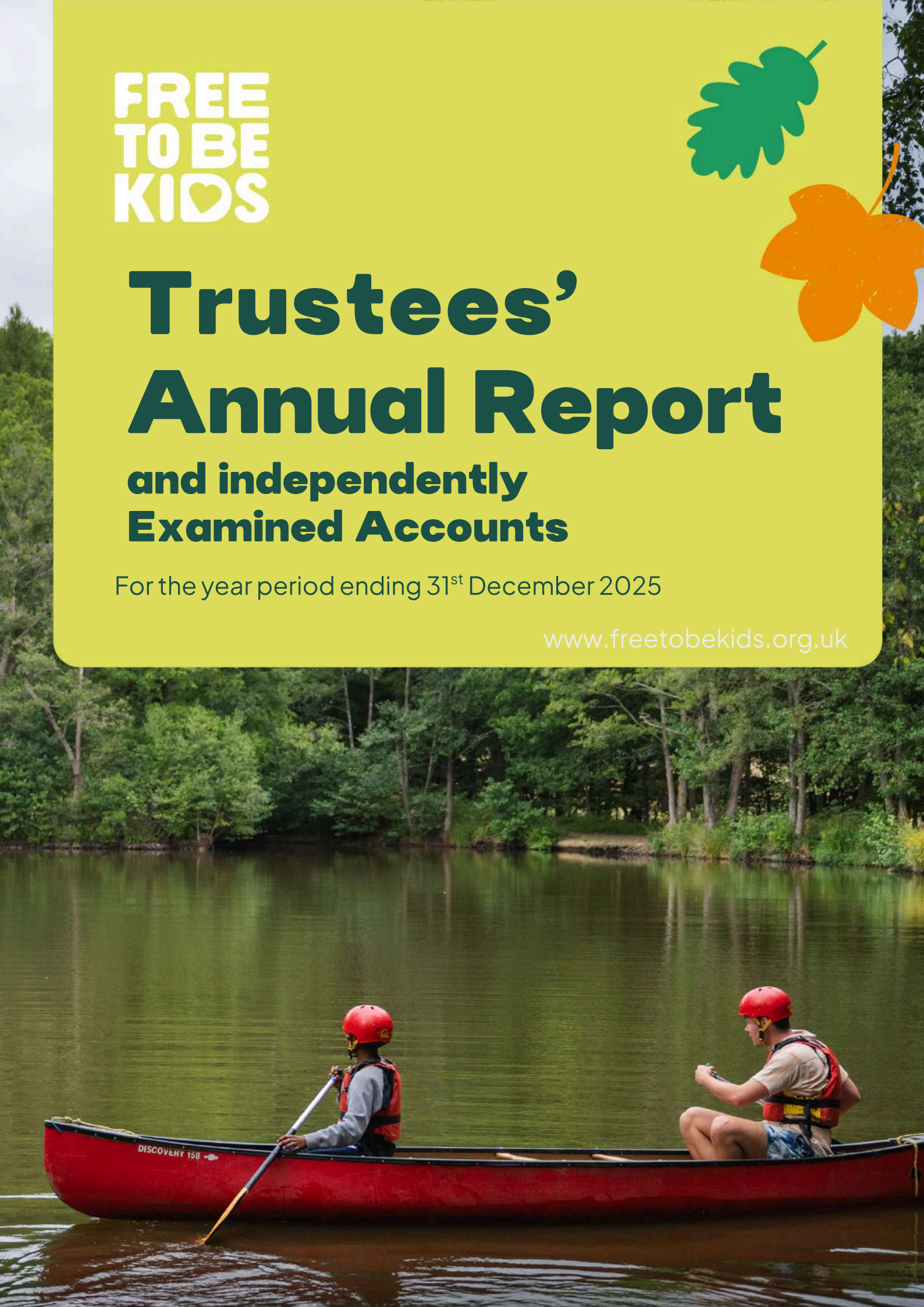
FREE TO BE KIDS

Trustees' Annual Report

and independently Examined Accounts

For the year period ending 31st December 2025

www.freetobekids.org.uk



Reference and administrative details

STATUS	Charitable Incorporated Organisation
REGISTERED OFFICE	Living Space 1 Coral Street Lambeth London SE1 7BE
TRUSTEES	Emma Kendall (Chair) Dr Leila Shepherd-North (Deputy Chair) Rosie Macpherson (Secretary) Elena Davies (Treasurer) Dr Gemma Cheney Beulah Antonin Richard Nicholas Olusola Adebiyi Theresa Dauncey Joel Campbell-Brazier (to 30th July 2026) Amy-Kate Robinson
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS	Mike Gee
BANKERS	HSBC plc
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER	Shruti Soni FCCA FCIE Shruti Soni Ltd Chartered Certified Accountants 117A St. John's Hill Sevenoaks TN13 3PE

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 of the accounts. They comply with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011, and the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice ("SORP"), applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

Overview

Free to Be Kids supports some of the most disadvantaged children in London – the majority with no other access to time away from challenging home circumstances, no access to the benefits of the outdoors or, for increasing numbers, to effective mental health support. The majority have had the building blocks of good mental health deeply eroded - reaching us with destroyed confidence and very significant challenges around anxiety, resilience, managing frustration/anger, and with most having extremely limited belief in their capacity to achieve. 2025 has again seen us continue to deliver deeply impactful work transforming these children's mental health using joy, adventure and the outdoors.

Through 2025, 228 individual children accessed joy and adventure on our programmes and came away reporting vastly improved confidence, increased resilience, gains in the capacity to work together, manage frustration and a reduction in anxiety. Feelings of hopelessness and risk taking behaviour reduced as our projects helped vulnerable children develop their stories about themselves, supported them to achieve beyond their own expectations, increased educational aspirations and unlocked children's belief in the power of their own potential. In total we provided 401child places across our programmes constituting just under 20,000 hours of mental health focussed support to this exceptionally vulnerable group of young people.

Financial results for the year have again been strong, producing a small surplus of £39,197 (2024: £51,404; 2023: £63,530). This reflects the investment in staffing and organisational infrastructures designed to help us build our fundraising, volunteer recruitment and other key capacity areas over the past few years, these being crucial foundations for planned investment in sustainable growth to meet need through 2026 and onwards. The charity remains in a financially stable position, holding free unrestricted reserves of approximately 4.5 months' operating expenditure, though as with most charities, reliant upon in-year fundraising to deliver its services.

