



Annual Report and Financial Statements

For the year ended 31st March 2026

Charity registration number 1007878
Company registration number 02658268 (England and Wales)

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Reference and Administration

Trustees

I N Cadman (Chair)
 E Behan (Vice Chair)
 C A F Battersby
 S Brealey (Resigned 24 February 2026)
 C Corton
 N M Kennedy
 S M Leech
 C R Sansome
 C Smart
 C Ward (Resigned 27 May 2025)
 N Whiteside (Resigned 4 December 2025)

Secretary

A Hill

Charity number

1007878

Company number

02658268

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Auditor

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Bankers and deposit takers

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Solicitors

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Liverpool
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Birmingham
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A message from our Chair of Trustees Iain Cadman



A message from our Chair of Trustees, Iain Cadman

The charity has seen strong performances over the past few years, and I am pleased to report that 2025/26 has continued this record.

The levels of care provided to the people we support continue to excel and our thanks must go to everyone involved for their hard work, dedication, and the passion they bring every day.

We are also pleased to see that our financial position remains good. There are always challenges in the sector and a healthy financial position allows us to plan and invest for the current and future benefit of the organisation.

Having had another positive year, it was a sad moment when Richard Whitby, our CEO, announced his decision to leave. His knowledge, guidance and support during the three years he was with the organisation were invaluable. We were extremely sorry to see him go and wish him every success in his new role.

One of the important things he helped to build was a strong Executive Team, and from their ranks we are delighted that Angie Kemp has agreed to become our next CEO. Angie brings with her a wealth of experience, having been a part of the organisation since 2003, and has worked in a number of roles – the most recent of which was Director of Operations.

The Trustees look forward to working with Angie and the Executive team, building on what has been achieved, providing the right support for people who need it, and improving and developing wherever we can.

A message from our outgoing CEO

Richard Whitby



Annual reflections from our outgoing Chief Executive Officer, Richard Whitby

I am writing this as we come to the end of the 2025/26 financial year, and I am feeling a strong sense of confidence in Autism Together, along with pride in what the organisation has achieved over the past year. This period has been characterised by continued resilience, progress, and quality delivery of our services. This is all underpinned by the commitment of staff across the organisation and a shared focus on providing high-quality, person-centred support to autistic people.

The year has once again demonstrated Autism Together's ability to operate effectively within a challenging and evolving social care environment. Demand for services remains high, expectations continue to grow and the wider sector continues to face financial and workforce pressures. Against this backdrop, the organisation has remained focused on its purpose and values, ensuring that the needs, rights and aspirations of the people we support remain central to everything we do. A particular highlight of 2025/26 has been the organisation's financial performance, which represents the strongest year in Autism Together's history. This achievement reflects disciplined financial management, strong commissioning relationships and sustained operational delivery across services. It has enabled the organisation to remain financially secure while continuing to invest in our workforce, services and infrastructure, strengthening our long-term resilience and capacity to support autistic people long into the future.

Our workforce continues to be one of Autism Together's greatest strengths. Throughout the year, colleagues across all services and teams have demonstrated professionalism, compassion and resilience. Recruitment, retention and staff wellbeing have remained key priorities, with continued investment in leadership capacity and development. Quality, assurance, and continuous improvement have remained central to our approach. Services have continued to evolve in response to learning, feedback and best practice, supported by a strong focus on compliance, safeguarding and positive outcomes. Partnership working has continued to play an important role throughout the year. Constructive relationships with commissioners, partners and stakeholders have supported service stability and growth, built on trust, transparency and collaboration.

I would like to place on record my thanks to the Executive Team, whose collective leadership, expertise and commitment have been central to navigating the organisation through another demanding year. They say that all good things come to an end, and as this financial year closes, so too does my time as Chief Executive of Autism Together. I do so with confidence in the organisation's future and genuine pride in what has been achieved. From the start of April 2026, Angie Kemp will take on the role of Chief Executive, ensuring continuity and stability as the organisation moves forward.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to Autism Together during 2025/26 – our staff, trustees, partners and supporters. Most importantly, I thank the autistic people we support, who remain the reason we do what we do.

A message from our incoming CEO

Angie Kemp



Annual reflections from our incoming Chief Executive Officer, Angie Kemp

I am immensely proud to take on the role of Chief Executive at Autism Together. This is a charity that is very close to my heart, having been part of the organisation for many years, and it is a privilege to now lead it into its next chapter.

I have been overwhelmed by the messages of support that I have received from people we support, families, staff, trustees and partners who have welcomed me into the role and contribute so meaningfully to our mission. I see every day the difference that this charity and all the staff that work here make to the lives of the people we support and I look forward to developing this great work.

The environment in which we operate remains complex and the expectations placed upon providers like Autism Together are increasing. Financial pressures across the health and social care sector, workforce challenges, and changing regulatory landscapes require us to remain agile and forward-thinking. A key priority for me since beginning this role is shaping our future strategic direction, ensuring we build on our strengths while addressing areas where we can evolve and improve. Over the coming months we will continue this work to ensure that this charity is ready to meet the challenges of the future.

We are already seeing encouraging progress. Recent improvements in our CQC ratings—from 'Requires Improvement' to 'Good' in a number of services—are a testament to the dedication, professionalism, and caring ethos of our teams. These achievements not only reflect the quality of our support but also our commitment to continuous improvement and regulatory compliance.

Since taking up post, I have also been proud to launch the Together for Change corporate partnership programme, which complements our forward-thinking Pathway to Work initiative. This programme is designed to enhance employment opportunities for autistic people by recognising their individual ambitions and supporting their unique strengths, helping to create more inclusive and accessible pathways into work.

In addition, our Unlocking Excellence co-production group, developed in partnership with the NHS, has received national recognition—winning the Dimensions Leaders award as well as being shortlisted for the National Learning Disability Awards. This success highlights the power of collaboration and the importance of truly listening to and working alongside the people we support.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Richard for his guidance and support over the past few years, and I am thankful to him for leaving the charity in such a strong position. I would also like to extend my thanks to every staff member of Autism Together for their dedication and passion. Together, we will continue to build on our strong foundations and shape a future where autistic people are empowered, included, and valued.



The Trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2026. The Trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "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)".

The Trustees' Report is a combined report of the Trustees and the Directors as required by company law.

Statement of Public Benefit

The Trustees have complied with their duty under Section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the Charity's aims and objectives and in planning its future activities.

The objects of the Charity, as set out in the Articles of Association last amended on 16 October 2021, are:

To provide, promote and develop services for the welfare, care, training and education of those children, adolescents and adults variously diagnosed as autistic, or having autistic tendencies or traits, or Asperger's Syndrome, whether or not these conditions are associated with other conditions.

In furtherance of these charitable objects, Autism Together provides specialist services and support for autistic adults. During the year, the Charity delivered services across the following areas:

- Registered residential care
- Supported living services
- Day services

The Charity accepts referrals from across the United Kingdom. Funding for care and support services is primarily provided by Local Authorities, with individuals contributing towards the cost of their care in accordance with applicable charging arrangements and benefit entitlements. Services may also be funded through Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and Individual Service Funds where individuals have been assessed as eligible for support.

Autism Together specialises in supporting autistic people and their families. Prior to admission, all potential beneficiaries undergo a comprehensive assessment to ensure that the Charity can meet their needs effectively and safely. This approach enables individuals to access appropriate support, maximise their personal development, achieve greater independence and enhance their quality of life. It also assists families, carers and the wider community to develop a better understanding of autism and promotes greater inclusion and acceptance.

The Charity's Advisory Service continues to provide information, guidance and practical support to autistic people and their families. Through the support of charitable donations and voluntary income, the service is able to offer a range of support free of charge, ensuring that advice and assistance remain accessible to those who need it.

