



A year together

2024 - 2025



Mel Dunn

Together Trust Chief Executive



Welcome to a year together

As the new Chief Executive of this wonderful charity, I have the great pleasure of introducing this year's review.

I joined the Together Trust in January 2025 and it's been the most incredible experience so far.

My introduction to the Trust started when two friends who thought I'd be a great fit shared the job advert for the Chief Executive role. From there, I had an insightful six months getting to know the Trust and all associated with it. At each stage of the recruitment journey, I had a deepening sense of association and belonging and I was thrilled and delighted to learn that I had been successful in securing the Chief Executive role.

As a teenager I was driven by a strong desire to help others and volunteered for a learning disability charity as a befriender. I then trained as a nurse at Manchester Royal before training as a social worker. For over 30 years I've worked in various roles to helping people in need of support.

Joining the Trust has felt like coming home, everyone has been so welcoming. **I have had the privilege of seeing the positive impact the Trust has on the lives of others, made possible by our incredible staff and volunteers** who help people to grow their confidence, self-belief, independence, and wellbeing.

The work of the Trust can be difficult but extremely rewarding. It has a long and rich history, one that is grounded in communities across Greater Manchester. Its amazing journey and continued growth to support more people and campaign for change is commendable. Working alongside our incredible people, I look forward to leading the Trust in helping people to thrive for years to come.





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Who we are

We are the Together Trust

For over 150 years, we've been championing and caring for people with disabilities, autism and complex health needs, as well as providing life-changing support for cared-for children and care-experienced people.

Today, we're one of the North West's leading disability, education and care charities. We help children, adults, parents and carers, delivering individual care, support and education to thousands of people and their families each year.





Who we are

Our mission

To champion the rights, needs and ambitions of the people we support – they are at the heart of everything we do. We stand by them and we work together for change

Together we

→ care

learn ←

→ support

grow ←

Our values

Positive

We take pride in celebrating the difference we make.

Professional

We act in a fair and respectable way that recognises our collective expertise.

Passionate

We encourage creative ideas and inspire one another.

Supportive

We are considerate and caring towards one another.

Our vision

A society where people thrive because they are valued within their communities



**What
we do**





What we do

Everyone deserves to lead a happy life – together, we make that possible.

At the Together Trust, we deliver individual care, support and education services across the North West.

Everyone deserves a place to call home

Whether that's a place to call your own, somewhere to rest and recharge or get stability and support. We're proud to offer warm and nurturing homes for children and young people. We help them grow their independence and shape their own story - all while regaining a sense of belonging.

Find out more about our caring homes at togethertrust.org.uk/caring-homes





Specialist learning environments

We support children and young people from age 5 all the way to 25 with individual learning plans.

Head to togethertrust.org.uk/education to find out more about Bridge College, Inscape House School and Inscape Vocational College.


Bridge
College

**Inscape
House
School**

**Inscape
Vocational
College**

Be brave, be brilliant, be a foster carer

We've been growing our foster family for over 25 years. If you've got a passion for helping young people succeed, you could be a Together Trust foster carer.

If you are interested in joining our fostering family, visit fostertogether.org.uk



What we do



Family support

We've helped a lot of families over the years, and we know that every family is different. Our support includes Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) mediation services, SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service) and autism sleep clinics.

Find out more about how we help families thrive at togethertrust.org.uk/helping-families

Community support

We put our services at the heart of local communities, whether that's helping adults to live independently or creating spaces for young people to learn, work and play.

Find out how we help people be valued within their communities at togethertrust.org.uk/community-support



Therapy and specialist support

Our experienced multi-disciplinary team offers a wide range of therapy and training programmes to professionals, bespoke input for children and young people in a variety of settings and universal advice for the wider community in which they live and learn. We can provide assessments, 1:1 and group therapy, programmes of support and written reports.

Find out more at togethertrust.org.uk/therapy-and-specialist-support



Campaigning

We work alongside the people we support to create change and make sure their voice is heard.

Find out where we stand at
togethertrust.org.uk/campaigning

What we've achieved



1,062 
mediation service enquiries




3,800+
hours given by volunteers

3,100+
children, young people,
adults and families
supported

 **58**
GCSE or equivalent
grades achieved (Inscape)

 **36**
young people fostered
by our carers

4.5/5 
rating given by parents and people we support for
the overall quality of the services we provide



What we've achieved

The staff at Inscape Vocational College are very understanding and supportive, very inclusive and make everyone feel welcome and happy.

– Inscape Vocational College student

The staff at Bridge College are fabulous the way they are with the young adults, I could not be happier.

– Bridge College parent

My child went from sleeping in my bed to sleeping in his own at a good time, thanks to the support of the Sleep Therapist.

- Parent of child helped by Sleep Clinic

The Together Trust are a brilliant agency. The support, training and 24/7 contacts are absolutely superb.

– Foster carer

Newbridge plays a huge part in our lives & we are extremely grateful our daughter can attend.

- Parent from Newbridge

Inscape has changed our entire life, including family life.

- Inscape House School parent

A big thank you for making such a positive difference to everyone in our family.

- Parent of young person in one of our residential homes

Our campaigning impact



BBC Radio 4 feature

on unregistered settings
research by Andy Smith
(ADSC President)



‘What Comes After Education?’

co-hosted parliamentary launch at
Westminster

35



blogs published spotlighting
key issues, policy developments and
lived experiences

Unregistered children’s homes briefing

used by Lord Watson of Invergowrie during the House of Lords
Committee Stage of the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill

400+

survey responses from disabled children, young people and families through our "What Comes After Education?" research project.



Contributed to policy positions



3

government consultations responded to

on post-education transitions for disabled young people

60+

emails sent to MPs through our public action calling for an end to illegal children's homes

YES Forum

Presented our work on the poverty and care link





Together we
care

9-year-old Lola* had been in the hospital for a substantial amount of time before finding her new home at Norvent, a Together Trust residential home which specialises in supporting children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Lola had selective mutism, but the team found creative ways to bond with Lola and always celebrated 'wins', no matter how small.

"Being an established team from day one was so significant. We had to learn from each other. It was so open and reflective," Assistant Manager Mandy recalls.

"Little by little, she was becoming more chatty – and more cheeky! Seeing the subtle connections she was making was so rewarding."



A few months into her new home, Lola was flourishing – but the next challenge was getting her back into education.

“She’d missed so much school. We were thinking, ‘How are we going to manage this?’

“We arranged a tutor from Manchester Virtual Schools, and it was a perfect fit. We’d celebrate every achievement openly and genuinely. We all understood the importance of small wins and the bigger picture.”

They worked with Virtual Schools so that Lola could take her SATS at home, and she did amazingly, despite all the time she’d missed from school, and they secured a place at a supportive secondary school for her.

“She started Year 7 last September. Our team, the school, and Virtual Schools all worked together, but we were led by Lola the whole time. When she’d say, ‘I can’t do a full day,’ we listened.” How long Lola could stay at school every day kept increasing, and now, one year into school, she hasn’t missed a day yet!

“Going to school has given her a sense of purpose. She’s starting Drama Group next year. She’s just so funny, she needs to be on the stage! She’s on the waiting list for St John’s Ambulance because her dream is to become a paramedic.”

**Names and identifiable details changed to protect Lola’s identity*

“I’ve worked at the Together Trust for 31 years and there are many kids I stay in contact with, even well into their thirties, and Lola will be one of the children that I and the rest of the team will always, always remember.”

- Mandy, Assistant Manager

Find out more about our residential care services by heading to:

togethertrust.org.uk/caring-homes



Together we
learn

We were delighted to open a brand new service this year to expand our ever-growing service offering.

Lyndene, a Home from Home environment based in Wythenshawe, was established through a collaborative effort involving Manchester City Council's social care team and NHS England. The new service works with young people with learning difficulties and autism and their families to develop systems and strategies aimed at keeping families together. The service also works in partnership with schools and multidisciplinary teams to facilitate improvements in school attendance and access to the education system for children.



Lyndene creates a safe space where our expert team can help the young people we support to develop new skills, to take carefully planned risks and to develop their current interests further. Young people have the opportunity to come to Lyndene for planned short sessions or visits – either by themselves, or with family members.

Whilst many services support young people with autism and learning difficulties once a family breakdown has happened, Lyndene differs in that it aims to support families before

this point to strengthen bonds, keep families together in their home and give everyone a chance to thrive.

Having been operational for over a year now, we are already seeing young people benefiting from Lyndene; thriving through participating in the engaging activities organised by staff. One young person particularly enjoyed a scavenger hunt and quizzes about different countries, which helped strengthen the bond between them and their mother through shared experiences. Another young person has improved their baking skills,

mastering recipes for brownies and pizza in just two weeks. They take great joy in sharing his culinary creations with staff and family.

“I just want to extend my thanks for all the support you are providing us, especially regarding school.”

- A parent who has accessed Lyndene

Find out more about our range of services across the North of England by visiting:

togethertrust.org.uk





Together we

achieve

Late last year, we joined forces with fellow charity National Star to launch our nationwide survey 'What comes after education'; the findings of which are shared with the government and other organisations with the long-term ambition of improving the way that young people are supported into adulthood.

At the parliamentary launch of these findings, we spoke to Rebecca, whose autistic son Joshua graduated from Inscape House School last year. She has been a passionate advocate for people with SEND for years.




Rebecca shared: “Even though my son has been awarded a 3-year college placement, the local authority has said it will only pay for the first year. After that, they will move him into a supported internship or into adult social care!

They have made that decision without considering what is in the best interest for my son, without talking to the college team who support him and without talking to me. They are not putting him at the heart of the decision making.

So now I must prepare for yet another fight. I can prove categorically how much he needs his education in order to support himself in the future. I am terrified what will happen next for my son when he leaves education. What is out there today isn’t good and extremely hard to navigate.

Yet, with the right support, my son has such potential. Thanks to the specialist school and the college he attends, he now does two half-days of work experience each week at two different settings and is thriving. That has happened because the college listens



and the college understands.
We continue to fight for our
children to give them the best
outcomes, because if we don't
speak up for them, nobody
else will!"

**Sadly, these experiences
are not uncommon. In our
comprehensive report, our
findings show that young
people and their families
up and down the country
face challenges when
transitioning into adulthood.**

Read the report by visiting:

whatcomesaftereducation.com



Together we

grow

We're so proud of the progress the adults we support have made in the past year at Salford Hub, one of our community services, exploring new activities and strengthening their skills.

One of the gentlemen who attends Salford Hub has been flourishing at his local swimming pool. After years of struggling with public activities, he has been working with staff over the past two years to build his confidence and encourage him to go out into the community. And all the hard work is paying off!



Sameya, Senior Support Worker, shares more:

“We began with trips to the park and feeding the ducks and, slowly but surely, he’s now regularly going for swims at three different pools. He’s asking for more and more swimming trips! He’s been twice this week and he’s super happy.

Another individual loved playing the PlayStation at the hub so we worked towards going to a local game centre. He’s now thriving at the game centre, where he’s engaging in a new shared space. His growing confidence has

enabled him to initiate conversations with new people and ask them their names.

A big part of what we do at Salford Hub is teach people skills to navigate activities in communal settings; building skills in the safety of the hub which we can then generalise more widely. It’s about risk enablement and taking positive risks. The individuals can then build new routines that enrich their daily lives, allowing them to participate in activities they love.

We recently held a summer BBQ where all the people supported came outside and ate together for the first time, which was a huge moment."

"Everything we do is person-centred and we're constantly learning. It's really exciting to see the results. It's been a journey!"

- Sameya, Senior Support Worker

Find out more about our
community services

togethertrust.org.uk/community-support



Mark

Jill

A black line representing a spotlight beam hangs from the top center of the page, ending in a small black circle that illuminates a yellow house-shaped graphic.

Fostering Spotlight

Across the UK, 7,000 new fostering homes are needed to care for children who are unable to live with their own family.

There's lots you can do with a spare room in your house, from a home gym to a walk-in wardrobe. **But nothing is more rewarding than turning a spare room into a home for a foster child.**

Two people who have answered this call for care are Jill and Mark, who have used their spare room to provide a loving home to many children across their years of fostering.