Our 5 year strategy is focussed on long-term follow on support to the highest need young people of the already deeply vulnerable children we work with, including an eventual aim to significantly increase place numbers built around sustainable and gradual growth of our existing long-term support pathways: our Mentoring, Young Leaders' and Journey Programmes. 2025 again saw significant financial and time investment towards the foundations which will underpin this focus on long-term support.

Throughout the year, Trustees had regard for the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit when overseeing the activities of the charity.



Our model – about Free to Be Kids

Free to Be Kids (colloquially 'Free to Be') supports some of the most vulnerable children in London to rebuild the foundations of positive mental health using the power of nature and the outdoors.

The majority of children referred to us have deeply ingrained negative views of themselves and their potential. Often reinforced by deeply challenging home and school lives, many arrive believing they are different, failing, rejected or alone. The majority have never left their area of London before. Abuse, harm, trauma and neglect characterise the majority of their childhoods. Most families referred to us do not access other mainstream support.

Our residential and mentoring projects support these children to feel proud, brave, adventurous and special, transforming their stories about who they are, and what they can achieve. Using the power of the outdoors, our programmes are carefully designed using key concepts from attachment, narrative and systems theories to support anxiety, rebuild confidence, address challenges managing anger/frustration, develop resilience and increase aspirations.



(1) The objects of the CIO are, for the public benefit, the relief of children and young people residing in London and the South-East, or any other UK location with a similar need profile as the trustees may from time to time determine, who are in need by reason of their youth, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage via the provision of services that:

(a) support them to develop better emotional health, build inner strengths to overcome challenges within their lives and consequently to manage better within social relationships at home, school or within their communities.

(b) provide practical support, advice or guidance.

(c) increase access to new or enriching experiences that will facilitate social learning and the development of new skills.

(2) In particular, but not exclusively, we will provide:

(a) a range of therapeutic adventures and residential projects.

(b) individual mentoring support.

(c) group based activities with a therapeutic component.

(d) group based activities that support the development of new life skills.

“At Free to Be Kids I feel like I get a break from home. It’s quite stressful at home - we don’t have much space and there’s loads of us. At Free to Be Kids, there’s lots of space and you can get things out of your head.

Sam, age 11



“The child I was referred to was absolutely buzzing. He did not stop talking about the adventures he participated in for over 1 year. He grew in confidence and resilience. He was able to manage confrontation better by being able to regulate after a challenging event, whereas he was unable to do this before going.

Social Worker - Referrer of Sam

Programme Structure

Children are referred by Child Protection Social Workers, schools, domestic violence refuges, Young Carers' groups, and others working with some of the most marginalised children in London. Heavily oversubscribed annually, all projects are provided free of charge to families to prioritise access for families in exceptional need. We specialise in working with families described by others as 'hard to reach'.

Children initially attend **'Thrive Outside'**, a range of 5 day therapeutically structured residentials designed to rebuild the foundations of positive mental health (confidence, self-esteem, resilience, positive aspirations) via a carefully scaffolded programme of outdoor activities. The projects are characterised by joy, adventure, and belonging and employ high adult:child ratios of 1:2 to ensure every child has the attention, support and care they need to rebuild often deeply damaged narratives about their worth and potential. The highest need children return year on year for as long as they need us.



> "At home I don't really get to go outside very much because Ilive in a flat. Here I can go outside and have fun. The helpers make me feel happy and safe.
>
> Mohamed, age 9

Thrive Outside intentionally functions as a gateway into our longer term support programmes:

Journey Programme: a series of 6 specialised small group, high-intervention residentials attended by the same cohort of older young people (aged 12-15) with complex needs over 18 months. Designed to deliver deep impact in supporting harder to reach young people to develop their story about themselves, improve their emotional and mental health, and to make healthier life choices.

Mentoring Programme: providing a year's worth of one-to-one support during evenings and weekends to higher need children who've attended Thrive Outside gateway projects and are in need of longer term support to build confidence and aspirations. 30 sessions over a year.

Young Leaders Programme: supports our oldest teenagers (aged 14-17) who, having graduated from our other programmes, are trained and supported to return on Thrive Outside residentials as young volunteers. Further developing responsibility, teamwork and key life and employability skills the programme empowers them to complete their journey from beneficiary to leader as they dedicate their own time to role modelling and leadership of younger peers.

We are deeply committed to evaluation and evidencing impact, publishing a detailed Impact Report annually.







Structure, Governance and Management

Free to Be Kids is a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (C.I.O), registered charity number 1165678, and is governed via its constitution and its 'Policy & Procedures' manual. As an organisation built around delivering direct support to vulnerable children, with an emphasis on residential work, Free to Be recognises the special responsibilities it holds in respect of safeguarding and child protection. Robust safer recruitment procedures are in place governing the recruitment of volunteers. All components of all projects are subject to thorough risk assessment. Where external instructors are required, they are selected in line with the relevant standards for accreditation. Policies in these areas are carefully developed in accordance with current legislation and sector best practice and are reviewed on a rolling basis every two years.

The Trustees confirm appropriate insurance is in place covering all activities.

The charity is led by a small leadership team with governance provided by the separate Trustee Board. Between them the leadership team have in excess of 30 years' experience leading interventions and residential work with extremely vulnerable young people. The charity's safeguarding provision is led by Mike Gee who is a consultant social worker with 20 year's post-qualifying practice and particular experience working with vulnerable children in non-mainstream settings.

Through the financial year the Board undertook an in-depth skills audit and subsequent recruitment process, culminating in the appointment of three new trustees to the Board. New trustees are appointed by due process led by the current trustees, and trustees serve for a term of three years, after which they may be reappointed. Trustee meetings took place at least termly.

The Board includes senior professionals holding the following areas of expertise:

- Clinical psychology, Looked After Children, Social Care and CAMHS.
- Residential support and outreach therapeutic youth work.
- Finance, investments, and financial controls.
- Charity fundraising.
- Management strategy, growth planning, financial modelling
- Contract & Property law

Free to Be Kids is run by a small staff team, increasing during 2025 from 8 up to 10, keeping core costs to a minimum. All staff work directly with young people or on projects as part of their role. The Charity relies upon and benefits immensely from several thousand hours of volunteer support each year. We believe it is the special qualities uniquely brought by volunteers – their particular passion, creativity and commitment to come together to make things work and to do the small things well, which makes what we offer so special.