In addition, Autism Together delivers a range of community-based activities that provide opportunities for autistic children and families to access inclusive social and recreational experiences. These include coffee mornings, family adventure events and autism-friendly sessions delivered in partnership with local organisations and leisure providers, including visitor attractions, cinemas and indoor activity centres. These initiatives help reduce social isolation and increase community participation.

The Charity continues to develop its Pathway to Work service, which supports autistic individuals in accessing employment opportunities. Funded through local authority partnerships, the programme works with both individuals and employers to identify appropriate employment opportunities, promote reasonable workplace adjustments and demonstrate the valuable contribution that neurodivergent people can make within the workforce.

Autism Together also provides autism-specific training and educational workshops for autistic people, families, carers and members of the wider community. These programmes are offered at a low cost to maximise accessibility and are designed to increase understanding of autism, build skills and confidence, and equip participants with practical strategies to support positive outcomes.

Through these activities, Autism Together provides tangible public benefit by improving the wellbeing, independence, opportunities and social inclusion of autistic people, while also supporting their families, carers, employers and the wider community.



Strategic Report



Our Work and Impact

Our Vision

Supporting Brighter Futures

Our Mission

To help autistic people develop to their full potential, while educating and developing the community around them.

Our Values



Positive
Communication



Person
Centred



Promote
Learning



Be
Respectful



Community
Connection

Objectives for the year ending 31st March 2026

Strategic Priority 1. Provide person-centred and high-quality services for people with autism across the spectrum

Strategic Priority 2. Develop our autism services

Strategic Priority 3. Develop and invest in our staff

Strategic Priority 4. Invest in our infrastructure and assets

Strategic Priority 5. Be financially sustainable

Strategic Priority 6. Raise autism awareness, acceptance and promote autism good practice



Achievements and performance

Operations

Residential Care

Autism Together currently supports 78 people through its core residential services, delivering approximately 7,767 hours of care each week across 14 registered properties.

During the year, Autism Together celebrated the tenth anniversary of one of its residential services located on the Charity's Raby site. Opened in April 2015, the service was designed to provide high-quality specialist accommodation and support for autistic adults and continues to play an important role within the organisation's residential care provision.

The anniversary was marked with a celebration involving the people supported by the service, their families and staff. Activities included creative displays, commemorative decorations and opportunities to reflect on the positive impact the service has had over the past decade. The event provided an opportunity to recognise the achievements of the people supported and the dedication of staff who have contributed to the success of the service over many years.

Across residential services, the Charity has remained focused on delivering high-quality, person-centred care. Significant work has been undertaken to strengthen care and support planning processes to ensure they not only promote safety and wellbeing but also enable people to lead fulfilling and meaningful lives. Family engagement has been enhanced through the introduction of the Nourish Family Portal, which aims to improve communication, transparency and involvement in the support provided.

Alongside maintaining compliance with regulatory requirements, teams have continued to learn from incidents, respond to feedback and drive continuous improvement. The introduction of a new incident management system has strengthened the Charity's ability to identify trends, promote organisational learning and implement service improvements more effectively. This has contributed to improved operational performance and increased confidence in quality assurance processes across residential services.

A key area of focus during the year has been a comprehensive review of restrictive practices across all services. Through a service-wide audit, teams have considered how best to balance safety with autonomy, independence and personal choice. This work has led to meaningful changes in practice and further strengthened the Charity's commitment to supporting people to exercise greater control over their lives whilst remaining safe and well supported.

Positive outcomes continue to be demonstrated through focus on person-centred care, meaningful activities and maintaining important family relationships. The people supported have benefited from regular family contact, opportunities to participate in community activities and access to tailored support that reflects their individual preferences and aspirations.

The service has promoted inclusion and engagement through a wide range of activities throughout the year. During Autism Acceptance Month, the people supported participated in a celebration event that included social activities, games, arts and crafts, and opportunities to come together as a community.

Regular opportunities for recreation, including swimming, cycling, social clubs and organised community events, have supported both physical wellbeing and social inclusion.

Staff teams across residential services have continued to provide high-quality support, enabling people to develop independence, access meaningful opportunities and enjoy a good quality of life. Their commitment and professionalism have contributed to another successful year, with activities and support tailored to individual interests, preferences and personal goals.

At another residential service, support arrangements were reviewed and restructured following comprehensive assessments of individual needs. The revised model was designed to enable people to enjoy a slower pace of life as they get older while maintaining opportunities for choice and independence. This included reducing attendance at day services for some individuals and introducing a core-hours support model that enabled greater access to community-based activities. The changes have resulted in positive outcomes and improved quality of life for those supported.

The Charity was also delighted to receive numerous nominations for its annual recognition awards, with several people supported across residential services receiving awards in recognition of personal achievement and progress towards their individual goals.

The Charity was particularly pleased to support one individual in achieving a longstanding ambition to undertake an international holiday. With appropriate support, the individual planned and organised the trip independently, developing valuable life skills and confidence throughout the process. The successful outcome demonstrated the Charity's commitment to promoting independence, choice and personal achievement.

Advanced Residential Care

Autism Together currently supports 12 people through its Advanced Residential Care services, delivering approximately 2,582 hours of care each week from a registered service.

In March 2026, the Charity completed the refurbishment of its advanced residential care service, merging Raby Hall and the Courtyard. The newly redeveloped service, provides five new self-contained apartments designed to meet the specific needs of the people supported.

The development was completed in close consultation with operational teams to ensure that the accommodation promotes independence, comfort and quality of life. Each apartment includes a modern bathroom, spacious bedroom, fitted kitchen and integrated living and dining space. In addition, the service benefits from shared communal facilities, including a lounge and kitchen/dining area, providing opportunities for social interaction and community participation when desired.

The first residents moved in during the year and have responded positively to their new living environment. The service represents an important step in the Charity's commitment to providing high-quality accommodation that promotes independence, choice and personal wellbeing.

A number of individuals successfully transitioned into new accommodation during the year from complex care to advanced care, reflecting the positive outcomes that can be achieved through carefully planned and person-centred support. These moves have enabled people to exercise greater choice and control

over their daily lives, including decisions about their home environment, routines and lifestyle, whilst continuing to receive the level of support required to remain safe and achieve their personal goals.

The opening of advanced residential care has been a significant milestone for the Charity. The quality of the accommodation reflects Autism Together's ambition to provide environments that people are proud to call home and which support positive outcomes over the long term. As wider refurbishment works continue across the estate, the Charity looks forward to extending the same high standards to other services.

The success of these transitions has been supported by effective partnership working with commissioners, local authority teams, families, advocates and multidisciplinary professionals. This collaborative approach has ensured that people have been able to move into environments that are better aligned with their aspirations, preferences and future ambitions, while maintaining continuity of care and support throughout the transition process.

Complex Residential Care

During 2025, Autism Together successfully relaunched its Complex Residential Care service at The Ferns. The development of this specialist provision represents an important milestone in the Charity's ability to support autistic people with highly complex needs.

Autism Together currently supports six people through its Complex Residential Care service, delivering approximately 1,575 hours of care each week from a registered service.

Throughout the year, Autism Together continued to support successful transitions via the support pathway, through its complex care building, its specialist step-up, step-down and move-through service. The service plays a key role in enabling people to develop skills, increase independence and progress towards more personalised living arrangements.

The service has been designed to support individuals who may require a period of stabilisation following a placement breakdown, a significant change in support needs, or where additional intervention is required to prevent unnecessary hospital admission. The service also provides an important pathway for individuals transitioning from hospital settings, enabling them to return to community-based living while remaining close to their established support networks where possible.

The service forms an integral part of Autism Together's support pathway, providing a specialist environment that enables individuals to receive tailored support while longer-term plans are developed and implemented.

The physical environment has been specifically designed to meet the needs of individuals with complex presentations. The service provides a robust, autism-specialist and low-arousal setting that promotes emotional wellbeing, reduces environmental stressors and supports behavioural and emotional regulation. The design also enables the service to facilitate planned internal transitions across Autism Together's wider care pathway when an individual's needs or circumstances change.

A new staffing model has been introduced within the service, including the appointment of dedicated Practice Leaders who provide enhanced operational oversight, coaching and support to frontline teams. This approach helps to ensure the consistent delivery of high-quality and evidence-based support.

The introduction of this service strengthens the support pathway and Autism Together's ability to respond to increasingly complex support needs and demonstrates the Charity's ongoing commitment to developing specialist services that enable autistic people to remain within their communities, achieve greater stability and progress towards positive long-term outcomes.

Supported Living

Autism Together currently supports 91 people through its Supported Living services, delivering approximately 9,949 hours of care each week across 21 properties.

Supported Living services continue to play a vital role in enabling autistic people to live as independently as possible within their local communities, whilst receiving personalised support tailored to their individual needs, aspirations and goals. Throughout the year, services have focused on promoting independence, strengthening family relationships, encouraging community participation and supporting positive health and wellbeing outcomes.

A key focus during the year has been the continued development of opportunities for family engagement. One supported living service hosted a series of family open days, providing opportunities for relatives and carers to visit, spend time with their loved ones and build relationships with staff and other families. These events have strengthened communication, fostered a sense of community and provided valuable opportunities for feedback and involvement.

The service also benefited from investment in new interactive equipment funded through internal fundraising initiatives. Staff, families and supporters demonstrated considerable commitment in raising funds to enhance the living environment and create additional opportunities for meaningful activities and engagement.

During the year, a new gardening project was established within one supported living service. The initiative brought together people supported, their families, staff and members of the local community to transform outdoor spaces and create opportunities for learning, wellbeing and social interaction.

Participants have been involved in growing fruit, vegetables and plants whilst developing practical skills, confidence and a sense of ownership over their environment. The project represents an excellent example of co-production in practice, with all stakeholders working together to create a welcoming and enjoyable space that can be enjoyed for years to come. The involvement of local community partners further strengthened connections and demonstrated the positive impact of collaborative working.

Throughout the year, many people supported across the Supported Living service achieved significant personal goals relating to health, wellbeing and independence.

Several individuals made substantial improvements to their physical health through healthier lifestyle choices, regular exercise and increased participation in community activities. These achievements have contributed not only to improved physical wellbeing but also increased confidence, self-esteem and quality of life.

People supported have also strengthened important family relationships, expanded their social networks and increased their involvement within their local communities through volunteering opportunities, recreational activities and participation in local events.

Across supported living services, individuals have continued to make progress towards greater independence and personal fulfilment. Achievements during the year included:

- Successfully moving into preferred accommodation that better reflected individual aspirations and long-term goals.
- Undertaking home adaptations to improve comfort, accessibility and independence.
- Developing increased confidence in household management and daily living skills.
- Accessing holidays and travel opportunities that supported personal growth and independence.
- Participating in Autism Acceptance Month activities and wider community events.
- Increasing engagement in social, recreational and educational opportunities.

These outcomes reflect the effectiveness of person-centred planning and the commitment of staff teams to supporting people to achieve the goals that matter most to them.

One individual supported within the service demonstrated significant progress in both wellbeing and independence following a period of increased support and stability. Through consistent staffing arrangements and personalised support planning, the individual successfully achieved a number of milestones that had previously presented challenges. These included enjoying an extended holiday experience, increasing participation in communal activities, developing stronger relationships and demonstrating greater independence within their home environment.

The individual also showed notable resilience and adaptability when managing changes to routines and personal finances, demonstrating the positive impact that stable support and long-term relationship-based practice can have on outcomes.

Another individual achieved remarkable improvements in health and wellbeing through sustained commitment to healthier lifestyle choices. Supported by staff, the individual engaged in regular exercise programmes, improved nutritional choices and increased participation in community activities. These efforts resulted in significant improvements in physical health, confidence and overall quality of life.

The individual also successfully re-established important family relationships, actively participated in volunteering opportunities and received recognition through the organisation's awards programme in acknowledgement of their personal achievements and progress.

Autism Acceptance Month provided an opportunity for services to host events bringing together people supported, families, friends and staff to celebrate inclusion, raise awareness and strengthen community connections. These events were well attended and reflected the strong sense of belonging that is fostered across Autism Together's services.

The achievements seen across Supported Living services during the year have been underpinned by the dedication, professionalism and consistency of staff teams. Stable and experienced teams have enabled individuals to pursue personal ambitions, maintain important relationships and develop greater independence in all aspects of daily life.

Holidays and Experiences

Providing opportunities for travel, leisure and new experiences remains an important aspect of Autism Together's person-centred approach to support. Holidays offer people the opportunity to develop

confidence, increase independence, enjoy meaningful experiences and create lasting memories, whilst accessing tailored support that reflects their individual needs and preferences.

During the year, Autism Together supported many individuals across Residential Care and Supported Living services to enjoy successful holidays throughout the UK and overseas. These experiences were carefully planned to ensure that people could access opportunities that were meaningful to them whilst receiving the appropriate level of support.

One individual supported within Residential Care enjoyed their first holiday in many years. Accompanied by staff, they spent time in a holiday property in Yorkshire, close to the coast. The holiday provided opportunities to engage in activities that reflected their interests, including long walks, sensory experiences in the local environment and visits to local attractions. Staff reported that the individual remained relaxed and engaged throughout the trip, demonstrating the positive impact that well-planned breaks can have on wellbeing, confidence and quality of life. The success of the holiday has encouraged plans for future travel opportunities.

Another individual supported through Supported Living achieved a long-held ambition to travel internationally, successfully undertaking a holiday to Japan. With support from staff, the individual was able to explore a new culture, visit places of personal interest, experience local cuisine and develop confidence through independent travel experiences. The achievement reflected significant planning and preparation and demonstrated how personalised support can enable people to pursue ambitious personal goals.

These examples illustrate the importance of ensuring that people have access to the same opportunities and experiences enjoyed by the wider community. Through personalised planning and dedicated support, Autism Together continues to enable people to pursue their interests, broaden their horizons and achieve goals that contribute to greater wellbeing, independence and life satisfaction.

Quality Assurance

Maintaining and continuously improving the quality of services delivered remains a key priority for Autism Together. Our quality assurance framework incorporates external regulation and inspection, internal quality monitoring, service audits and continuous improvement activity to ensure that the people we support receive safe, effective and person-centred care.

Care Quality Commission (CQC) Inspections

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) resumed inspections across several of our residential services during the year, following a prolonged period in which many services had not received routine inspections since before the COVID-19 pandemic.

In February 2025, inspections were undertaken at three residential services. Two services achieved improved overall ratings of Good, having previously been rated Requires Improvement. A third service retained its Requires Improvement rating, with action plans remaining in place to address the areas identified and support further improvement.

Further inspections took place in March 2025 across two additional residential services, both of which achieved overall ratings of Good. These inspection outcomes demonstrate the progress made across our

residential services and reflect the commitment of managers and staff teams to delivering high-quality support.

Local Authority Quality Assurance Reviews

In addition to CQC regulation, Autism Together's services are also subject to review and scrutiny by local authority quality assurance teams. During the year, several services participated in quality assurance visits and reviews undertaken by commissioning authorities. We are pleased to report that these assessments generated positive feedback regarding the quality of care and support provided, the professionalism of staff teams and the outcomes being achieved for the people we support.

Alongside the Provider Assessment and Market Management Solution (PAMMS) framework, we also supported Wirral Borough Council with the development and implementation of their own in-house Quality Audit Tool by acting as part of the pilot and giving feedback on the new approach.

These reviews provide valuable opportunities to benchmark practice, demonstrate compliance with recognised quality standards and identify opportunities for further improvement. The process supports managers and teams to reflect on service performance, celebrate areas of good practice and develop targeted improvement plans where necessary.

The feedback received through these quality assurance processes has been used constructively to strengthen service delivery and enhance outcomes for the people we support. Autism Together welcomes external scrutiny as an important component of continuous improvement and remains committed to maintaining open and collaborative relationships with commissioning and regulatory bodies.

Internal Quality Assurance and Mock Inspections

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, Autism Together operates a comprehensive programme of internal quality assurance activity. During the year, 14 mock inspections were commissioned across registered services. These exercises were designed to replicate the experience of a regulatory inspection and provided managers and staff teams with valuable opportunities to assess compliance, identify areas for improvement and reinforce best practice.

The mock inspection programme has strengthened organisational preparedness, supported management development and provided additional assurance regarding the quality and consistency of service delivery. Findings from these reviews have informed service improvement plans and contributed to the continuous enhancement of care and support across the organisation.

Through a combination of external inspection, local authority quality reviews and robust internal audit processes, Autism Together continues to drive improvements in quality, strengthen governance arrangements and ensure that people receive high-quality, safe and person-centred support.

Safeguarding and Assurance

The safety and wellbeing of the people we support remains the Charity's highest priority. Trustees receive regular assurance regarding safeguarding arrangements through reports presented to the Board, including information relating to safeguarding concerns, incidents, complaints, regulatory matters and

quality assurance activity. The Charity maintains robust safeguarding policies and procedures that are reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with current legislation and best practice guidance. Staff receive safeguarding training appropriate to their roles and responsibilities, and a culture of openness and learning is actively encouraged across the organisation. Where safeguarding concerns arise, they are investigated thoroughly and learning is shared to support continuous improvement and strengthen protections for the people we support.

Stakeholder Engagement

The Trustees recognise the importance of understanding and responding to the views of those affected by the Charity's work. Throughout the year, the Board and Executive Team have engaged with a wide range of stakeholders, including autistic people, families, employees, volunteers, commissioners, regulators, community partners and supporters. Feedback is obtained through co-production forums, family engagement activities, staff surveys, quality assurance processes, complaints and compliments, and regular stakeholder meetings. This engagement helps to inform strategic decision-making, service development and organisational priorities. The Trustees consider the needs and interests of stakeholders when making significant decisions and are committed to ensuring that the voices of autistic people remain central to the future development of the Charity.

Day Services

Autism Together currently supports 237 people through its Day Services provision, delivering approximately 1,110 sessions each week across six specialist service areas.

Day Services continue to play a vital role in promoting independence, personal development, social inclusion and community participation. Throughout the year, people accessing Day Services have engaged in a wide range of educational, vocational, creative and recreational activities designed to reflect individual interests, aspirations and goals.

During the year, people supported through Day Services participated in a variety of community-based activities and events that provided opportunities to develop confidence, build relationships and access new experiences.

One such opportunity involved a visit to a regional racecourse through a partnership with an organisation dedicated to increasing accessibility and inclusion within the horseracing industry. Participants enjoyed behind-the-scenes access to facilities, learned about how the industry operates and experienced the excitement of live racing. The event was enjoyed by many people, including several who were attending for the first time, and demonstrated the value of community partnerships in creating inclusive experiences.

Creativity continued to be a strong feature of Day Services throughout the year. To celebrate National Poetry Day, people supported participated in interactive workshops that combined creative writing with technology. These activities encouraged imagination, communication and self-expression, whilst introducing participants to innovative digital tools. The project inspired many people to create original work and explore new ways of sharing their ideas.

Learning and skill development remain central to the Day Services programme. During the year, a number of individuals successfully achieved ASDAN accreditations through participation in specialist

activity groups. These externally recognised awards acknowledge personal development and achievement whilst supporting the development of practical life skills, teamwork, decision-making and independence.

Other creative projects included animation, digital media and multimedia storytelling activities. One particularly meaningful project supported an individual to transform a treasured personal memory into a stop-motion animation, resulting in a unique piece of work that celebrated personal history, creativity and self-expression.

Podcasting has continued to grow as a highly successful activity within Day Services. Individuals have worked collaboratively to develop and produce podcasts covering a wide range of subjects including sport, entertainment, personal interests and popular culture.

The development of these projects has enabled participants to enhance communication skills, develop confidence, build friendships and explore creative interests. Several podcast productions have received external recognition through nominations and awards programmes, highlighting the quality and impact of the work being produced.

These activities provide valuable opportunities for people to share their knowledge, opinions and passions with wider audiences whilst developing transferable skills in media production, teamwork and presentation.

People supported by Autism Together have continued to make meaningful contributions to national research and service development initiatives. During the year, individuals participated in a research project exploring effective community-based mental health support for people with learning disabilities and autistic people. Through regular involvement, participants helped shape research materials, improve accessibility and contribute to the design and delivery of research activities.

Their contributions included:

Developing easy-read information materials.

Producing accessible communications and newsletters.

Supporting the design of interview methodologies.

Participating in and facilitating research interviews.

The group's work culminated in presentations delivered at a national NHS conference, where they shared their experiences of co-production and research involvement. Their contribution received positive feedback and has led to invitations to participate in future events and initiatives.

The work undertaken by the group has also received external recognition through award nominations and achievements, reflecting the quality and impact of their involvement.

Co-production forums continue to provide important opportunities for people supported to influence the development of services and activities. Alongside the long-established Meeting Together Forum, which celebrated its fifteenth anniversary during the year, local Day Services forums have enabled individuals to share feedback, suggest improvements and contribute to decision-making within their services. These

forums ensure that people remain at the centre of service development and help the organisation better understand what is important to those who access its services.

One notable project this year involved the co-production of a new woodland feature created using reclaimed and sustainable materials. Designed and constructed with the active involvement of people supported, the project incorporated wildlife-friendly features including habitats for insects and nesting birds.

The initiative provided opportunities to develop practical skills, learn about environmental sustainability and contribute positively to the wider service environment.

The STAR Awards

A significant highlight of the year was the launch of the STAR Awards, delivered in partnership with Wirral Mencap. Created specifically to celebrate the achievements of people supported, the awards recognise determination, personal growth, talent and achievement.

The awards were developed through a co-produced approach, with people supported actively involved in planning, decision-making, branding, venue selection and judging. Representatives participated in judging panels and played a key role in determining award recipients, ensuring that the voices of people supported remained central throughout the process.

The inaugural awards ceremony attracted more than 200 nominations and brought together people supported, families, carers, staff and community partners to celebrate individual achievements. The event provided a powerful opportunity to recognise personal success, promote inclusion and celebrate the remarkable accomplishments of people supported across both organisations.

The launch of the STAR Awards reflects Autism Together's commitment to recognising achievement, promoting self-advocacy and ensuring that people are celebrated for their talents, contributions and aspirations. Through initiatives such as this, the Charity continues to place the voices and achievements of the people it supports at the heart of everything it does.

Pathway to Work

Autism Together's Pathway to Work programme continues to provide autistic adults with opportunities to develop skills, gain work experience and progress towards meaningful employment. Established in 2023, the programme was created to offer a structured and supported pathway into the workplace, helping individuals build confidence, increase independence and achieve their employment aspirations.

Over the past year, the programme has continued to expand, supporting a growing number of individuals to access volunteering, work experience and employment opportunities within their local communities. In April 2026, the programme was relaunched to a wider audience of employers and community partners, further strengthening opportunities for collaboration and increasing awareness of the valuable contribution autistic people can make within the workforce.

The programme adopts a person-centred approach, recognising individual strengths, interests and ambitions. Participants are supported to develop workplace skills, gain practical experience and build confidence in a way that reflects their personal goals and aspirations.

A particularly positive example of the programme's impact has been the success of an individual undertaking a community-based placement with a local social enterprise organisation. Through the placement, the individual has been able to develop new skills, increase confidence and take a leading role in designing and delivering a community initiative focused on providing healthy breakfast opportunities for local residents.

With appropriate support, encouragement and collaboration from colleagues and volunteers, the individual successfully planned and led the initiative, demonstrating increased independence, leadership skills and confidence. The project represents an excellent example of co-production in action, with the individual actively shaping and delivering a service that benefits the wider community.

The success of Pathway to Work demonstrates the significant positive impact that meaningful employment opportunities can have on wellbeing, self-esteem and social inclusion. By working collaboratively with employers, community organisations and local partners, Autism Together continues to challenge barriers to employment and create opportunities for autistic people to contribute their skills, talents and experience within the workplace.

The Charity remains committed to further developing the programme and expanding opportunities for autistic people to access fulfilling employment, develop greater independence and achieve their long-term aspirations.

High Quality, Person-Centred Support

Developing the knowledge, skills and confidence of our workforce remains central to Autism Together's commitment to delivering high-quality, person-centred support. Throughout the year, significant progress has been made in strengthening training, co-production and workforce development through our Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) approach, the Autism Together Model (ATM) and the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism.

Quality Assured Delivery of Oliver McGowan Training

In June 2025, Autism Together's Learning and Culture Team achieved formal recognition from Skills for Care for the quality of its delivery of the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism.

The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training is designed to improve the knowledge and understanding of health and social care professionals, ensuring that autistic people and people with learning disabilities receive more informed, responsive and person-centred support. The training has become a key component of workforce development across health and social care and supports compliance with training expectations for regulated providers.

The Skills for Care quality assurance process assesses providers against recognised standards to ensure that training is delivered consistently and effectively. Autism Together was pleased to be recognised as a quality-assured training provider, reflecting the expertise of the Learning and Culture Team and the valuable contribution of the Experts by Experience who play an integral role in delivery. This achievement demonstrates the organisation's commitment to delivering high-quality learning opportunities that improve understanding, challenge misconceptions and promote better outcomes for autistic people and people with learning disabilities.



Expanding the Network

The organisation also welcomed a new cohort of Oliver McGowan Experts by Experience during the year. Experts by Experience are individuals with lived experience of autism, learning disabilities, or both, who work alongside trained facilitators to deliver the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training programme. This co-produced model ensures that participants hear directly from people with lived experience, bringing authenticity and practical insight to the learning experience.

The newly qualified Experts by Experience completed a comprehensive programme of learning and assessment before achieving certification. Their successful completion of the programme has strengthened Autism Together's training capacity and increased opportunities for autistic people and people with learning disabilities to contribute actively to workforce development.

The expansion of the network further reinforces Autism Together's commitment to recognising lived experience as a valuable form of expertise. Through their involvement, Experts by Experience help improve understanding, challenge assumptions and support the development of a more knowledgeable, skilled and inclusive workforce.

Co-production in the Autism Together Model (ATM)

Co-production continues to be a defining feature of Autism Together's approach to learning and development. During the year, a group of autistic people supported by the Charity successfully completed a Train the Trainer programme, enabling them to become co-trainers within the Autism Together Model (ATM).

ATM is Autism Together's bespoke autism-specific training programme, accredited by Bild ACT, and forms a key part of employee induction and ongoing professional development. The training explores autism-specific approaches to support, sensory differences, communication, behavioural understanding and person-centred practice.

Through participation in the programme, the new co-trainers developed the skills and knowledge required to contribute directly to the delivery of future training sessions. Their involvement ensures that lived experience remains at the heart of learning and provides staff with authentic insight into the experiences of autistic people.

The initiative has delivered benefits for both trainers and learners, empowering autistic people to share their expertise while strengthening the quality and relevance of staff training.

Developing Practice Through Positive Behaviour Support

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) continues to underpin Autism Together's approach to delivering high-quality care and support. PBS focuses on understanding the reasons behind behaviour, reducing restrictive practices, promoting quality of life and supporting individuals to achieve positive outcomes.

Throughout the year, PBS principles have been embedded across operational services through training, practice leadership, specialist interventions and service reviews. This work has been particularly important in supporting individuals with more complex needs, enabling staff teams to develop a deeper understanding of communication, sensory processing and behavioural presentation.

The integration of PBS principles within staff training, service development and quality assurance activity continues to strengthen professional practice and supports the organisation's commitment to delivering compassionate, evidence-based and person-centred support.

Promoting Autism Understanding

During Autism Acceptance Month, Autism Together's Learning and Culture Team delivered awareness and training sessions to healthcare professionals across the region. These sessions incorporated contributions from autistic Experts by Experience and focused on increasing understanding of autism, promoting reasonable adjustments and improving the experiences of autistic people accessing healthcare services.

Feedback from attendees was highly positive, with participants highlighting the value of hearing directly from autistic people and gaining practical insights into how services can become more accessible and inclusive.

Admissions, Advisory Services and Supporting Families

Autism Together remains committed to supporting autistic people and their families throughout their journey, from the point of initial enquiry through to accessing services and ongoing support. The Admissions and Advisory teams play a key role in ensuring that individuals, families, carers and professionals can access information, advice and guidance, whilst helping people identify the most appropriate support to meet their needs.

The Admissions Team has continued to play an active role in engaging with local communities, educational establishments, families and professionals to raise awareness of Autism Together's services and the support available to autistic people.

Throughout the year, team members attended a range of events across the region, providing information and advice to prospective beneficiaries, families, carers and professionals. These events created valuable opportunities to discuss available services, answer questions and support individuals who were considering future care, support, education or employment pathways.

A key area of activity during the year involved engagement with schools, colleges and specialist education providers to support young people who are considering their next steps after education. The Admissions Team attended a number of transition-focused events, careers fairs and aspiration programmes, where they met with students, families and education professionals to discuss future opportunities and provide information about Autism Together's services.

These events enabled the Charity to engage directly with young people as they explored aspirations for adulthood, independence, employment and community participation. Discussions focused on understanding individual goals and identifying the support pathways that could help people achieve their ambitions.

By working proactively with schools and colleges, Autism Together continues to support smoother transitions into adult services and ensure that autistic young people and their families have access to the information and guidance needed to make informed decisions about the future.

The Advisory Service continues to offer information, guidance and practical support to autistic people, families and carers across the region. These activities support Autism Together's wider charitable objectives by increasing access to autism-specific information and ensuring that families can obtain timely support at important stages of their journey.

Recognition and Awards

The achievements of Autism Together, the people we support and our staff teams continue to be recognised both regionally and nationally. During the year, the Charity received nominations, finalist placements and external accreditation across a range of awards and quality assurance programmes, reflecting our commitment to excellence, co-production, innovation and person-centred support.

National Learning Disabilities and Autism Awards

In June 2025, Autism Together was proud to be recognised at the National Learning Disabilities and Autism Awards, which celebrate excellence in supporting people with learning disabilities and autistic people across the United Kingdom.

The Charity's Learning and Culture Team, together with its Experts by Experience, were shortlisted in the Partnership for Co-Produced Training Award category in recognition of their collaborative delivery of the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism. This category recognises organisations that successfully involve people with lived experience in the design, delivery and evaluation of training programmes.

In addition, a Day Services podcasting project was shortlisted for The People's Award, recognising initiatives that promote personal development, inclusion and meaningful opportunities for autistic people and people with learning disabilities. Although the Charity was not successful in securing the overall awards, national recognition of these initiatives reflects the strength of Autism Together's commitment to co-production, empowerment and innovative service delivery.

Charity Times Awards

Autism Together was also recognised at the prestigious Charity Times Awards, one of the sector's leading award programmes celebrating excellence and best practice across UK charities. The Charity was shortlisted in the Charity of the Year (£10 million+ income) category, placing Autism Together amongst a select group of leading national charities recognised for their impact, governance and service delivery.

In addition, a member of the Charity's Executive team was shortlisted in an individual leadership category in recognition of outstanding professional achievement and contribution to the sector. Being shortlisted alongside some of the UK's most established charities was a significant achievement and reflects the progress, impact and reputation that Autism Together continues to build.



Great British Care Awards

In November 2025, Autism Together was represented at the regional Great British Care Awards, which celebrate excellence across the social care sector. The Charity received a Highly Commended award in the Co-production category, recognising the outstanding contribution of the Learning and Culture Team and the Experts by Experience who play an integral role in the development and delivery of training programmes.

The judges highlighted the organisation's commitment to meaningful co-production and the positive impact of involving people with lived experience in staff development and organisational learning.

Autism Together was also shortlisted in additional categories recognising excellence in workforce practice and assessment processes, further demonstrating the breadth of high-quality work being delivered across the organisation.

Autism Leaders' List Recognition

A long-established Day Services podcasting project received further national recognition during the year after being shortlisted for the Learning Disability and Autism Leaders' List Awards. The project, developed and delivered by people supported within Day Services, provides opportunities for participants to share their interests, develop communication skills and engage with wider audiences through digital media.

The podcast has continued to grow in popularity and is now available across a range of public platforms. National recognition of the project reflects its success in promoting inclusion, creativity, confidence and self-expression.

Autism Together Model (ATM) Re-accreditation

The Charity was pleased to secure successful re-accreditation of its Autism Together Model (ATM) training programme through Bild ACT. This nationally recognised accreditation provides assurance that the training continues to meet rigorous quality standards and reflects best practice in autism-specific support and restraint reduction approaches.

The assessment process included a detailed review of the organisation's training framework and evidence demonstrating the positive impact of the programme on practice across services. Feedback from the accreditation panel recognised the high standard of the training and highlighted the organisation's commitment to supporting people as individuals through evidence-based, person-centred practice.

The successful re-accreditation provides further assurance that Autism Together continues to invest in high-quality workforce development and specialist autism training.

Cyber Essentials Plus Certification

During the year, Autism Together strengthened its information governance and cybersecurity arrangements by achieving Cyber Essentials Plus certification. Cyber Essentials Plus is a government-backed accreditation that provides independent verification of an organisation's cybersecurity controls

and systems. It represents a higher level of assurance than the standard Cyber Essentials certification and requires robust testing of technical security measures.

Achieving this certification demonstrates the Charity's commitment to protecting sensitive information, maintaining secure systems and ensuring the highest possible standards of cyber resilience. It also provides reassurance to the people we support, families, commissioners and other stakeholders that data security remains a key organisational priority.

Celebrating Success

These achievements reflect the dedication, professionalism and commitment of the people we support, staff teams, volunteers and partners who contribute to the success of Autism Together. Recognition from external organisations provides valuable independent validation of the quality, innovation and impact of our work, while also motivating us to continue improving the services and support we provide.

The Charity remains committed to maintaining high standards, embracing innovation and ensuring that autistic people remain at the heart of everything we do.

Community Engagement & Events

Community engagement remains an important part of Autism Together's charitable activities, helping to promote autism acceptance, reduce social isolation, strengthen community connections and create opportunities for autistic people to participate fully in community life. Throughout the year, the Charity delivered and supported a wide range of events, activities and partnerships that brought together people we support, families, staff, volunteers and members of the wider community.

Autism Acceptance Month

Autism Acceptance Month continues to be a key annual focus for the Charity, providing opportunities to celebrate autistic people, raise awareness and promote greater understanding within local communities.

To mark World Autism Awareness Day and the start of Autism Acceptance Month, people we support and staff from across the organisation participated in a community Spring Stroll through Bromborough Pool Village. The event encouraged participation, social interaction and visibility whilst celebrating autism in a positive and inclusive way.

The month also included the Charity's annual bake sale, which brought together people from services across the organisation to showcase their baking skills and creativity. The event generated significant engagement from staff, supporters, families and local communities and reflected the inclusive and collaborative spirit of Autism Acceptance Month.

Heritage and Community Partnerships

Autism Together continues to play an active role in preserving and promoting the history and heritage of Bromborough Pool Village, where many of its services are based.

During the year, the Charity participated in the national Heritage Open Days programme, offering guided and self-guided tours of the historic village and its listed buildings. These events provided members of

the public with opportunities to learn more about the area's rich social and industrial history while highlighting the Charity's stewardship of important heritage assets.

The tours proved highly popular, attracting significant interest from across the region and generating positive feedback from visitors. The success of the programme reflects the Charity's commitment to making local heritage accessible and engaging for the wider community.

Further heritage engagement took place through participation in the Wirral Heritage Fair, where staff, volunteers and people we support shared information about Bromborough Pool Village and its historical significance. These activities continue to raise awareness of the area's heritage while strengthening relationships with local communities and partner organisations.

A notable event was the Military Vehicles Day held at Bromborough Pool Village, which attracted hundreds of visitors and provided people we support with opportunities to engage with members of the public, participate in event activities and contribute to the success of the day. The event also increased awareness of the Charity and its activities among local residents and visitors.

Volunteering and Community Contribution

Autism Together continues to benefit from the time, skills and commitment of volunteers who make a valuable contribution to a wide range of activities across the Charity. Volunteers have supported projects including Bridge Community Farm, community events, heritage activities and fundraising initiatives, helping to enrich the experiences available to the people we support. Their involvement promotes community engagement, social inclusion and partnership working while providing additional opportunities for autistic people to participate in meaningful activities. The Trustees would like to record their sincere appreciation to all volunteers for their dedication and contribution during the year.

Arts, Culture and Creative Participation

Opportunities for artistic expression and cultural engagement continued to flourish throughout the year. As part of Autism Acceptance Month, people supported through Day Services exhibited artwork in a public exhibition that celebrated creativity, self-expression and individuality. The exhibition provided artists with the opportunity to showcase their work to a wider audience and helped challenge perceptions by highlighting the talents and achievements of autistic people. The event attracted positive feedback from visitors and represented an important opportunity to promote inclusion through the arts.

Seasonal Activities and Family Events

Autism Together continued to provide a range of family-friendly activities and seasonal events throughout the year. During the Easter holiday period, activities were delivered across community venues including Bromborough Pool Café and Bridge Community Farm. These events provided opportunities for autistic children, families and people we support to participate in accessible leisure activities, creative workshops and inclusive community experiences.

The Charity's Autism-Friendly Christmas Grotto returned during the festive period and proved highly popular with families from across the region. Designed to provide an accessible and welcoming festive experience, the event enabled children and families to enjoy seasonal celebrations in an environment that reflected their needs.

In addition, the Charity hosted its first community Christmas Carol Concert within Bromborough Pool Village, bringing together people we support, families, staff, volunteers and supporters for an evening of music and celebration. The event highlighted the strong sense of community that exists across Autism Together and provided an opportunity to celebrate the festive season together.

Remembrance and Community Reflection

During November, Autism Together once again supported a community Remembrance Day service within Bromborough Pool Village. The event brought together people we support, staff, families and local residents to reflect on the sacrifices made by previous generations and to pay their respects in a shared act of remembrance. The service provided an important opportunity for community participation and demonstrated the Charity's ongoing commitment to supporting community cohesion and civic engagement.

Raising Awareness and Promoting Inclusion

Autism Together maintained a visible presence at a range of public events throughout the year, helping to raise awareness of autism and the Charity's services.

Participation in large-scale public events provided opportunities to engage with thousands of people, share information about autism and signpost individuals and families to sources of support and advice. These events also helped challenge misconceptions, promote understanding and celebrate the achievements of autistic people.

Through its extensive programme of community engagement activities, Autism Together continues to foster greater understanding of autism, strengthen community connections and create opportunities for autistic people to participate fully in society. These activities support the Charity's wider mission of promoting inclusion, acceptance and opportunity for autistic people and their families.



Supporting Staff

Autism Together recognises that the quality of support provided to autistic people is underpinned by the commitment, wellbeing and professional development of its workforce. Throughout the year, the Charity has continued to invest in staff engagement, recognition, learning and wellbeing, ensuring that colleagues have access to the support, resources and opportunities needed to thrive in their roles.

Leadership and Organisational Change

The year saw a period of planned leadership transition within the organisation. Following the departure of Richard Whitby, Chief Executive, at the end of March 2026, staff from across Autism Together came together to recognise their contribution to the Charity and to reflect on the progress achieved during their tenure.

Angie Kemp has been appointed as Chief Executive and an interim Director of Operations were subsequently appointed, ensuring leadership continuity during the transition period. The Board of Trustees worked closely with the Executive Team throughout this process to maintain organisational stability and support the continued delivery of high-quality services.

Staff Voice and Engagement

During 2025, Autism Together undertook a comprehensive staff survey which achieved an exceptional response rate of 70%, representing a significant increase from the previous survey undertaken in 2022. The high level of participation provided valuable insight into employee experiences and enabled the Executive Team and Board of Trustees to gain a robust understanding of workforce views across the organisation.

Key strengths identified through the survey included:

- Reward and recognition.
- Support from managers.
- Team relationships and workplace culture.
- Commitment to organisational values and purpose.
- Health, safety and wellbeing.
- Diversity and inclusion.
- Internal communication.

The survey also identified areas where further improvements could be made, particularly around organisational communication and cross-team collaboration. Work has subsequently been undertaken to analyse feedback in greater detail and identify actions that will strengthen engagement and communication across services.

Recognising and Rewarding Staff

Recognising the contribution of staff remains an important organisational priority. Throughout the year, a range of staff recognition initiatives were delivered, including prize draws offering significant financial rewards and additional leave to employees. These initiatives were designed to recognise the

extraordinary commitment shown by staff throughout the year and reinforce Autism Together's culture of appreciation and recognition.

In addition, all staff received festive appreciation hampers during the Christmas period as a gesture of thanks from the Board of Trustees and Executive Team for their dedication and contribution. The Charity also hosted its annual Autism Together Awards, which continue to grow in popularity and significance. The awards celebrate outstanding performance, innovation, teamwork and commitment across the organisation.

The 2026 awards attracted over 550 nominations, demonstrating the strong culture of peer recognition that exists within the Charity. The event provided an opportunity to celebrate successes, recognise excellence and thank staff for the exceptional work they deliver every day.

Promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Autism Together remains committed to fostering an inclusive workplace where diversity is valued and celebrated. During the year, staff and people we support participated in a range of activities to celebrate cultural diversity and recognise the different backgrounds, experiences and traditions represented across the organisation.

Events highlighted cultures from around the world through food, music, storytelling and shared experiences, creating opportunities for colleagues and people supported to learn from one another and celebrate diversity together.

The Charity also marked a number of national awareness events throughout the year, including International Women's Day, recognising the achievements and contributions of women across the organisation and wider society. These activities continue to support the development of an inclusive culture where people feel respected, valued and able to bring their authentic selves to work.

Supporting Staff Wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of employees remains a key priority. Autism Together provides staff with access to a comprehensive range of wellbeing services, including confidential counselling, mental health support, legal and financial guidance, life coaching and access to 24-hour support helplines.

Additional services include access to online General Practitioner consultations, wellbeing resources, mental health programmes and support designed to help staff manage stress, prevent burnout and navigate challenging life events. Staff are also able to access support through trained Mental Health First Aiders and First Responders located across the organisation, providing an additional source of confidential advice and assistance when required.

To further promote wellbeing, the Charity continued to organise awareness campaigns and engagement activities throughout the year, including events focused on mental health, resilience and workplace wellbeing.

Learning and Development

Autism Together remains committed to supporting professional development and career progression. During the year, the organisation expanded its apprenticeship offer through a new learning partnership,

enabling staff to access nationally recognised qualifications in adult social care, leadership and management.

The programme combines practical workplace learning with structured education and provides employees with opportunities to develop new skills, enhance their careers and improve outcomes for the people they support. The Charity also celebrated National Apprenticeship Week by recognising the achievements of colleagues who had successfully completed apprenticeship programmes and progressed within their careers.

Alongside formal qualifications, staff continue to benefit from a wide range of learning opportunities delivered through the Learning and Culture Team, supporting ongoing professional development and the maintenance of high practice standards.

Health and Safety

During the year, Autism Together reviewed its internal governance arrangements relating to staff wellbeing and workplace safety. The Health and Safety Committee was integrated into the wider Working Together Group, creating a more joined-up approach to employee wellbeing, staff engagement and organisational safety.

Health and safety now forms a standing agenda item at all Working Together Group meetings, ensuring that safety issues remain subject to regular review and discussion by representatives from across the organisation. This approach has strengthened communication, improved accountability and supported a more integrated response to workforce matters.

Embracing Innovation and New Systems

Autism Together remains committed to embracing innovation and investing in technology that enhances the quality of support provided, improves operational effectiveness and delivers positive outcomes for the people we support. Throughout the year, the Charity has continued to explore new approaches and implement digital solutions designed to strengthen safety, independence, learning and service delivery.

Innovation Through Assistive Technology

During the year, Autism Together continued to explore how emerging technologies can support both the quality of care provided and the independence of the people we support.

Working collaboratively across operational and technology teams, the Charity launched a pilot programme using infrared imaging technology. Unlike traditional camera-based monitoring systems, infrared technology provides a less intrusive approach to observation, helping to maintain privacy and dignity while supporting safety and wellbeing.

The pilot has been developed with a particular focus on two areas. Firstly, the organisation supports an increasingly ageing population, and the ability to identify falls or changes in wellbeing at an early stage has the potential to significantly improve safety and support. Secondly, some individuals require enhanced monitoring due to specific health or behavioural support needs, including the identification of potential health events or early indicators of distress.

Autism Together is also exploring advanced anonymisation capabilities within this technology to ensure that privacy and confidentiality remain central to its application.

Whilst the project remains in its early stages, the potential benefits are considerable. Assistive technologies have the capacity to support greater independence, improve safety outcomes and reduce reliance on more intrusive interventions. The Charity looks forward to evaluating the outcomes of the pilot and identifying opportunities for wider implementation where appropriate.

Lumis Learning Management System

In August 2025, Autism Together introduced Lumis, a new learning management system designed to modernise and streamline the delivery of training across the organisation. The platform provides a centralised solution for managing training records, monitoring compliance, tracking development requirements and delivering e-learning content. For the first time, all training resources and online learning modules are available through a single system, providing a more efficient and user-friendly experience for both staff and managers.

The introduction of Lumis has strengthened oversight of mandatory training, improved reporting capabilities and supported more effective workforce development planning. The system has been successfully embedded across the organisation and is now a key component of the Charity's learning and development infrastructure.

Vantage Incident Management System

In March 2026, Autism Together implemented Vantage, a new digital system for recording and managing accidents, incidents and safeguarding concerns. The introduction of Vantage represented a significant improvement in the Charity's ability to collect, monitor and analyse information relating to health, safety and safeguarding. To support the transition, all staff completed mandatory training through the Lumis platform, ensuring a smooth implementation process across services.

The system provides enhanced reporting functionality and enables managers to identify trends, monitor risks and respond more effectively to incidents and safeguarding matters. The improved availability of data has strengthened organisational learning and supports continued improvements in safety, quality and governance. Since implementation, Vantage has become an important tool in monitoring incidents and informing decision-making across the organisation.

Bromcom Day Services Management System

During the year, Autism Together further embedded the use of Bromcom, its digital care planning and management system for Day Services.

The platform enables staff to maintain comprehensive electronic records for individuals accessing Day Services, while also providing functionality for attendance monitoring, activity scheduling and timetable management. The system has improved record-keeping, enhanced operational oversight and provided a more robust framework for monitoring engagement and outcomes.

As Bromcom continues to evolve, the Charity is exploring further development opportunities to maximise its benefits for the people we support, their families and staff teams. A key future development will be the introduction of a family engagement application, which will provide families with increased

visibility of activities, attendance and progress within Day Services. This enhancement is expected to strengthen communication, improve collaboration and further support person-centred planning.

Corporate and Business Operations

Throughout the year, Autism Together continued to strengthen its organisational infrastructure, invest in future sustainability and develop new opportunities to support autistic people and their families. Significant progress was made across property ownership, family support initiatives and corporate partnerships, ensuring the Charity remains well positioned to meet future demand and deliver long-term impact.

Securing Our Head Office

A significant milestone was achieved in March 2026 with the completion of the purchase of Oak House, Autism Together's head office.

Securing ownership of the Charity's principal administrative base provides long-term operational stability and reflects the strong financial position and continued growth of the organisation. With the previous lease approaching expiry, the acquisition removes future uncertainty and ensures that Autism Together retains a permanent headquarters from which to coordinate and support its services.

The purchase strengthens the Charity's asset base and demonstrates a commitment to long-term sustainability. Owning Oak House provides greater control over future development opportunities and enables the organisation to focus its resources on delivering high-quality services and support for autistic people.

Fundraising

Fundraising and community support continue to play an important role in enhancing the opportunities, experiences and environments available to the people we support. Through grants, donations, community fundraising and innovative supporter initiatives, Autism Together has secured additional resources that directly contribute to improving wellbeing, promoting inclusion and creating meaningful opportunities for autistic people.

National Lottery Funding for Sensory and Therapeutic Facilities

During the year, Autism Together successfully secured a grant of £20,000 from The National Lottery Community Fund to support the installation of two specialist hot tubs at the Raby site.

The project has been designed to create accessible sensory and therapeutic environments for the people we support. The facilities will include purpose-built sheltered areas, privacy screening, calming lighting, music systems, accessible changing facilities and specialist equipment to ensure that the experience is inclusive and accessible to people with a wide range of needs.

The introduction of these facilities will provide opportunities for sensory exploration, relaxation and hydrotherapy, supporting both physical wellbeing and emotional regulation. The project demonstrates how external funding can be used to enhance quality of life and expand the range of therapeutic opportunities available across the Charity's services.

Community Fundraising and School Partnerships

Autism Together continues to benefit from the generosity and support of local schools, community groups and individual fundraisers.

During the year, a local primary school selected Autism Together as a beneficiary of a community fundraising initiative, raising funds through a sponsored event involving pupils, families and staff. In addition to this support, representatives from Autism Together attended a school-based community event focused on supporting families and promoting positive outcomes for children and young people.

These partnerships provide valuable opportunities to raise awareness of autism, strengthen community connections and generate funds that directly support the Charity's work.

Staff-Led Fundraising

The dedication and commitment of Autism Together employees extend well beyond their day-to-day roles.

A particularly successful staff-led fundraising initiative raised more than £2,000 through a community cake sale and raffle held during Autism Acceptance Month. The event attracted significant support from local businesses, families, colleagues and community members, with funds raised being used to enhance the living environment for people supported within one of the Charity's residential services.

Fundraising initiatives such as these demonstrate the passion of staff teams and their ongoing commitment to improving the experiences of the people they support.

Friends of the Farm

A significant fundraising development during the year was the launch of Friends of the Farm, a new supporter programme designed to help sustain Autism Together's farm and animal-based activities.

The Charity's 19-acre farm at Raby provides a unique environment where autistic people can access meaningful activities, develop practical skills and benefit from interaction with animals and the natural environment. The farm is home to a wide variety of animals and remains one of the Charity's most valued community assets.

The Friends of the Farm initiative allows supporters to sponsor individual animals and contribute directly to their ongoing care and welfare. Funds generated through the scheme support the costs of food, veterinary care, shelter and the continued development of activities available at the farm.

Sponsors receive regular updates and opportunities for engagement, helping to build long-term relationships between supporters and the Charity whilst generating sustainable income for an important community resource.

Plans for the future

Under the leadership of the new Chief Executive Officer, Angie Kemp, Autism Together commenced a strategic review during 2026 to refresh and strengthen the organisation's vision and priorities for the years ahead. This work is focused on ensuring that the Charity remains responsive to the changing needs of autistic people, evolving commissioning arrangements and wider developments across the health and social care sector.

The refreshed strategy will guide Autism Together's development during 2026/27 and beyond and is built around five key priorities.

1. Extending Our Reach

Autism Together remains committed to increasing the number of autistic adults who can benefit from its specialist services and support.

The Charity will seek to maximise capacity within existing services whilst exploring new service models and development opportunities that align with the needs of autistic people and commissioners. This includes identifying innovative approaches to service delivery, developing new business opportunities and broadening the range of funding sources available to support future growth.

Through a sustainable and carefully managed approach, the Charity aims to ensure that more autistic people can access high-quality, specialist support that promotes independence, wellbeing and positive life outcomes.

2. Developing, Empowering and Recognising Our Workforce

Our staff are central to the success of Autism Together and the delivery of outstanding support.

Over the coming years, the Charity will continue to strengthen its workforce through effective recruitment, retention and development initiatives. We will focus on attracting skilled and values-driven employees at all levels of the organisation whilst investing in leadership development, resilience and wellbeing.

A comprehensive training and development strategy will support staff to build their skills, knowledge and confidence, ensuring they are equipped to meet the evolving needs of the people we support. Autism Together will also continue to explore opportunities to enhance employee reward, recognition and benefits, reinforcing its commitment to being an employer of choice within the sector.

3. Optimising Safe, Supportive and Sustainable Environments

Providing high-quality environments that promote safety, wellbeing and independence remains a key strategic priority.

The Charity will continue to implement its property strategy to ensure that accommodation and service environments meet modern commissioning expectations and the changing needs of autistic people. This includes ongoing investment in maintenance, refurbishment, compliance and accessibility.

Alongside this, Autism Together is committed to improving environmental sustainability and will continue to identify opportunities to reduce its environmental impact, improve efficiency and embed sustainable practices across its operations.

4. Driving Quality and Continuous Improvement

Autism Together is committed to delivering services of the highest possible quality and maintaining a culture of continuous improvement.

The Charity will continue to strengthen its quality assurance framework, ensuring that people receive safe, effective and person-centred support. A strong focus will remain on learning, innovation and evidence-based practice to improve outcomes across all services.

Alongside service quality, the Charity will work to enhance its financial sustainability, strengthen governance arrangements and ensure full compliance with its statutory and regulatory responsibilities. Continued investment in digital systems, technology and data analysis will support informed decision-making and help drive organisational improvement.

5. Educating Communities and Promoting Inclusion

Autism Together believes that creating more inclusive communities is essential to achieving better outcomes for autistic people.

The Charity will continue to expand its autism training and awareness programmes, working with employers, community organisations, schools, and the wider public to promote greater understanding and acceptance of autism.

Through co-production, partnership working and engagement activities, Autism Together will ensure that autistic voices continue to shape service development and influence practice. The Charity will also seek to maximise awareness of its work through fundraising, community engagement and advocacy activities, helping to create more inclusive opportunities for autistic people and their families.

Measuring Our Impact

The Charity is committed to strengthening the way it measures, monitors and reports the impact of its services. During 2026, work commenced on the development of an enhanced organisation-wide performance framework that will bring together operational, quality, financial, workforce and outcomes-based measures into a single reporting structure. This framework will enable the Board, stakeholders and the people we support to better understand the difference the Charity is making and how this aligns with its strategic objectives. As part of this development, a comprehensive key performance indicator (KPI) dashboard is being designed and will be reported within the Trustees' Annual Report from 2026/27 onwards, providing greater transparency regarding service performance, quality outcomes and organisational effectiveness.

The Trustees are confident that these strategic priorities provide a strong foundation for the future development of Autism Together. