Support | Hope | Compassion

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER & TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 December 2025

Supporting, befriending and empowering birth mothers whose children do not live permanently in their care.

£8,744.80	£5,325.06	£5,855.79
Income	Expenditure	Year-end balance

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Our Impact in Numbers

A snapshot of how BEAM supported mothers and built connection throughout 2025

44 Carry On Beaming online sessions	**3** 12-week Wellbeing Courses	**24** Wellbeing Course places
10 Online art sessions	**18** Ipswich Art Group sessions	**4–8** Mothers attending Carry On Beaming weekly

Behind these figures was a wide range of practical, relational and emotional support. BEAM provided one-to-one help to mothers, including shopping vouchers, clothing, toiletries and books. We offered mentoring and befriending online, by telephone and in person, made referrals to other agencies and organisations where needed, and provided supporting letters for housing and character references.

1. Introduction

2025 was a year of transition, consolidation and renewed growth for BEAM. The charity welcomed new leadership, strengthened its volunteer base, continued its core peer-support activities and began putting in place the structures needed for sustainable development.

Clair Merrall became Chief Executive Officer in early 2025, working closely with Cherie during the leadership transition. The year also saw new trustees and volunteers join BEAM, alongside continued involvement from mothers with lived experience.

At the heart of the year was the same simple purpose: to ensure that birth mothers who are separated from their children are not left to face grief, stigma and isolation alone.

2. About BEAM

BEAM is a peer-to-peer support charity for birth mothers whose children do not live permanently in their care. Our work provides confidential support, friendship, community and opportunities for mothers to rebuild confidence and wellbeing.

Our charitable purpose is to relieve the needs of birth mothers whose children do not live permanently in their care through confidential support group meetings, one-to-one meetings, telephone and online support, and by raising awareness of the problems facing birth mothers separated from their children.

BEAM's approach is rooted in compassion, lived experience, dignity and empowerment. We aim to create spaces where mothers can be heard without judgement and can connect with others who understand experiences that can be difficult to explain elsewhere.

3. Our work in 2025

44	30	24	18
Carry On Beaming online sessions	Online art sessions & Online Coffee Beams	Wellbeing Course places across 3 courses	Ipswich Art Group sessions

Carry On Beaming

Carry On Beaming delivered 44 online sessions during 2025, with around 4–8 BEAM mothers attending each week. Sessions provided a regular, accessible space for peer support, connection and personal development. Topics included boundaries, healthy relationships, money management, grief, power dressing and many more practical and wellbeing-focused themes.

Wellbeing support

BEAM delivered three 12-week Wellbeing Courses during the year, with eight new mothers signing up to each course. The course supports birth mothers separated from their children through structured wellbeing and personal-development sessions covering topics including grief, procrastination, anxiety, depression, shame and anger. The programme aims to help mothers understand their experiences, develop practical tools and begin to recognise their own capacity to make positive changes.

Feedback from mothers who completed the course included:

"I'm loving the course."

"It's making a huge difference."

"I look forward to it."

"I feel amazing."

"I've done every session."

"Some of the stuff we've been doing has helped me identify the signs of anxiety and depression."

"I didn't think I could do anything to help myself feel better or to try and improve things."

One mother also expressed an interest in becoming a Wellbeing Helper in the future, demonstrating how participation can develop into opportunities for peer leadership and contribution.

Coffee Beam

Led by two of our Beam mum's, Coffee Beam was introduced weekly online, to provide an extra peer support session for our community. Activities included games and quizzes, as well as space for peer support.

Creative and community activities

Online art sessions were also provided, enabling mothers to take part creatively from home. BEAM funded craft packs for ten mothers, who attended eight online sessions. Activities included clay modelling, painting, colouring, crafts and jar decorating. These sessions provided opportunities for creativity, connection and achievement without requiring mothers to travel.

Alongside the online programme, BEAM's Ipswich Art Group delivered 18 sessions during 2025. The group met twice monthly for two hours per session and supported approximately 4–10 mothers in Ipswich. BEAM provided light refreshments and all art materials, and funded transport where needed to help reduce barriers to attendance.

Community, celebration and belonging

BEAM also worked to create a sense of community and belonging beyond regular support sessions. We maintained a community presence through our BEAM tree of Hope at the Ipswich Minster Christmas Tree Festival and held a Christmas party for BEAM mothers and volunteers, including a buffet, raffle and small gifts for mothers. We sent birthday cards to mothers each year and special handmade gifts for Mother's Day.

We attended charity networking events and ran community stalls to increase awareness of BEAM and the experiences of birth mothers. We also celebrated the achievements represented in One Drop Holds the Sun with a book launch party in London, held at the Team Lewis building at Battersea Power Station. BEAM supported mothers with travel so they could attend and celebrate together, and the event was attended by Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt.

The voice and contribution of BEAM mothers

A particularly important part of BEAM's community in 2025 was THE BEAMY, our newsletter created with and by BEAM mothers. The newsletter gave mothers a platform to share their experiences, talents, ideas, encouragement and practical knowledge. It reflected the peer-led character of BEAM and showed mothers not simply as recipients of support, but as people who actively shape the community, support one another and contribute to the charity's wider purpose.