Achievements and Performance

The Trustee's primary goals for the 2025 financial year were:

- Continue to work towards a strategic plan of significantly increasing place numbers on our longer-term support pathways targeted to higher need young people.
- Specifically, aim to double mentoring numbers from 10 to 20 in 2025, and to 30 in 2026, thereby building out enhanced support for larger numbers of young people between projects.
- Continue to build the sustainable infrastructure needed to deliver our existing work over the long term for young people. In particular, complete work on Monday.com to systemise all project, volunteering and service delivery logistics; work with schools and Social Care to evaluate and hone our referrals process; expand opportunities for seasonal residential staffing, in particular to former beneficiaries.
- Continue to invest in our staffing capacity to deliver project place growth that is sustainable, increasing staff numbers to 9-10 FTE in 2025 (from 8 in 2024) with a focus on residential project staffing and youthwork, as well as on the fundraising resources to ensure project delivery staffing growth is sustainable.
- Invest in growing our volunteer base whilst creating new pathways for longer term volunteers to stay involved outside of residential project/mentoring related volunteering.
- Ensure the quality and 'magic' of our existing projects is maintained as we grow.
- Continue to operate within our reserves policy.

2025 was another successful year and the charity has achieved each of these aims. The headline focus continues to be very much one of 'sustainability' – of staff and volunteer capacity, funding, and project logistics – whilst delivering high-quality impactful work to particularly vulnerable young Londoners as we scale cautiously and sensibly.

In line with our growth plans, significant time was invested in increasing volunteer engagement, diversity and longevity of volunteering, leading to a significant growth in the number of hours' volunteered. We are proud that the number of former beneficiaries now returning as volunteers has again increased year on year, and we have ambitious plans to grow this, our 'Young Leaders' programme through 2026-27.

We have also invested in our staff team – rolling out 'new to management' training for our new management team, re-evaluating training pathways, and beginning work to explore the role therapeutic supervision might play in supporting our team to work with some of the most disadvantaged children in London.





Our partnership with the Woodcraft Folk which sees us take over their base at Cudham Environmental Activities Centre in Kent for each school holiday, continues to grow from strength to strength.

But the highlight are the incredible young people we support. In total, 2025 saw 401 places delivered across all programmes (2024: 355) constituting just under 13% project place growth. This is a direct product of the careful work on systems, infrastructure and sustainability we have poured time and effort into over the last two years, intentionally taking the time to transition the charity from micro start up in 2016, to a now established, deeply impactful long term organisation.

Throughout the year there have been moments of impact, togetherness, adventure and personal growth for the deeply vulnerable children whom we support. From the 9-year-old boy who'd never left his area of London before marvelling at the sunset from the top of a South Downs hill, to the 15 year-old girl formerly struggling with deep anxiety and self-harm challenges after a childhood of trauma, who has just qualified as a Young Leader and will be returning on projects now brimming with confidence, self-belief and purpose to help others walk the same path she has trodden with us.

> "Sometimes I don't feel that what I do in life matters, but when I come to Free to Be Kids, it makes me feel like everything I do really does matter and I'm helping so many other people. It transfers to things outside as well – I feel more confident in my school work, in making friends and talking to people and I know that when I come back to volunteer again, all my friends will be there, so I feel like I have people to fall back on and trust when I need them.
>
> Sammy, Young Leader, 16



Programmes delivered were:

	Individual young people	Notes
Thrive Outside	182	257 Thrive Outside residential places provided to 182 children (As via our recurring respite ongoing support strand, higher need children attend multiple times to enhance impact.)
Journey Programme	38	As a rolling 18 month programme, 2 cohorts of 8 young people each started their journey in 2025, whilst a separate 3 cohorts finished, some having been extended from previous years. Total residential project places delivered = 91.
Mentoring Programme	25	25 individual young people were mentored during 2025.
Young Leaders' Programme	15	15 individual Young Leaders each volunteered multiple times across the year.

Table refers to individual children participating on each project. Some children attended more than one project/category of project. Total unique children worked with across all projects in 2025 was 228. Total project place numbers across all programmes was 401.

Referrals & Need:

As has been the case every year since Covid, all programmes were heavily over-subscribed. There were again very many incredibly sad stories, including a 12-year-old girl rejected by her birth parents, foster placement and adoptive parents, an 8-year-old boy who watched his older brother stabbed in a gang related attack, an 11-year-old girl too anxious to leave the house, go to school, and who doesn't have a friend in the world. On our projects, with careful support from our volunteers, each has begun to see they have potential and capacity far beyond what their childhoods had taught them.

As usual, referring organisations included a wide range of primary and secondary schools operating in deprived areas of London, specialist homelessness charities, Social Services teams, Young Carers' projects, housing associations and a range of other community and charitable organisations. Families referred were often dealing with multiple, often inter-linked, issues of poverty, emotional and behavioural challenges and historical trauma.

Of those referred to us in 2025:

- **100%** were from extremely disadvantaged backgrounds including having experienced housing instability/homelessness; had a parent experiencing mental health problems or addiction issues; acting as Young Carers; recent experiences of loss/trauma; experienced food poverty.
- **100%** would have had no other break from these circumstances or no other safe access to outdoor spaces.
- **Nearly half** had significant involvement from statutory agencies relating to risk (either being at risk of, or having experienced, school exclusion, Social Services, or CAMHS referral within the past year.).
- For **86%** these difficulties were impacting mental health, leading to emotional or social difficulties assessed within either their school or home environment. In particular, the majority struggled with issues relating to low self-confidence, low self-esteem and very limited views of their own worth and potential.

Volunteers & staffing:

Volunteers are our most crucial resource and growth of our volunteer pool continued to be a key aim for 2025 as, alongside funding base growth, this is the key catalyst in unlocking future project place growth. In total 2025 saw 230 volunteers support our projects with nearly 20,000 combined volunteering hours, an increase of 1,000 volunteering hours compared to 2024.

As per last year's report, a core task has been to grow our staff team to prepare for planned growth whilst ensuring sustainability of our work. Full-time equivalent staffing grew from 8.2 FTE to 10.3 by the end of 2025 in line with our targeted strategy. Further, limited, staffing growth will be required over the next 12 months to ensure planned delivery aims are sustainable with a forecast of circa 11.5 FTE required to deliver the organisation's core work sustainably by end 2026 and through 2027. Securing longer term grants and corporate support to underpin staffing growth, in turn underpinning increased project delivery, remains a key aim.