Fostering spotlight

Jill explained the difference becoming a foster carer has made to her life:

“The impact of fostering on my life is that it has completely taken over it, we live with these children every day, it’s the first thing we think about.

Being a foster carer has really changed my life. To see these young people who haven’t had the experiences as others their age, to be able to provide

those experiences for them and let them thrive in life... it just means everything to me.”

Mark added: “Seeing the children leave and get good careers, you give yourself a tap on the back to say you’ve done a good job.”

Whilst there are many options when choosing who to foster with, Jill and Mark chose the Together Trust to benefit from the supportive, local fostering team and the extensive training available.

Jill said:

“

The Together Trust will give you the opportunity to go and speak to other foster carers, to find out their real-life experiences. They also outlined all the training that was available as well as explaining what was expected of us and the challenges we might face. They provide wonderful support.

”

From Mark:

“

The Together Trust has been a fantastic agency for us, the support mechanism, the training; everything has been superb. And we decided to go ahead with fostering after some initial training and, 21 years later, we are still doing it and still enjoying it!

”



Our volunteers

Our wonderful volunteers have continued to support services and people across the Together Trust. In addition to the time contributed by our trustees and governors, they donated **3,310 hours to our services** and **551 hours to our events**.

They have contributed in lots of different ways, including:

Campaigning

Researching evidence gaps to help us champion the rights of the people we support.

Residential care

Creating sensory gardens.

Fundraising

Taking photographs of clothing for us to sell and raise money online.

Driving

This special group transported vulnerable children and young people across our education and residential services on important journeys, including to school, work experience, sports tournaments, educational trips, as well as collecting donations.

Education

Supporting our Bridge College students

with their music and horticulture studies, music and welcoming visitors on site.

Family support

Creating sleep service materials to help children and families have a restful night.

Central support services

Helping us share information through writing articles

Hear from one of our amazing volunteers

Amber has been working as an Assistant Researcher with our Campaigns team for the Together Trust since March 2023.

“I have greatly enjoyed learning something new. I have a passion for research and I loved harnessing those skills and using them to dive into policy and the literature to create something that could be used for change,” she shared.

Amber spoke about how volunteering with the Together Trust has affected her personally: “My volunteering experience has reignited a belief in myself. I have found a new confidence, particularly in my ability to

collaborate and produce work that I can be proud of.”

When asked what she would say to someone considering a similar voluntary role Amber said:

“Go for it! If you are new to research or have been doing it for a long time I recommend it. Getting to work with the passionate and dedicated people that work for charities like Together Trust has given me great enjoyment, developed my skills, and has given me a platform to do something I am passionate about.”



Congratulations to our horticulture enthusiast, Tom Hatton-Jones, who was a finalist for the Young Volunteer of the Year Award, while our Volunteer Drivers were nominated for the Volunteering Team of the Year Award this year.

**Our thanks go to all
our amazing volunteers
for their incredible
dedication and support
during the year.**

Interested in volunteering with us?
togethertrust.org.uk/volunteer-us

Our supporters

Some fantastic individuals and organisations, including our own services, support our work in a range of really helpful ways. These are just a few examples and we're immensely grateful to all our supporters.

The Vernon Building Society

We were very lucky last year to have the Vernon Building Society sponsor our annual Join Together Festival as part of their centenary celebrations.

“It was great to be the sponsor of the Together Trust Festival in the centenary year of the Vernon Building Society. As a community focused building society there was no better event for us to sponsor. We had a great day supporting the event and could see how much the young people in the community value your help. The sponsorship shows in your words “Together we thrive” and in our words “Together we are greater.”

- Judith Aspin, Finance Director, The Vernon Building Society

Vernon had such a significant presence on the day of the festival, and we thoroughly enjoyed having them there as supporters. Their stand was the final point of our scavenger hunt, meaning every attendee had to visit their stall to collect their prize, their brass band performed twice in front of the stage, and their mascot, Vernon Bear, was also in attendance.

In the lead up to the event, staff from Vernon volunteered at the Together Trust to help set up for the festival and use one of their corporate volunteering days.