Mothers used the newsletter to celebrate one another through features such as 'Mum of the Month', share humour and quizzes, highlight creative work, provide information about support services and interview people connected with BEAM. These contributions helped create connection and belonging, while giving mothers opportunities to use their own skills and lived experience.

The newsletter also captured the importance of peer support in mothers' own words. It highlighted how women can gain confidence and express themselves without judgement, support and champion one another, and share their experiences so that professionals can better understand birth mothers and respond with compassion rather than judgement.

Mental health was another important theme raised by mothers. THE BEAMY included practical, lived-experience-led information about mental wellbeing, encouraging mothers to check in with themselves, recognise when they are struggling, identify triggers, seek trusted support and access professional help when needed. This complemented BEAM's wider wellbeing work and reinforced the message that asking for help is a strength.

Creative activity was also shown to be more than a pastime. In a newsletter interview, BEAM's art therapist described how mothers grew in confidence through creative work and progressed from participating to suggesting and leading sessions. The newsletter described this as 'Beam's Art' belonging to the mothers themselves, illustrating how creative spaces can support ownership, achievement, confidence and peer leadership.

The newsletter also celebrated the ordinary things that matter when people are rebuilding connection: laughter, shared interests, pets, cooking, learning, celebrations, birthdays, art and opportunities to meet together. Alongside the more serious support and awareness content, these lighter features helped THE BEAMY become a community space in its own right.

Individual and practical support

Alongside group activities, BEAM provided practical and relational support tailored to individual mothers. This included one-to-one help with shopping vouchers, clothing, toiletries and books. We provided mentoring and befriending support online, by telephone and in person, made referrals to other agencies and organisations where needed, and provided supporting letters for housing and character references.

Online community

BEAM continued to develop its online community through Slack. A dedicated channel for mothers on the wellbeing course was created to strengthen integration and connection, alongside a Neurodivergent Voices channel to support inclusion.

A powerful message from mothers

Research being undertaken within BEAM during the year identified a clear positive theme in interviews: mothers described BEAM as universally helpful and a positive experience. This feedback reinforces the value of peer connection and the importance of creating spaces where mothers feel understood.

Feedback from mothers at BEAM:

“BEAM means EVERYTHING to me. Restoration of My Life. New non judgemental friendship....and so much more.”

“I have received support and friendship.”

“I have met people that understand.”

“BEAM means more than you’ll ever know.”

“BEAM means Everything.”

“It’s there when I need it.”

“BEAM is like family to me, a breath of fresh air, purpose in life and motivation beyond words.”

“Without Beam, I wouldn’t be here.”

4. Peer support, participation and volunteering

BEAM continued to value the contribution of mothers with lived experience, alongside volunteers and trustees. During 2025, new volunteers joined across administration, social media, befriending, Carry On Beaming, book distribution and wellbeing activity.

The charity also explored ways for mothers to take greater ownership of activities and develop leadership opportunities. The Ambassador Programme was piloted briefly but paused while BEAM strengthened expectations, training, procedures and boundaries. Informal projects continued to be encouraged as a way of enabling mothers to contribute their skills and interests safely.

This work reflects BEAM’s belief that mothers are not simply recipients of support. Their knowledge, creativity and lived experience are central to the charity’s identity and development.

5. Safeguarding and good practice

Safeguarding and good practice remained a priority throughout the year. BEAM reviewed training, DBS requirements, confidentiality arrangements, codes of conduct, group expectations and organisational policies.

The trustees agreed that those undertaking leading roles or providing face-to-face support should be DBS checked. Safeguarding training was developed around interactive scenarios relevant to BEAM’s work, helping volunteers and trustees apply principles to real situations.

The year also reinforced the importance of clear boundaries between peer support, volunteering and therapeutic activity. BEAM continued to review its structures so that support remains safe, respectful, confidential and appropriate.

6. Governance and leadership

The board developed during the year, with Anne Marie Shinkins and Hanna Shepherd joining alongside existing trustees. Catherine Cracknell stepped down from the trustee board citing a conflict of interest. Marie, the Art Therapist, also planned her departure from the Ipswich group due to family commitments.

New governance and operational arrangements were developed alongside the leadership transition. Policy and procedure reviews, clearer volunteer roles, financial authorisation arrangements and safeguarding responsibilities were all identified as areas for continued strengthening.

The charity’s development remained collaborative, with trustees, volunteers and mothers contributing ideas for services, fundraising, communications and future growth.

7. Communications, awareness and resources

One Drop Holds the Sun

BEAM's book, One Drop Holds the Sun, was successfully redesigned and reprinted during 2025. The refreshed edition corrected errors and included a review from Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt. The book was registered with an online distributor to improve access for bookshops, retailers and bulk orders.

Work also progressed towards print-on-demand and Amazon distribution, with the aim of reducing the practical burden of storing and posting books while increasing reach and fundraising potential.

Raising awareness

THE BEAMY newsletter was a key part of this work, with mothers contributing directly to its content and helping to make communications representative, encouraging and rooted in lived experience.

