



Open Arms  
Malawi

# NEWSLETTER

## Building brighter futures in Malawi!

### WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

- ◆ Helping infants survive and thrive
- ◆ Giving the security of a family home
- ◆ Returning healthy toddlers to their communities
- ◆ Building early childhood development
- ◆ Your Open Arms Malawi community

The news from Malawi this year has been dominated by the devastating floods that ripped through the southern region in March. The effects will be felt for the rest of the year and well into the future. We are working closely with children returned to affected regions through our outreach programme. Thanks to your generous support we have been able to provide food, basic supplies and health and sanitation advice and we are rebuilding and repairing homes.

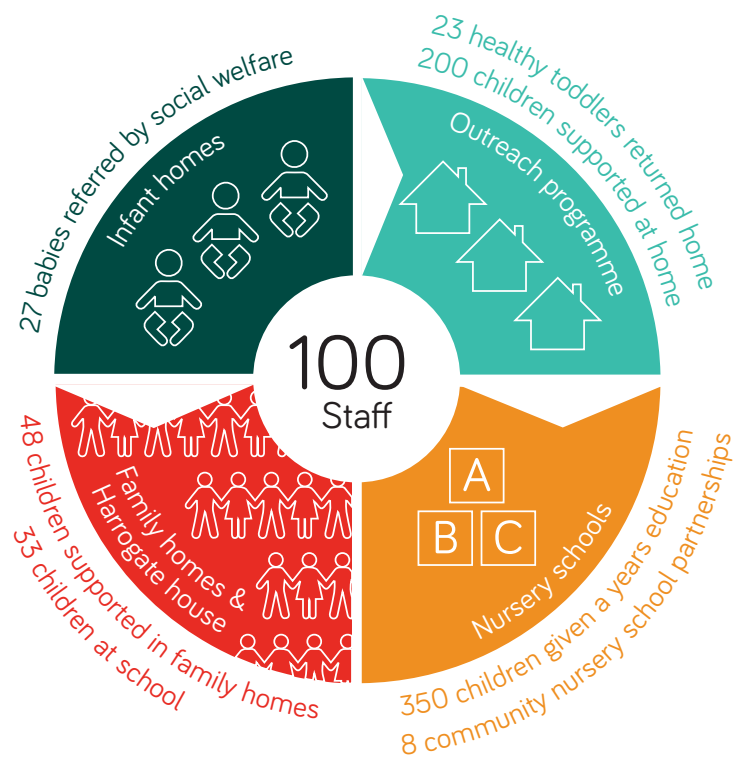
### Help where it is needed

In Malawi, around one in nine children are orphaned and 835,000 Malawian families are caring for an orphaned child. It remains our intention to provide a safe place for vulnerable infants to survive and thrive before returning as healthy toddlers to live with their families. Your help allows us to work in partnership with communities so that they can provide effective early childhood development to allow children to realise their potential.

Over half of the toddlers in Malawi are stunted by malnutrition and one child in sixteen doesn't make their 5th birthday. Sustainable support within communities is essential to changing these figures. That is why it is our ambition to grow our community work and make sure that toddlers can return home and continue to thrive.

The work of the Open Arms teams, our partners and your commitment makes all of this possible. Thank you.

### 2018 AT A GLANCE





Peace in his first days at Open Arms

## Welcomed with Open Arms

Peace, born at the start of 2019, is one of our newest arrivals. He was being looked after by his granny who just couldn't afford the formula milk he needed and so she had no choice but to bring him to Open Arms.

On Peace's first night at Open Arms, he was rushed to hospital where he was diagnosed with neonatal sepsis, and after a worrying few days, he was thankfully discharged. Now back at Open Arms, he is learning to feed well and gaining that all important weight. Milestones and small developments are seen each day as our children learn to grab, roll, sit, crawl, eat independently and take those wobbly first steps. Every child has three key carers that remain with them until they are ready to return home.

## Returning home

It's always bittersweet to see a child leave Open Arms. Staff find it very rewarding to see how they've grown and developed into happy and healthy toddlers.

After five wonderful years at Open Arms, Lydia said goodbye to her fellow children, staff and school teachers this year. She's gone to live with her new foster parents. With no home or family to return to, she moved into Harrogate House while we worked with Social Welfare to find her a family of her own. It was sad to say goodbye, but Lydia enjoyed spending time getting to know her new parents and told our Director Charlie that she was excited to have "a real mum and dad"! We wish her all the best as she settles into her new home.