Romiley Golf Club

Romiley Golf Club raised an incredible £4,000 for us this year for much needed equipment for one of our residential services Woodlands' sensory room. This is part of a partnership where Romiley Golf Club kindly selected the Together Trust as their charity to support for the year. The club has worked tirelessly raising funds through a golf event, Lady Captain's Day, and Clarins event, amongst other fundraisers throughout the year.



We are so grateful to Romiley Golf Club and in particular Lady Captain Rebecca Byle and Captain David Ogden for choosing us and raising such an incredible amount for our service.

Pocket Nook

This year three Together Trust staff members took fundraising to new heights by taking part in a sky dive! They took on this challenge to raise funds to take the young people at one of our residential services Pocket Nook to Disney Land. They collectively contributed over £1500 to the fundraising total which is a truly

incredible team effort. Pocket Nook provides a home for up to five children with autism, learning disabilities, and complex needs. This holiday will be a once in a lifetime trip for the young people that they would not be able to access without support from their dedicated team. A huge well done for our amazing dare devil sky divers!



Ways to support

Sign up to the lottery

Each week you could be in with a chance of winning the top prize of £25,000, 2nd prize of £1,000, plus 35 other prizes including 5 x £20, 10 x £10, and 20 x £5! You can join from just £1 a week - £1 is equal to one entry and you can have up to five entries a week.

togethertrust.org.uk/lottery

Shop online

The Together Trust sell a wide variety of new and second hand items via our Depop and Vinted shops.

search

[togethertrustcharity](#)



We're also registered with easyfundraising, who donate a percentage of your transaction when you're shopping online.

easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/togethertrust

Nominate us

Whether you work for a company that nominates a charity of the year or are a member of a group that does fundraising events, we'd love to hear from you!

Attend our events

Whether you're buying a ticket to attend one of our events, sponsoring, providing goods or services, or volunteering on the day, your support is crucial! Visit

togethertrust.org.uk/events

Recycle with us

The Together trust recycle a variety of different items in exchange for cash donations to our charity, raising vital funds and keeping items out of landfill. For a list of items we accept, visit: togethertrust.org.uk/recycle-together-trust

Sponsor a support animal

Our SEND school's Animal-Assisted Intervention (AAI) sessions help improve students' mental, physical, social and emotional functioning. You will receive a welcome letter, a poster, a fact card and email updates. togethertrust.org.uk/support-our-aa-animals-£3-monthly-donation

Run for charity

Keen runner/cycler/walker/swimmer or even bungee jumper? You can take part in challenge events throughout the country while raising money for our charity! Visit runforcharity.com/charity/together-trust

Future plans



Our workforce and the people we support are shaping our plans. As we approach the end of our current Stronger Together Plan, we will now focus on developing new longer-term plans to take the Trust forward in the next 5 years and beyond. Over the coming year our commitment to growing and delivering high-quality, person-centred support to meet changing needs remains. We will continue to care for and listen to our incredible, diverse workforce and to working in partnership to strengthen our work and impact.

We will start to strengthen the foundations for ambitious growth, plans which involve:

1

Improving our buildings

2

Leading with compassion to support the wellbeing and development of our workforce

3

Gathering the right information to help shape our services

4

Expanding our reach

5

Growing partnerships

6

Ensuring we meet the highest standards

We look forward to an exciting year ahead and to shaping our longer term plans with and for the people we support, their parent/carers, our workforce and other stakeholders.



Mel Dunn

Mel Dunn
Chief Executive



A handwritten signature in black ink.

Giles Gaddum
Chair of the
Board of Trustees

0161 283 4848
enquiries@togethertrust.org.uk

Together Trust, Together Trust Centre,
Schools Hill, Cheadle, SK8 1JE

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INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Gold

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 **thetogethertrust**

To read our latest news, see what events we have coming up or to see our job and volunteering opportunities, visit **togethertrust.org.uk**

To read our latest Report and Accounts, visit
togethertrust.org.uk/charity-information

A digital copy of this publication can be downloaded at
togethertrust.org.uk/annual-reviews

Please contact us to request this publication in a different format.





Disability,
specialist education
and care