Govt has decided to put into its budget from April 2025: they are making all Employers including The Action group pay more money for the staff they employ- by increasing the Employers National Insurance % we pay and increasing the numbers of staff who we need to pay this for. This will cost us and all social care a lot more money. If we do not get any extra funding for this, it will make our budget very difficult next year- but we will find a way through. It may mean we have a lot less money to spend on things that we might want to do- I will keep you informed next year once we are clearer on the SGovts plans and if they decide to give us some extra funding for this extra cost.

### New Carers post:



I am delighted that we now have a new part time **Carer Involvement Officer - Alisa Jaakkola** - [carer@actiongroup.org.uk](mailto:carer@actiongroup.org.uk). She will work to make sure we provide more digital communication to all the carers who are part of The Action group. There is so much information that can help carers and parents- but it can be hard to know where to find the right information when you need it. Our carers worker will start to make this easier for people as well as making sure we have all the contact details we need for carers. She will work with Carers to find out how best to support them digitally and in real time over the next year. Alisa, together with our work as Lead of the Carewell project and our BEMAS service for carers who are Black or ethnic minority, shows our commitment to carers here at The Action Group.

Alisa will be in touch in various ways soon.

### Stay connected and involved:



Another reminder to everyone, to join our TAG facebook pages, to help you stay connected and see what else is happening in TAG. Contact **Johanna** at [Communications@actiongroup.org.uk](mailto:Communications@actiongroup.org.uk)

Linda Tuthill CEO  
[Lindatuthill@actiongroup.org.uk](mailto:Lindatuthill@actiongroup.org.uk)

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and I hope your 2025 is a great year for you all. Thank You for being part of The Action Group.

If you wish to contact me, please do so via <https://forms.office.com/r/JxEZaqwNX3> or email me.