Impact:

The trustees place a high value on evidencing the value and impact of the services Free to Be provides. At the end of projects young people complete child focussed feedback forms allowing us to gather their stories, drawings and the words they use to describe the growth and change. Adult volunteers complete observation sheets and structured feedback opportunities are provided for referrers and for parents. In 2025:

- **100%** of children attending developed at least one significantly improved social skill including making/keeping friends; resolving frustrations without lashing out; relating better with adults.
- **97%** improved in social confidence.
- **93%** self-reported improved indicators of self-esteem and/or social confidence.
- **93%** felt brave enough to try something they had never before felt possible.

For our long-term Journey Programme, 100% of young people self-assessed themselves as having increased resilience, anger management, confidence or other core social skills. 100% of parents/carers reported that their children had reduced risk in at least 2 key areas of their mental health following the programme with 90% of young people and 100% of parents/carers reporting their child showing improved aspirations and belief that they can achieve more than they had thought by the end of the programme.

Further detail regarding our impact can be found within **our 2025 Impact Report via our website.**

Risk Review

The charity did not experience any major incidents of risk relating to its operations, reputation, finances nor the safeguarding or welfare of participants during the period.

Trustees continued to maintain, review and update a register of significant risks to the charity's operation and ongoing effectiveness. The trustees confirm that the major risks to which the charity may be exposed continue to be kept under review and that systems are in place and functioning effectively to manage any such risks.

Financial Review

2025 was again a strong fundraising year with income increasing 10.7% to £776,183 (2024: £701,056; 2023:£663,991), albeit costs, driven largely by planned increased staffing spend, rose at a slightly higher rate at 13.4% to £736,986 (2024: £649,652; 2023:£600,461). At year end this generated an in-year surplus income over costs of £39,197 although this is expected to be spent out through 2026 on increased staffing costs to deliver both sustainability and underpin future growth – see below.

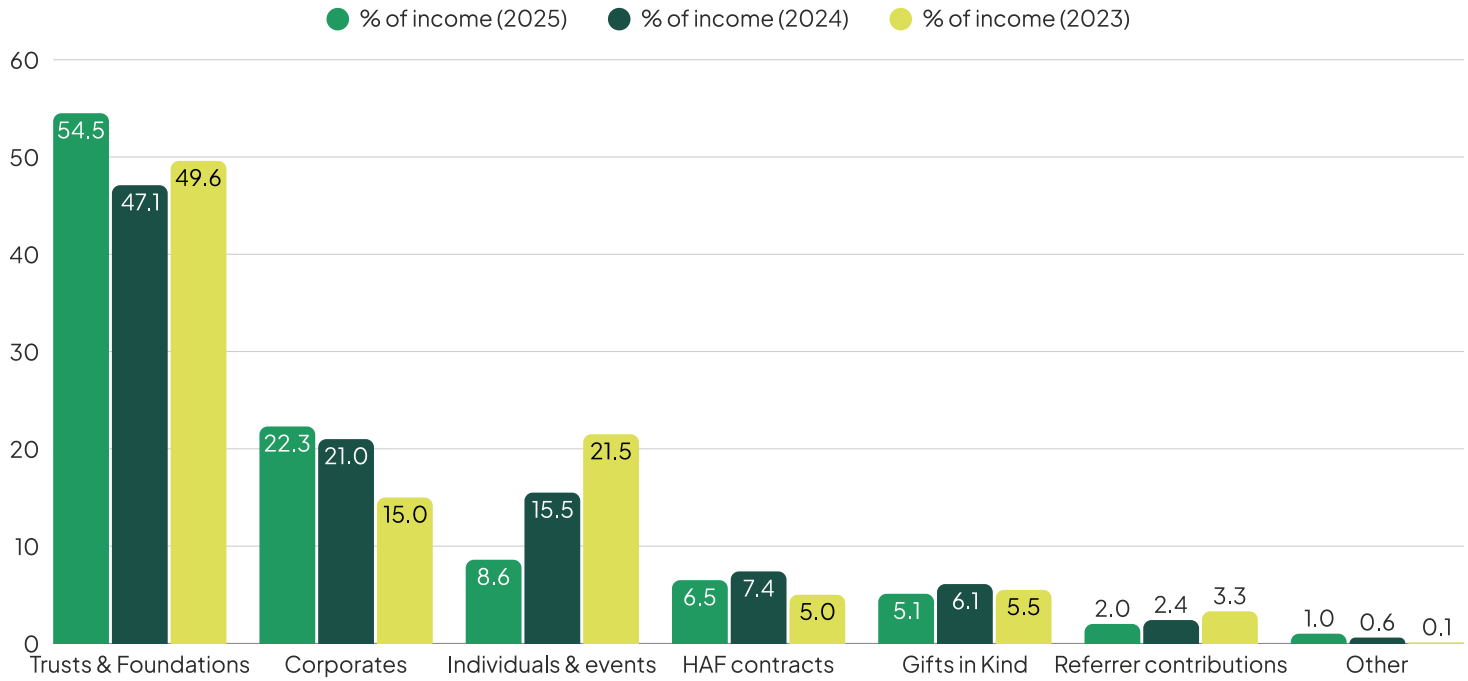
Income from Trusts and Foundations remained the largest stream, at £422,699 accounting for approximately 54% of income (2024: £330,036, 47%), followed by income from Corporates at £173,398 constituting 22% of income (2024: £147,279, 21%) with Individual Giving & Events at £67,108, 9% (2024: £108,528, 15%, albeit income from this category was coded differently pre-2025 meaning the 2024 and 2025 figures are not directly comparable.)

Raised Trust and Corporate income was supported by expansion of our Fundraising team to two members of staff part way through the year – a key step for future sustainability.

Successful delivery of local Government contracts under the Government's 'Holiday Activity and Food programme' (HAF) brought in £50,120 (2024: £52,200), maintaining the increase from £33,700 in 2023 via continued strong relationship building with commissioners and consistently strong performance against past contracts. The balance of income came from Gifts/Services in Kind at £39,611, referrer contributions of £15,380, and bank interest at £7,867.

Significant successes included our annual Fundraising gala event, led by our wonderful corporate partners Higson Consulting, again raising over £30,000. Proceeds from participation in the Childhood Trust's summer 'double your donation' match funded campaign were again a key part of our fundraising year, coming in at £101,254. Both events were again key areas of focus as we worked hard to diversify our reliance on Trusts and Foundations amidst a continuing deeply challenging national climate for Foundation led giving. The trustees remain incredibly grateful to all the individual donors who ran marathons; sky dived from planes; undertook triathlons, and donated via birthday, wedding, funeral collections and more throughout the year.

