

REACT
DISASTER RESPONSE



**Strategic
Plan
2022-2026**

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Cover image: REACT Responder Rich McSweeney checks in on a resident during flooding in Northamptonshire. Credit Lewis Inman 2024.

REACT is lean, and its rapid and needs-driven approach to crisis response is increasingly relevant, but its scale and operations are highly dependent on the establishment of sustainable funding sources.

REACT is a people offer.

A step change is required to attract and retain the highest calibre Responders who can help meet the anticipated increase in complexity and scale of operations in the next four years.

From our Chair and Chief Executive

Since its establishment in 2015, REACT's strength has always been our ability to rapidly mobilise and deploy highly trained and specialist teams of Responders to help stabilise a situation.

As humanitarian needs continue to grow more chronic and complex in nature, further impacted by the health and non-health related shocks of the Covid-19 pandemic, the humanitarian system is not keeping pace. Today, one in 33 people worldwide needs humanitarian assistance or protection, more than at any time since the Second World War. Change is happening, but not fast enough. Our value proposition – harnessing continued service (purpose, community, identity) for disaster response for the hardest to reach and most vulnerable – is more relevant today than even six years ago, when the organisation was conceived.

The last year has seen a period of great change and transformation for REACT from which the charity has emerged financially more secure with positive reputations both in the UK domestic sphere and internationally. Our contribution will optimise and magnify the effect of larger aid organisations by addressing the growing global humanitarian demand. We will deploy rapidly, build strong local relationships, assimilate information to understand and meet local needs and always cooperate and partner with local and international agencies.

General Sir Nick Parker

Chair of the Board

Dr Toby Wicks

Chief Executive

Pictured: REACT Responders take in the destruction caused by the earthquake in Turkiye in September 2023. Credit Lewis Inman.



Our vision

A world united in delivering rapid and effective humanitarian aid to communities in crisis.



Our mission

Rapid humanitarian action for the hard-to-reach and most vulnerable.



Our values

Humanitarian first

Whatever our background or role, we are humanitarians, and those principles guide our every decision and action.

Courage and humility

We do the right thing for all people, without exception.

Trust and be trustworthy

We act with integrity, we give trust to build trust and drive collaboration at all levels.

Walk towards danger

We have a bias for action. We train hard, prepare well, and mitigate risks so that we can move fast and lean into the problem to address critical unmet needs.

Selfless commitment

We possess the grit and tenacity to persevere through adversity and always put the needs of others ahead of our own.

Pictured: REACT Responder Sarah supports a mother and her newborn twins in the High Atlas Mountains after an earthquake destroyed their home. Credit REACT Responder



Humanitarian Principles

Humanity.

Human suffering must be prevented and alleviated wherever it is found. The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect human life and health and to ensure respect and dignity for all.

Neutrality.

Humanitarian actors must not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Impartiality.

Humanitarian actions must be based on need alone, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress, and with no distinctions made on the basis of nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, social class, religious beliefs or political opinions.

Independence.

Whilst subject to international and local laws wherever they operate, humanitarian actors must remain autonomous from political, economic, military or other objectives and influences.

What we do

Rapid humanitarian action

**We get the right support,
to the right place, quickly, by:**

- **Deploying rapidly**
- **Developing strong local relationships**
- **Assimilating multiple sources of information to understand local needs**
- **Rapidly partnering with local and international agencies**
- **Working collaboratively to address unmet needs in a joint humanitarian response**

Our value proposition

1. Rapid disaster response

Drawn heavily from the military veteran and emergency services communities, our volunteers use their unique skills to apply a military approach to planning and problem solving, enabling targeted interventions which **save lives and alleviate suffering at pace.**



2. Upskilling and purpose

For those accustomed to a life of service the transition to civilian life can be challenging. REACT provides bespoke training and a continued sense of purpose through our deployments. The supportive **REACT community is incredibly valuable to our volunteers.**



3. Value for money

Our volunteer-centred operations keep costs to a minimum. Eighty pence of every pound donated to REACT goes directly to funding humanitarian action. **REACT are financially efficient and operationally effective.**



How we do it

The military approach applied to humanitarian action

REACT commonly deploys 4-person rapid response teams. Such a small number has proved its worth during REACT's experience in Mozambique, The Bahamas, and most recently in our response to the Ukraine crisis. Four is small enough to move fast and still carry enough supplies to get the job done.

REACT has a clearly defined vision and purpose as outlined in its strategy. Its operational model has three components: Conceptual; understand the context by using robust and tried and tested processes, a bias for action and the flexibility to adapt. Physical; This means having the right people who have been selected, trained and equipped to allow them to operate in remote and potentially hostile environments. They are self sufficient so as not to become a burden on the limited resources found in the aftermath of a disaster. Moral; This is made up of morale, an intangible force that makes us feel we are part of something greater than ourselves, leadership and the bedrock of our values.

REACT's humanitarian action, has at its forefront the needs of the affected population. It utilises an effects based approach and through detailed analysis it seeks to understand the problem and set attainable objectives with clearly defined outcomes. Whilst conducting this analysis there is always the ability to react to sudden changes in an often dynamic situation.

REACT Response teams have undergone realistic training to prepare them for the

challenges of response operations. They have detailed procedures and will have rehearsed many of the scenarios they may encounter. They maintain a flexible approach and possess the grit and tenacity to preserve through adversity and navigate constraints in order to find a solution.