## Vital early years care

Our infant homes are places where we care for children most at risk and support their return home to their own communities and families.

2018 saw 61 children cared for in our infant homes. They remain an essential support for the government social welfare team who refer new babies to us all year round. When children are well enough to move back home, farewells are planned around the rainy season and we support as needed through their transition.

## Goodbye, but not forever

This year we wave a very special farewell to the wonderful Mrs Phiri as she retires from Open Arms.

Starting with the charity in 2002, she has played a pivotal role in transforming children's lives. She has seen us grow from a single infant home, caring for 26 children, to the organisation we are today. Mrs Phiri was the first qualified nurse to join Open Arms, and through her knowledge, management and training she introduced better standards of care that resulted in a huge drop in infant mortality. She was also instrumental in setting up the outreach programme and community sponsorship. These make sure that when children return home, they continue to grow and develop with support if needed.

Many things have changed in Malawi and at Open Arms since 2002, indeed Mrs Phiri tells us that she "could write a newspaper about her memories" – what a read that would be! Her huge impact on the lives of children will last a lifetime. We're sure you'll join us in passing on our very best wishes for a long and healthy retirement as we say goodbye but not forever...



Mrs Phiri

## Give vital infant care

### Give a regular gift

You can sponsor a baby or child at Open Arms for just £25 a month. Your regular donation gives them the security of a home and allows us to plan for the future.

### Give a one off gift

- £5 gives a week's supply of formula for a baby
- £10 gives a special care therapy session
- £50 gives a months supply of beans for the home
- £75 gives a mother's monthly salary





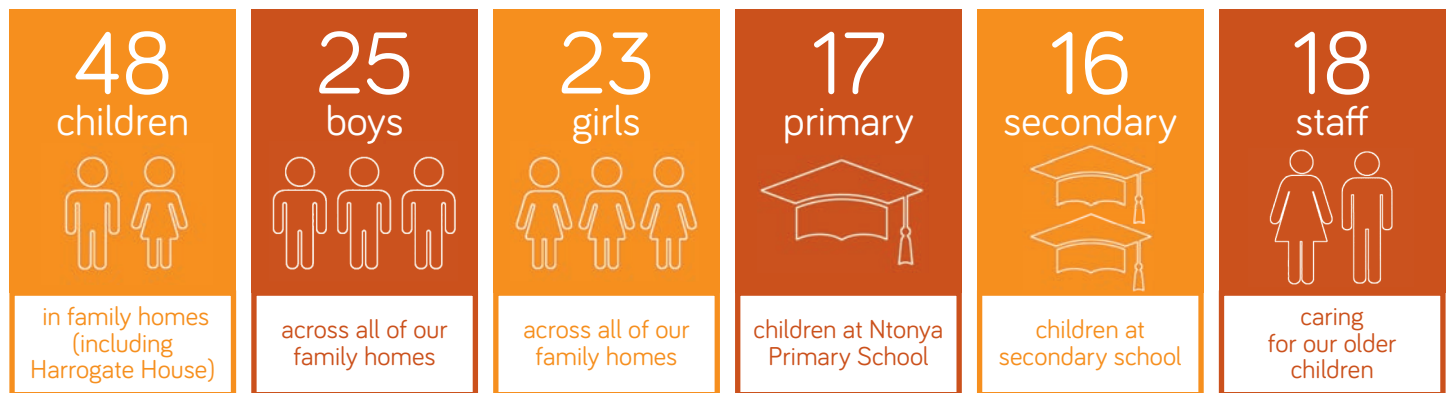
# Children grow up so fast!

It is rewarding to see the children growing and developing in Harrogate house and our family homes. Nursery, school, teenage and early adult years are incredibly formative and we are proud of each and every achievement that our children make on their own journeys.

Our family homes are for children over the age of five who are unable to return home.

A house mother and assistant, appointed from within the infant home, live in the house with their own families and care for around six children. Children go to local schools, make local friends, go on holidays together like any other family.

## At a glance



# Primary education in Malawi

Younger children attend Ntonya school each day. We have seven children that will take their end of primary exams this summer and if successful they will be making the move to secondary school with their peers in September.