Income by percentage 2025

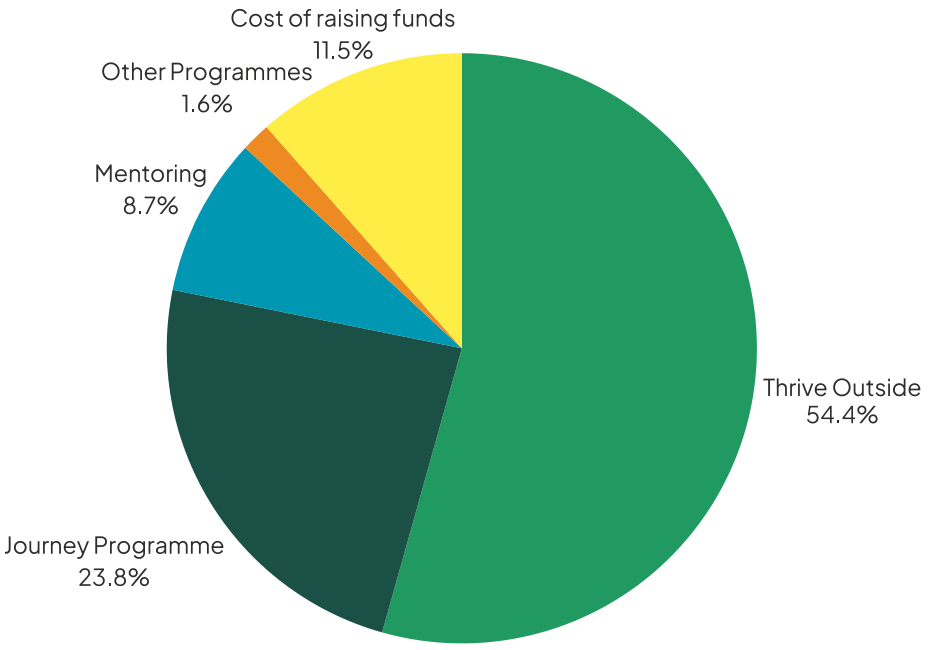


Costs: in line with our on-going strategic plan to invest in our infrastructure to both ensure sustainability following post-Covid rapid growth and prepare solid foundations for planned gradual future growth, overall costs have risen 13.4% to £736,986 (2024: £649,652). Our principal cost remains staffing - the complex needs of the children Free to Be support requires projects are planned and then led on the ground by experienced and skilled staff. As participant project places grow, and as we invest to ensure workloads are sustainable, consequently so does the organisation's salary needs. Salary and employment related costs increased slightly under projections to £415,755 (budgeted, £425,000), due to some staff changes having vacancy gaps before new hires started. This constitutes a planned rise of 21.9% from 2024 (2024: £341,164; 2023: £300,444; 2022: £202,457). Staff costs are projected to rise to c.£490,000 in 2026 and c.£500,000 in 2027 before stabilising from 2027 as staff numbers grow to support significantly increased project delivery to vulnerable young people.

Just under 89% of the charity's expenditure in 2025 (2024: 90%) related to delivery and management of projects and provision of support to young people, including project support costs, with the remaining relating to the cost of raising funds, infrastructure costs, and governance. Inevitably as the organisation grows to support more young people, the associated fundraising task will require further staffing support, but the trustees remain committed that all staff regardless of role will always spend time working directly on projects with vulnerable children as this ensures the charity remains orientated entirely around the needs of the children we support.

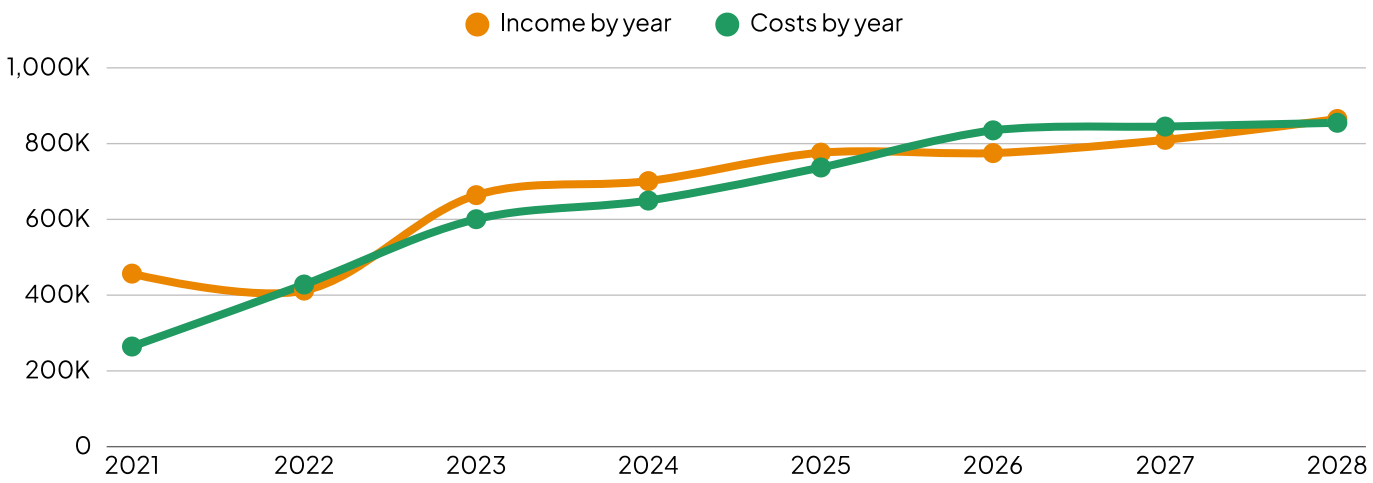
Other principal costs were again accommodation hire for residential programmes, outdoor activity instructor fees, food, fuel and other consumables directly related to residential project delivery.

Costs by percentage 2025



2025's figures again present a strong set of financial results - a surplus of c£39,000, continuation of our focus on diversification of income, and planned cost growth managed in line with projections. The charity continues to grow steadily but sensibly and has continued to deliver strong donor confidence whilst doing so. Despite a surplus for the third year running following 2022's small loss, projections show future income tracking within 3-5% of costs through 2026 to 2027, with an aim to have built the capacity (fundraising and volunteer numbers) to grow more rapidly through 2027 onwards.