REACT empowers its leaders and those closest to the problem to make decisions. It promotes the use of initiative and freedom of action to enable its teams to rapidly navigate their way through uncertainty. This philosophy of 'mission command' runs throughout the organisation and it trusts its Responders, never reverting to the 'long screwdriver'.

REACT is the connective tissue that binds organisations together. Teamwork is at the very centre of our approach and through experience we have learnt that collaboration is the cornerstone of any effective humanitarian action. This collaboration takes place before, during and developing best practises after the event. We understand our own strengths and weaknesses and those of our partners so the best asset can be brought to bear at the right time and the right place.

The situation

120 million people are now displaced worldwide and they are increasingly vulnerable.



Today, one in 33 people worldwide need humanitarian assistance or protection.



The UN estimates that this year, US\$ 51 billion will be needed to provide humanitarian assistance to 230 million people across 63 countries.

In 2020 climate-related disasters affected over 98 million people. As natural hazards like storms, flood and heatwaves increase in frequency and severity, public services are often stretched beyond their limits.



UN-OCHA Global Humanitarian Overview.



Pictured: REACT Flood Responders undertake regular specialist training.
Credit REACT Responder

So what for REACT?

With ever more protracted, complex and geographically dispersed crises, traditional aid organisations are understandably stretched.

REACT's highly trained volunteers are able to deploy anywhere within hours, rapidly assess a situation and take action to meet almost any need.

Our close partnerships with local groups and organisations allow us to respond quickly to the changing needs of local populations, as reported by local people.

Our volunteers are self-sufficient and can sustain themselves for long periods in the remotest locations.

Our ambition

Our ambition is to develop a capability to deliver up to 34 deployments per year by 2026. This demands a pool of 700 engaged Responders.

Volume (ops/year)	Baseline	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Level 1	12	12	14	16
Level 2	4	4	5	7
Level 3	1	2	2	3
Capacity	2	4	6	8
Total	19	22	27	34

Bandwidth (concurrent ops)	Baseline	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Level 1	2	2	4	6
Level 2	0	1	1	2
Level 3	0	1	1	1
Capacity	1	1	1	1
Total	3	5	7	10

Responsiveness (hrs)	Baseline	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Level 1	48	6	6	6
Level 2	72	48	24	24
Level 3	72	48	24	24

* Geography, duration, type of emergency subsumed into L1 - L3 classification.

This assumes that:

- 25% of Responders are able to deploy two times in any one year.
- We need four engaged Responders for every one who commits to deploy to a Level 3 operation.

Responders supported by a lean HQ team, complemented by:

- A successful devolved regional structure.
- A casual bank that grows relative to the demands of commercial activity.

The plan

Core objective areas

Sustainable and predictable funding

1. Grow income from fundraising by focussing on trusts and foundations, regular giving, high net worth individuals and corporate donors.
2. Build strong new business capability and healthy pipeline to support ongoing fundraising income growth.
3. Engage and retain existing supporters through consistent structured account management.

Increase scope, scale, speed, and impact of responses

1. Targeted and measurable stakeholder engagement to strengthen our network and increase our scale, speed, and scope of response.
2. Increase speed of response to 6h domestically and 24h globally by FY 23/24.
3. Increase capacity for up to 34 operations per year by FY24/25.
4. Increase capacity for up to 10 operations at any one time by FY 25/26.

Effective organisation

1. Maintain a lean and clear organisational structure that reflects our offer.
2. Recruit and retain the right people to deliver the plan (income generation and commercial are key priorities).
3. Ensure REACT is a high performing organisation with the right operating rhythm
4. Continue to develop and enhance the REACT culture which is a USP.
5. Ensure REACT has the right core operating systems and BI to deliver the plan.

Phases of implementation

Selected activities shown

Phase 1 (2022/23)

Get the fundamentals right

- Establish and maintain a cost effective regional leadership and management team in each of the 9 regions in the UK.
- Appropriately resource the fundraising team by recruiting income stream specialists, and educating wider colleagues in lead identification.
- Engage and retain existing supporters through consistent structured account management.
- Establish a winning new business capability, including responding to tenders, focussed on leveraging the existing skill set within REACT.



Phase 2 (2023/24)

Sharpen the saw

- Increase speed of response to 6th domestically and 24h globally by FY2024.
- Focus on trusts and foundations, high net worth individuals, and corporate donors.
- Establish full understanding of broader skillsets held by volunteers.
- Professionalise a Responder training pipeline and upskill instructors and mentors.



Phase 3 (2024/25)

Earn the right to grow

To capitalise on opportunities, REACT will focus on three key areas:

- **Scale:** Expanding our reach to serve more communities efficiently.
- **Affordability:** Ensuring cost-effective operations to maximize the impact of every pound spent.
- **Sustainability:** Building long-term, sustainable solutions that empower local communities.



Phase 4 (2026 onwards)

Scale our reach and impact

- **Retain Capability:** Maintain and enhance our operational capacity to respond effectively to crises.
- **Consolidate Movement Up the Value Chain:** Strengthen our position as a key player in strategic humanitarian initiatives.
- **Confirm Routes to Market:** Solidify our operational pathways to ensure smooth and effective delivery of aid.
- **Demonstrate Effectiveness:** Continuously showcase our impact through measurable outcomes and high standards.





For more information please contact:

info@re-act.org.uk

0300 330 9488