Ruth at Ntonya Primary School

# Teens and young adults

15 of our children from 14-18 years are now studying at Blantyre Baptist Academy in Blantyre. They board during term time to benefit from additional academic support and the extracurricular activities that are on offer. Secondary school can be a big challenge and we work closely with the school to monitor the progress of every child.

While Malita started secondary school this year, Eric will be completing his GCSEs and taking the big step into A levels from September. Holiday time is always a welcome break, a chance to switch off and spend time at home with their brothers and sisters.



Eric and his family

In Malawi, if a child doesn't pass the end of year exams they need to repeat the year, which sadly, is very common. This means that classes often contain a mix of ages, which can be difficult at times.

Emmie is one of the children that will be taking her end of year exams this year. Twin to Morris the pair couldn't be more different! She studies hard and is making the most of additional summer classes to prepare for the up and coming exams. Morris enjoys sport more especially football.

The teacher explains that children are expected to work hard and concentrate on their studies to pass each year. 17 of our children attend Ntonya Primary School in Blantyre. Walking past the brightly coloured classrooms, the artwork and posters on the wall is a clear demonstration of the work that has been put in over the year. And seeing children, like Ruth (pictured), bright eyed and proudly dressed in their school uniform makes it all worthwhile.

## Give the security of a family

We need £400 to support a child at Nytonya Primary School for a year and £9,000 to run each family home every year.

Donating in support of our growing children provides the security of a family unit as well as an education that they would otherwise not have.





Every child that returns home faces a different challenge. Our outreach programme is designed to support children and families through this transition.

Matrons visit our families in their villages, providing advice, medicines, food and basic supplies until children are settled and families can support themselves.

These visits are vital for a smooth move home, to continue each child's development and support families that may need a bit more help.



The impact of cyclone Idai

## Chisomo's story

Chisomo was born on 12th June 2016 in Nsanje, she was orphaned and suffering from severe malnutrition. She was brought into Open Arms when she was very young by the local social welfare officer. Chisomo grew and responded well to food and medicines. She was able to return home to her guardian last year.

As with all returnees, Chisomo was visited regularly. But, her weight dropped and so, to make sure that she could remain at home, Mrs Phiri recommended Chisomo for our sponsorship programme. Designed specifically for families most in need, they visit Open Arms monthly, receive a small allowance, basic supplies (like soap and underwear), advice and monitoring.

## Cyclone Idai

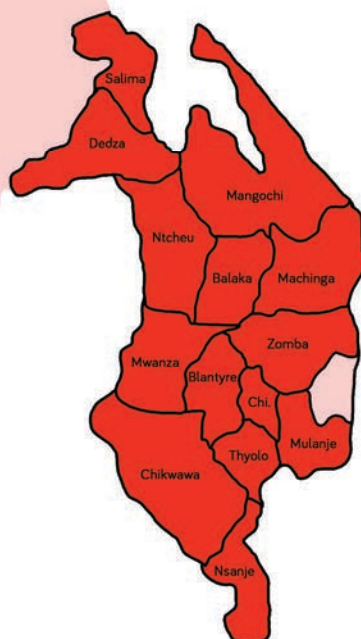
Sadly cyclone Idai hit the lower Shire region in March. Chisomo's small house, which was grass thatched and built of unburnt bricks, was badly damaged. They had to move to live in a shelter with hundreds of other affected families.

As a result of the floods, all crops were washed away. The family were left with nothing to eat, nowhere to sleep, no sanitation facilities, no safe drinking water and no mosquito nets.

## Your help

With your help we have raised over £18,000 so far to support families like Chisomo's. Open Arms driver Kondwani has been overseeing the building work and food distributions.

### Areas that we support



Chisomo's house is now being rebuilt giving her and her family a safe and secure home. Open Arms have rebuilt another Grandmother's house in Chikwawa and other rebuilds and repairs are underway. Ten tonnes of maize is being distributed to the families most in need and Likuni Phala is following this as part of the extended outreach support we are offering. This support will be ongoing as families get back on their feet. Many families will need support for the rest of this year.

We have been overwhelmed by the support you have shown. We were committed to helping those families most in need, but thanks to

your support we have been able to widen our help to staff and other families in low lying regions that have been affected.

You can visit [www.openarmsmalawi.org/floods](http://www.openarmsmalawi.org/floods) to see updates from the team as this important work progresses.