Projected Income & Costs 2025-2028, showing 5 year history



Key aims for 2026 remain to further embed sustainability whilst managing steady growth, before a potential step change in the amount of long-term follow-on beneficiary support (mentoring, Young Leaders, Journey Programmes) in the second half of that year, and through 2027-2028. In order to support these sustainability and growth goals, the charity continues to need the support of longer-term grant funding and corporate donors, and will reach out to funders particularly interested in supporting the sustainable growth of high promise small charities.

Reserves statement:

The Board have kept the charity's reserves policy and position under review throughout the year. Free to Be's reserves policy requires we hold a minimum of three, and maximum of six, months' full costs, excluding one off capital costs, as free unrestricted reserves.

During the year the Board retained the designated fund of £100,000 to underwrite investment in staffing sustainability and growth through 2026-2028.

At the end of the 2025 financial year, projected operating costs for 2026 were calculated at £824,340, therefore requiring a free reserves position of £206,085 to £412,170. Free unrestricted reserves stood at £309,570 with a further £100,000 in designated funds with £nil restricted reserves. (2024: Free unrestricted reserves £266,167, £100,000 designated funds, £4,206 restricted reserves.)

Reserves held were therefore in accordance with the charity's reserves policy.

Future development

Core aims for the 2026 operating period:

- Continue to work towards a strategic plan of significantly increasing place numbers on our longer-term support pathways targeted to higher need young people.
- Specifically, aim to increase mentoring numbers from c20 to 30 in 2026, and to 40 in 2027, thereby building out crucial enhanced year-round support for larger numbers of young people between projects.
- Commence work on the growth plan for our deeply impactful Young Leaders Programme – aiming to double places over the next 2 years from 12 to 24+ by 2027 whilst also deepening the scope of the project to encompass additional support around employability.
- Continue to invest in our staffing capacity to deliver project place growth that is sustainable, increasing staff numbers to 11.5 FTE in 2026 (c10 currently) before staffing growth then flattens out through 2027 and 2028 having reached our target base for long-term sustainability of leadership and staffing for our residential projects.
- In particular, continue to create employment opportunities for former Free to Be Kids young people on both a seasonal and permanent basis, recognising the extreme value their lived experience of both childhood diversity and the power of our work brings.
- Continue to invest in growing our volunteer base year on year whilst also creating new pathways for longer term volunteers to stay involved outside of residential project/mentoring related volunteering. Launch of 'University Ambassadors scheme'.
- Ensure the quality and 'magic' of our existing projects is maintained as we grow.
- Continue to operate within our reserves policy.

Registered Address & Contact details

The charity's registered address is:
Free to Be Kids, Living Space, 1 Coral Street,
Lambeth, London SE1 7BE

0203 778 0323

hello@freetobekids.org.uk | www.freetobekids.org.uk





Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England & Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

a) select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;

b) observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;

c) make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;

d) state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;

e) prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Trust will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Trust's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Trust and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Trust and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the contents above as a true reflection of the charity's activities, operations and financial position within the 2025 operating period.

Signed on 27th October 2026 on behalf of the trustees:

Miss Emma Kendall (Chair)

EJ Kendall

Mrs Elena Davies (Treasurer)



Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Free To Be Kids

charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2025 which are set out on pages 19-31 below.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of Association of Chartered Certified Accountant, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Shruti Soni

Shruti Soni FCCA FCIE

Date: 27 October 2026

Shruti Soni Ltd • Chartered Certified Accountants
117a St. John's Hill, Sevenoaks TN13 3PE

Statement of financial activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account)

For the period ended 31 December 2025

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	**2025 Total £**	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2024 Total £
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	2	383,679	369,258	**752,937**	407,227	273,282	680,509
Charitable activities							
Thrive Outside Gateway	4	14,380	1,000	**15,380**	14,360	2,160	16,520
Other trading activities		-	-	**-**	-	-	-
Investments		7,866	-	**7,866**	4,027	-	4,027
Total income		405,925	370,258	**776,183**	425,614	275,442	701,056
Expenditure on:	5						
Raising funds		81,943	3,159	**85,102**	62,084	5,084	67,168
Charitable activities		280,579	371,305	**651,884**	316,332	266,152	582,484
Total expenditure		362,522	374,464	**736,986**	378,416	271,236	649,652
Net income / (expenditure) for the year	6	43,403	(4,206)	**39,197**	47,198	4,206	51,404
Transfers between funds		-	-	**-**	-	-	-
Net movement in funds		43,403	(4,206)	**39,197**	47,198	4,206	51,404
Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds brought forward		366,167	4,206	**370,373**	318,969	-	318,969
Total funds carried forward		409,570	-	**409,570**	366,167	4,206	370,373

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in Note 15 to the financial statements.

Balance sheet

As at 31 December 2025

	Note	£	2025 £	£	2024 £
Fixed assets:					
Tangible assets	10		**10,629**		14,260
			10,629		14,260
Current assets:					
Debtors	11	**17,154**		8,553	
Cash at bank and in hand		**451,380**		401,818	
		468,534		410,371	
Liabilities:					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	**69,593**		54,258	
Net current assets / (liabilities)			**398,941**		356,113
Total assets less current liabilities			**409,570**		370,373
Total net assets / (liabilities)	14		**409,570**		370,373
The funds of the charity:	15				
Restricted income funds			**-**		4,206
Unrestricted income funds:					
Designated funds		**100,000**		100,000	
General funds		**309,570**		266,167	
Total unrestricted funds			**409,570**		366,167
Total charity funds			**409,570**		370,373

Approved by the trustees on 27th October 2026

and signed on their behalf by

Name: Elena Davies

Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 December 2025

		2025		2024
	£	£	£	£
Net income / (expenditure) for the reporting period		**39,197**		51,404
Depreciation charges		**3,631**		8,153
Dividends, interest and rent from investments		**(7,866)**		(4,027)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors		**(8,601)**		36,157
Increase/(decrease) in creditors		**15,335**		28,617
Net cash from /(used in) operating activities		**41,696**		£120,304
Cash flows from investing activities:				
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	**7,866**		4,027	
Purchase of fixed assets	**-**		(16,490)	
Net cash provided by / (used in) investing activities		**7,866**		(12,463)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		**49,562**		107,841
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		**401,818**		293,977
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		**451,380**		401,818

Analysis of cash and cash equivalents	**At 31 December 2025**	At 31 December 2024
	£	£
Cash in hand and at bank	451,380	401,818
Total cash and cash equivalents	**451,380**	401,818

Analysis of changes in net debt	**At start of year**	Cashflows	At end of year
	£	£	£
Cash in hand and at bank	**401,818**	49,562	451,380

Notes to the financial statements

For the period ended 31 December 2025

1. Accounting policies

a. Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP FRS 102), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy or note.

b. Public benefit entity

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

c. Going concern

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

The trustees do not consider that there are any sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

d. Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and that the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

Income received in advance of the provision of a specified service is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

e. Donations of gifts, services and facilities

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item or received the service, any conditions associated with the donation have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), volunteer time is not recognised so refer to the trustees' annual report for more information about their contribution.