BEAM continued to raise awareness through social media, newsletters, its website and external engagement. The charity also delivered training to an NHS team alongside Cherie and mothers, creating an opportunity to share lived experience and improve understanding of the issues facing birth mothers.

Plans were developed for refreshed newsletters, website content, social media resources and training materials for mothers.

BEAM rebranded with a new logo and brand colours to give us an updated, professional look, that is easily recognisable. We have since updated our website and social media channels accordingly.

8. Public benefit

BEAM exists to relieve the needs of birth mothers whose children do not live permanently in their care. The charity's activities during 2025 directly furthered this purpose through confidential peer support, online meetings, wellbeing activity, creative opportunities, befriending and awareness raising.

The trustees consider that these activities provide public benefit by reducing isolation, supporting emotional wellbeing, strengthening confidence and connection, and ensuring that mothers affected by child removal have access to a supportive community.

The trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's activities and plans.

9. Financial review

BEAM's 2025 receipts and payments information records total income of £8,744.80 and expenditure of £5,325.06, giving an excess of income over expenditure of £3,419.74. The year-end balance recorded in the accounts was £5,855.79.

2025	Amount
Donations	£7,979.33
Book income	£765.47
Total income	**£8,744.80**
Therapeutic activities	£2,664.84
Travel expenses	£608.11
Administration	£572.26
Online subscriptions	£369.00
Sundries	£420.01
Total expenditure	**£5,325.06**
Year-end balance	**£5,855.79**

The largest area of expenditure was therapeutic activities, reflecting BEAM's investment in direct support and activity. Compared with 2024, expenditure was substantially lower in therapeutic activities, travel and online subscriptions.

Financial sustainability remained an important consideration. The trustees continued to explore funding opportunities and more efficient systems for authorisation, purchasing and delivery. A formal reserves policy and target should be confirmed by the trustees and inserted into the final filed version of this report.

10. Challenges and learning

BEAM is a small charity operating in an area of significant need. During 2025, funding remained a central challenge, while the charity also navigated leadership transition, volunteer capacity, venue costs, safeguarding requirements and the need for clearer operational structures.

The trustees recognised that growth must be matched by appropriate policies, training, boundaries and governance. The pause in the Ambassador Programme was one example of this learning: BEAM identified the need to establish stronger foundations before expanding formal responsibility.

Venue and travel costs also highlighted the importance of sustainable funding. The trustees explored alternative venues and considered how volunteer expenses could be met fairly without placing volunteers out of pocket.

11. Looking ahead

BEAM's priorities following 2025 include strengthening sustainable funding, expanding accessible online support, developing wellbeing resources and training videos, improving communications, completing safeguarding and DBS updates, and reviewing organisational policies.

The charity also aims to develop opportunities for additional wellbeing provision, strengthen peer leadership safely, improve access for mothers who cannot attend in person, and continue building partnerships that increase understanding of birth mothers' experiences.

The ambition is growth with care: reaching more mothers while protecting the safe, compassionate and peer-led character that makes BEAM distinctive.

12. Thanks

BEAM would like to thank every mother who trusted the charity with her story, every volunteer who gave time and energy, every trustee who helped guide the organisation, and every supporter and donor who made the work possible.

The progress made in 2025 was the result of a community effort. BEAM remains committed to ensuring that birth mothers know they are not alone, that their experiences matter, and that support is available.

13. Statement of trustees

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and ensuring that the charity's activities are carried out in accordance with its charitable purposes and governing document.

This report has been prepared from BEAM's governance records, CEO reporting and 2025 financial information supplied for annual-report preparation. It is intended to accompany the charity's annual accounts and annual return.

BEAM | Registered Charity No. 1187918
Annual reporting period: 1 January 2025 – 31 December 2025

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name	No (if any)
BEAM	1187918

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	Period start date 01/01/2025	To	Period end date 31/12/2025

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Donations	7,979	-	-	7,979	4,398
BEAM Book income	765	-	-	765	620
	-		-	-	980
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
***Sub total** (Gross income for AR)*	8,745	-	-	8,745	5,998
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	8,745	-	-	8,745	5,998
A3 Payments					
Therapeutic activities	2,665		-	2,665	4,483
Supervision	120	-	-	120	165
Insurance	157	-	-	157	157
Subscriptions	369	-	-	369	1,590
Hotel & Travel	608		-	608	3,051
Telephone	65	-	-	65	117
IT	50	-	-	50	25
Postage	129	-	-	129	92
Admin costs	572			572	182
Sundries	420			420	350
BEAM Book expenses	170		-	170	
Sub total	5,325	-	-	5,325	10,212
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	5,325	-	-	5,325	10,212
Net of receipts/(payments)	3,420	-	-	3,420	- 4,214
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	-	-	-	-	-
Cash funds this year end	3,420	-	-	3,420	- 4,214

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

B1 Cash funds

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
	Brought forward fund	2,436	-	-
	Surplus for the year	3,420	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	**5,856**	**-**	**-**
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	Agreement Error	OK	OK

B2 Other monetary assets

Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
Bank account	5,856	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-

B3 Investment assets

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
Admin laptop	Unrestricted	-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

B5 Liabilities

Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
Julia Farmer	Julia Farmer	03/09/2026