## Give support in the community

### Give regular help

For just £15 a month you can sponsor a child who needs some extra support at home. This small allowance gives them help when they most need it.

### Give a one off gift;

- £6 gives a care pack to children (including soap and water tablets)
- £26 gives a going home pack
- £15 pays for a year of nursery education





# Building early years development in Malawi

Nursery schools have been a key part of the community support we provide in Malawi for over 15 years. We now have nine community nursery schools, providing education and food to 400 children every day.

Our school in the village of Mchocholo opened this year to provide nutrition, security and a better foundation for learning. The whole community came together to celebrate a great partnership.

With support from our corporate partners, schools, individuals, volunteers, the Chief of Mchocholo, local villagers and the school management committee (run by local volunteers) this nursery is set to be a great success with 50 children enrolled from day one.

## The ambition

In line with Government policy, we support the ambition of giving every child the chance of an education in a safe and secure environment near home. We believe that everyone has the right to survive, thrive and transform their potential and education is key to this.

To support this practically we are developing our nursery school strategy in line with the Early Childhood Development Centres strategy that the Malawi government is striving towards. By adopting this model we will facilitate more holistic care for the community. Centres will function as nursery schools that foster a nurturing environment. And children will be supported in their learning and wider development by qualified staff.

Early Childhood Development Centres provide a valuable resource for the whole community. It is a partnership that we are proud of, providing the building blocks, tools and advice for some of the most vulnerable and remote families in Malawi.

## Supporting children like Jaffu



Jaffu and his sister

Jaffu Mtokoma came to Open Arms Mangochi when he was two years old after his mother had sadly passed away.

Starting his learning journey by attending the Mangochi Nursery, Jaffu soon hit all developmental milestones and learnt vital interpersonal skills.

Now aged 12, Jaffu is no longer a shy and timid little boy but a young man who has worked hard to be the top of his class, a position which has been achievable due to the best foundations provided for him at an Open Arms community nursery.



The opening of Mchocholo nursery

## The next step

This year, we have already started building our tenth Early Childhood Development Centre in the village of Mauwa, designed to help even more children achieve their potential.

Good childhood development can break the cycle of poverty, creating opportunities for individuals, the community and the country.

You can follow our updates on social media or by signing up to our email newsletter [www.openarmsmalawi.org](http://www.openarmsmalawi.org)

## Where our nurseries are



● Nursery Locations

## Give early years development

We need £1,000 to run each community nursery school for a year. This includes food, teacher allowance and monitoring by Open Arms. Donate today to give children in remote communities the chance to get a head start on their education and set strong foundations for learning.





It is an exciting time for Open Arms Malawi as we turn the big 20 next year! This is a tremendous landmark that is thanks to far too many people to list individually!

Staff, trustees, volunteers, fundraisers, partners and supporters past and present underpin all of our work and we rely on a huge community to be able to generate the funds needed to operate all the work in Malawi. There is always something to do and we're incredibly lucky to work with such a fantastic team.

Sadly, this year we will be saying goodbye to Jasmine as she moves to join the charity her father founded. It goes without saying that she will be greatly missed as she has been a huge asset to the UK team over the past couple of years, bringing Malawi to life for everyone she has met. We thank her for her hard work and wish her all the very best.

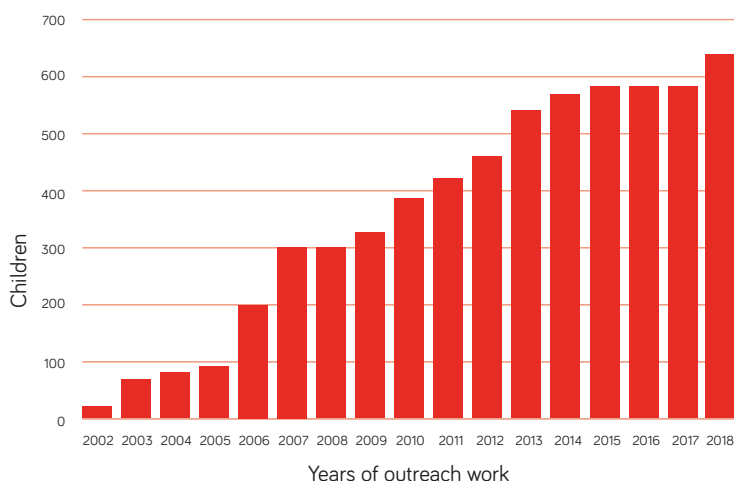
## Your impact in Malawi

Since 2000, over 700 children have been referred to our infant homes and been given round the clock medical care and support. Many of these babies would have died without this help. At the same time our community outreach work has benefitted over 6,000 children and this number is growing too.



On behalf of us all - Thank you!

### Children supported at home



## What next

As our work grows so does the need for funding. The vital support of the infant homes comes at a large cost. It is a constant challenge for us to raise enough funds to keep the entire operation running. Our priorities this year will be to grow our income enough to secure a sustainable future for Open Arms.

Thanks to your help we sent £420k over to Malawi last year to improve the lives and outcomes of the children that we work with.

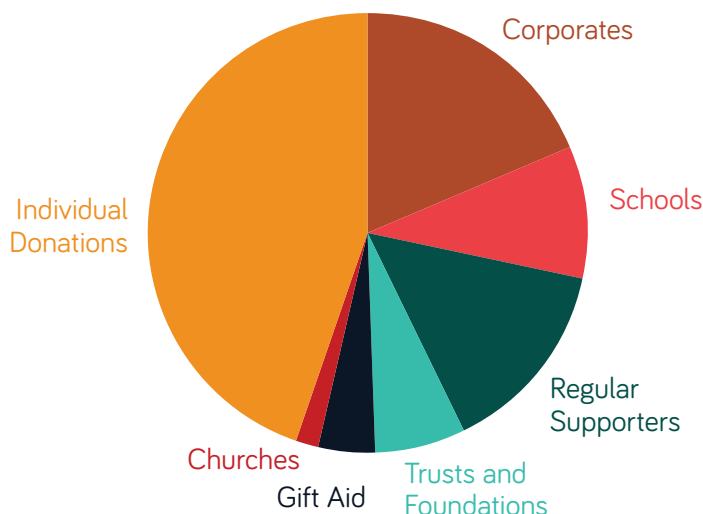
We're proud of our partnership with the team in Malawi and are committed to supporting their vision for the future. A recent visit to our projects allowed us to delve into the next phase of our strategy aimed at providing the most effective support where it is needed the most and we look forward to sharing details as the work unfolds.

## Working together

This year has seen over 40 volunteers travelling out from Johnson & Johnson group of companies, to provide care, security and a future for some of Malawi's most vulnerable children. Employees from SMBC Aviation Capital also made their third trip to Malawi to offer support through their work with the Malawi team.

School groups continue to be central to the Open Arms community and this year we were delighted to work with Ashville College, Kingswood School, George Watson College, Verde Valley and Queen Elizabeth's School who have given tremendous support. Spreading our news to students and parents has helped build Open Arms to what it is today. We are grateful for each and every individual who chooses to take time to share news from Malawi and champion our work to bring lifechanging benefits to children in Malawi.

### How we are funded



We can only make the impact we do with you and we'd like to say an enormous thank you for your commitment and each and every contribution you have made to Open Arms this year.



# How are you inspired to help?

Volunteering in Malawi is your opportunity to help vulnerable children and see first hand the amazing difference this makes. You will develop your skills, experience a rich African culture, explore Malawi, and meet some great people.

## Alice's story

I'm Alice and I'm from Scotland. I am currently on a gap year before starting university so I am spending several months at Open Arms volunteering. I found out about Open Arms through my old school who support the charity and many people recommended coming here, so very quickly I was booking my flight to come out to Malawi.

Each day I help feed the babies, help in the kitchen with dishes or preparing snacks and enjoy lots of play time with the babies. I often visit the older kids at Harrogate House and do tasks like drawing or learning new numbers and words with them.

It's very special here to be able to see the children grow so quickly and get noticeably stronger and more confident everyday. Each child has such a unique and strong personality and it's amazing to see the bond they have to each of the mothers.

Working with the house mothers every day, you really get to learn about them and their culture. Everyone is incredibly friendly, will always help you out and show you something new.

The first few days were a little tricky, but I quickly settled in and everyone was welcoming and helpful. Now two months in, the thing I enjoy the most is seeing the children develop different skills like throwing a ball or learning to walk. A hug with a child is very rewarding and when they laugh, you can't help but also laugh.



Playtime in Blantyre infant home

I would definitely recommend volunteering here. There are so many wonderful things to do and incredible people to meet. Malawi is such a beautiful country and in your free time there are lots of things to go see and do. Overall, my experience with Open Arms has been amazing!

## What other volunteers say



Volunteering with Open Arms

*"My time in Malawi was absolutely amazing. It was hard work, but then I expected it to be. I had such a fantastic time with the other volunteers, the staff, and of course the babies and young people at Open Arms. I can't wait to go back!"*

**Graeme, Edinburgh**

*"Volunteering at Open Arms was a defining moment in my life. If I had to summarise it in a few words they would be: fun, amazing, eye opening, beautiful, madness, best thing I ever did"*

**Sharon, London**

*"The impact of Open Arms' professional and efficient model is highly effective. The sustainability of returning infants to their communities, rather than keeping them institutionalised for their whole lives, creates empowerment and benefit reaching further than the walls of the homes."*

**Becky Bottle**

## Give your time and skills

Sound like something that you would like to do? We have volunteers from all over the world and all walks of life.

Find out more today

[www.openarmsmalawi.org/volunteer](http://www.openarmsmalawi.org/volunteer)





We have always been lucky to have amazing people who do amazing things to raise money for Open Arms. This year we may have our most unusual yet. But it doesn't matter what you do or how much you raise, everyone at Open Arms, from the team in the UK to the team and children in Malawi appreciate and never take for granted what you do for us. So we want to say thank you to everyone who has raised funds for us in the past year and good luck to everyone who will be raising funds in the future including those taking part in the Prudential Ride London 100 in August and the Great North Run in September.

## Make a MEAL of it

An evening with family or friends is a great way to spend time together and in November you can really make a MEAL of it by raising funds for Open Arms at the same time! Join us to host a dinner with friends and raise money to provide the nutrition that is vital to early year's development.

Visit [www.openarmsmalawi.org/meal](http://www.openarmsmalawi.org/meal) for more information.



## Our fundraisers



In November 18 Jarred trekked 100km across the Sahara in 5 days raising £1195. During the trek he had to contend with the heat, a variety of terrain and camping under the stars. *'It was a tough but rewarding, inspirational experience and worth it all to raise money for Open Arms.'*



Billy Rudolph ran the London Marathon in April with an amazing time of 3 hours 33 minutes and raised over £2300. An amazing achievement!



Dimitri Hass swam around the island of Bermuda over 3 weekends in memory of his friend Nick Marriot, a long time supporter of Open Arms. He raised \$4758.



Veronica Evans visited Open Arms 3 years ago and was inspired to cycle the 990 miles from Lands End to John O'Groats to support our work. If you would like to donate <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/veronica-evans1>



In July Charlie, Theo and Tim will set off in an attempt to drive 10,000 miles to Mongolia in a small 1L car without any support. Open Arms is one of two charities that they are raising money for. To find out how you can support them go to <https://mongolrally2019.site123.me/> or <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/miles4malawi>



In December Guy Munnoch, John Moorehouse, Mike Winn and Steve Hughes are attempting to break the world record for the oldest team of 4 to row across the ocean in the Talisker Whiskey Atlantic Challenge in their boat the Grey Escape. To support them <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/john-moorhouse4> and to keep up with their progress keep an eye on our Facebook page.



## Cycle Malawi 2020

If you fancy an adventure of your own next September, why not look at our Malawi Cycle Challenge 2020. A fantastic 10 day trip, a 5 day bike ride with a day visiting our home in Mangochi and local community projects. You'll experience the real Malawi and see what we do.

For more details contact [judith@openarmsmalawi.org](mailto:judith@openarmsmalawi.org)

## Anyone for golf?

Join us for the Open Arms Golf Day on Friday September 20th 2019 at Ilkley Golf Club. Always a relaxed and friendly day, we would be delighted if you would support us by bringing a team of four people, men's, ladies or mixed teams are all welcome. To book your team contact us on [hello@openarmsmalawi.org](mailto:hello@openarmsmalawi.org)



## How are you inspired to help?

By getting involved with Open Arms you can help transform the lives of hundreds of children in Malawi. There is a way to get involved to suit you and we'll support you all the way!



Open Arms Malawi, Franklin House, 4 Victoria Avenue, Harrogate HG1 1EL Open Arms is a registered charity in England and Wales Reg No. 1171686