On receipt, donated gifts, professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

f. Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

g. Fund accounting

Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure which meets these criteria is charged to the fund.
Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources received or generated for the charitable purposes.
Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes.

Notes to the financial statements

For the period ended 31 December 2025

1. Accounting policies (continued)

h. Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Costs of raising funds relate to the costs incurred by the charitable company in inducing third parties to make voluntary contributions to it, as well as the cost of any activities with a fundraising purpose
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of offering residentials and delivering related services undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

i. Allocation of support costs

Resources expended are allocated to the particular activity where the cost relates directly to that activity. However, the cost of overall direction and administration of each activity, comprising the salary and overhead costs of the central function, is apportioned on the basis of estimated staff time attributable to each activity.

j. Tangible fixed assets

Items of equipment are capitalised where the purchase price exceeds £500. Depreciation costs are allocated to activities on the basis of the use of the related assets in those activities. Assets are reviewed for impairment if circumstances indicate their carrying value may exceed their net realisable value and value in use. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write down the cost of each asset to its estimated residual value over its expected useful life. The depreciation rates in use are as follows:

• Motor Vehicles	4 years
• Temporary storage structures	5 years
• Equipments	3 years

k. Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

l. Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account. Cash balances exclude any funds held on behalf of service users.

m. Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

n. Pensions

The charity contributes towards the employees' personal pension schemes. The cost of the contribution is charged to the statement of financial activities on an accrual basis.

Notes to the financial statements

For the period ended 31 December 2025

2. Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted	Restricted	**2025 Total**	2024 Total
	£	£	**£**	£
Grants and donations	383,679	329,647	**713,326**	638,044
Donation in kind (note 3)	-	39,611	**39,611**	42,465
	383,679	369,258	**752,937**	680,509

3. Donation in kind

	Unrestricted	Restricted	**2025 Total**	2024 Total
	£	£	**£**	£
Donation in kind includes				
Venue room hire	-	23,963	**23,963**	20,726
Equipment & consumables	-	700	**700**	974
Temporary storage structure	-	-	**-**	13,993
Activity cost	-	263	**263**	-
Software	-	8,752	**8,752**	3,200
Food & household	-	5,633	**5,633**	1,772
Office IT equipment	-	-	**-**	1,500
Project phones, comms, systems	-	300	**300**	300
	-	39,611	**39,611**	42,465

4. Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted	Restricted	**2025 Total**	2024 Total
	£	£	**£**	£
Thrive Outside Gateway	14,380	1,000	**15,380**	16,520
Total income from Charitable activities	14,380	1,000	**15,380**	16,520

Charity has awarded subsidies of £43,070 to the participating schools and organisations. This has been netted off against the receipt of Referrer contribtutions £58,450.

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2025

5. Analysis of expenditure

		CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES						
	Cost of raising funds	Thrive Outside Gateway £	Journey Programme £	Mentoring Programme £	Other programmes £	Support costs £	**2025 Total £**	2024 Total £
Staff costs (Note 7)	78,577	204,600	85,989	39,999	6,590	-	**415,755**	341,164
Accounting fees and charges	-	-	-	-	-	2,596	**2,596**	2,408
Depreciation	-	-	-	-	-	3,631	**3,631**	8,155
Equipment & consumables	466	8,722	3,130	275	15	3,756	**16,364**	15,443
Food & Household	2,941	18,802	6,760	1,148	784	3,442	**33,877**	30,289
Office costs & Admin expenses	82	2	-	-	-	948	**1,032**	4,301
Other Staff costs	-	15,141	-	-	-	978	**16,119**	17,879
Professional fees	579	-	-	-	-	11,849	**12,428**	33,452
Programme costs	-	32,125	20,202	6,455	448	4,863	**64,093**	53,518
Recruitment, training, retention	615	-	-	-	-	11,227	**11,842**	5,433
Rent &insurance	-	-	-	-	-	23,698	**23,698**	15,157
Telephone, IT systems, software	360	1,618	408	1,751	53	18,972	**23,162**	15,159
Travel	213	3,417	1,577	1,015	592	1,590	**8,404**	6,100
Vehicle costs	14	13,871	10,991	47	262	4,846	**30,031**	23,533
Venue Hire	1,255	31,247	16,585	-	995	23,872	**73,954**	77,661
	85,102	329,545	145,642	50,690	9,739	116,268	**736,986**	649,652
Support costs		70,552	29,651	13,793	2,272	(116,268)	-	-
Total expenditure 2025	**85,102**	**400,097**	**175,293**	**64,483**	**12,011**	-	**736,986**	-
Total expenditure 2024	**67,168**	**351,412**	**173,292**	**40,357**	**17,423**	-	-	**649,652**

Of the total expenditure, £362,522 was unrestricted (2024: £378,416) and £374,464 was restricted (2024: £271,236).

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2025

6. Net incoming resources for the year

This is stated after charging / crediting:	**2025**	2024
	£	£
Depreciation	**3,631**	8,153
Trustees' remuneration	**Nil**	Nil
Trustees' expenses	**831**	Nil

7. Analysis of staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses, and the cost of key management personnel

Staff costs were as follows:	**2025**	2024
	£	£
Salaries and wages	**369,415**	300,116
Social security costs	**25,309**	25,644
Employer's contribution to defined contribution pension schemes	**21,031**	15,404
	415,755	341,164

No employees earned more than £60,000 during the year (2024: none).

The total employee benefits including pension contributions of the key management personnel were £61,594 (2024: £84,558).

The charity trustees were not paid or received any other benefits from employment with the charity in the year (2024: £nil). No charity trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2024: £nil).

8. Staff numbers

The average number of employees (head count based on number of staff employed) during the year was as follows:

	2025	2024
	No.	No.
Charitable activities	**10.3**	8.2
	10.3	8.2

9. Related party transactions

Reimbursed subsistence expenses of Trustees, during the year, £831 (2024: none).

During the year unrestricted donation of £17,708 was received from 5 trustees (2024: £16,000 from one trustee). There are no donations from related parties which are outside the normal course of business and no restricted donations from related parties.

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2025

10. Tangible fixed assets

	Equipments	Temporary storage structure	Motor Vehicles	**Total**
			£	**£**
Cost or valuation				
At the start of the year	2,497	13,993	23,695	**40,185**
Additions in year	-	-	-	**-**
At the end of the year	2,497	13,993	23,695	**40,185**
Depreciation				
At the start of the year	831	1,399	23,695	**25,925**
Charge for the year	832	2,799	-	**3,631**
At the end of the year	1,663	4,198	23,695	**29,556**
Net book value				
At the end of the year	834	9,795	-	**10,629**
At the start of the year	1,666	12,594	-	**14,260**

All of the above assets are used for charitable purposes.

11. Debtors

	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade debtors	**5,140**	1,460
Other debtors	**-**	-
Prepayments	**12,014**	7,093
	17,154	8,553

12. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade creditors	**5,124**	3,135
Accruals	**1,020**	1,020
Deferred income	**61,918**	48,967
Other creditors	**1,531**	1,136
	69,593	54,258

13. Deferred income

Deferred income comprises grant funding received in advance that relates to future years:

	2025	2024
	£	£
Balance at the beginning of the year	**48,967**	19,500
Amount released to income in the year	**(48,967)**	(19,500)
Amount deferred in the year	**61,918**	48,967
Balance at the end of the year	**61,918**	48,967

14. Analysis of net assets between funds

	General unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	**Total funds 2025**
	£	£	£	**£**
Tangible fixed assets	**-**	-	10,629	**10,629**
Net current assets	**309,570**	100,000	(10,629)	**398,941**
Net assets at the end of the year	**309,570**	**100,000**	**-**	**409,570**

	General unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	**Total funds 2024**
	£	£	£	**£**
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	14,260	**14,260**
Net current assets	266,167	100,000	(10,054)	**356,113**
Net assets at the end of the year	266,167	100,000	4,206	**370,373**

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2025

15. Movements in funds

	At the start of the year 2025	Incoming resources & gains	Outgoing resources & losses	Transfers	**At the end of the year 2025**
	£	£	£	£	**£**
Restricted funds:					
Programme funds					
Thrive Outside Gateway	-	168,966	(168,966)	-	**-**
Journey Programme	1,806	68,300	(70,106)	-	**-**
Other programmes	2,400	6,063	(8,463)	-	**-**
Staff recruitment	-	3,500	(3,500)	-	**-**
Project support - staffing	-	75,855	(75,855)	-	**-**
Project support - other	-	44,415	(44,415)	-	**-**
Non project costs	-	-	-	-	**-**
Fundraising	-	3,159	(3,159)	-	**-**
Total restricted funds	4,206	370,258	(374,464)	-	**-**
Unrestricted funds:					
Designated funds:					
Staffing and staffing sustainability	100,000	-	-	-	**100,000**
Total designated funds	100,000	-	-	-	**100,000**
General funds	266,167	405,925	(362,522)	-	**309,570**
Total unrestricted funds	366,167	405,925	(362,522)	-	**409,570**
Total funds	370,373	776,183	(736,986)	-	**409,570**

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2025

15. Movements in funds (continued ...)

	At the start of the year 2024	Incoming resources & gains	Outgoing resources & losses	Transfers	**At the end of the year 2024**
	£	£	£	£	**£**
Restricted funds:					
Programme funds					
Thrive Outside Gateway	-	144,093	(144,093)	-	**-**
Journey Programme	-	38,489	(36,683)	-	**1,806**
Other programmes	-	19,330	(16,930)	-	**2,400**
Project support - staffing	-	41,636	(41,636)	-	**-**
Project support - other	-	25,310	(25,310)		**-**
Non project costs	-	1,500	(1,500)	-	**-**
Fundraising	-	5,084	(5,084)	-	**-**
Total restricted funds	-	275,442	(271,236)	-	**4,206**
Unrestricted funds:					
Designated funds:					
Staffing and staffing sustainability	-	-	-	100,000	**100,000**
Total designated funds	-	-	-	100,000	**100,000**
General funds	318,969	425,614	(378,416)	(100,000)	**266,167**
Total unrestricted funds	318,969	425,614	(378,416)	-	**366,167**
Total funds	318,969	701,056	(649,652)	-	**370,373**

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2025

Purposes of restricted and designated funds

Within Unrestricted funds are **designated funds** of £100,000 – towards staffing to source sustainability.

Restricted funds:

Thrive Outside Gateway - Costs of delivering our Thrive Outside gateway and recurring respite programme. These are 5 day residential projects with high staffing ratios catering to particularly vulnerable children. Based around a carefully designed programme of outdoor activities the key aim is to rebuild the foundations of positive mental health via using adventure activities and youthwork techniques to build confidence, self-esteem, teamwork, social problem solving, resilience and aspirations. Ultimately leading to improved mental health, improved social relationships and key social/life skills, and key engagement with education. Children are referred by schools/social workers and the highest need return for as often as they need us throughout their childhood. Includes all venue, transport, food, activity, equipment and staffing costs.

Journey Programme - A follow-on intensive support programme for the highest need of our Thrive Outside attendees. Built around 6 small group, high intervention residentials spread over 18 months and designed for 12-15 year olds with complex emotional, social or behavioural needs. The key aim is around improving mental health, rebuilding aspirations, helping young people at risk of 'going off the rails' to find a positive path through adolescence. Includes all venue, transport, food, activity, equipment and staffing costs.

Other Programmes - Covers our smaller follow-on programmes for medium-high need Thrive Outside attendees. Includes our Mentoring Programme: a year's worth of London based 1:1 mentoring matched to a volunteer who's also attended our projects, this programme also including 'Targeted Youth Work' for the highest need young people - essentially an intensive mentoring scheme delivered by our paid youth work staff. Young Leaders Programme: a training and support programme for our older teenagers 14-17 who are supported to return on projects as young volunteers, going full circle from former beneficiary to now being a positive role model for the next generation of attendees. Includes wraparound support around life skills and employability.

For all these Programmes cost totals include all venue, transport, food, activity, equipment and staffing costs.

Project Support - Covers staffing and operational costs incurred for running the programmes and activities of the organisation.

> “Free to Be is the most exhilarating place. I feel like I’m free here! They give us so much time to be able to achieve our potential.
>
> Jamie, age 11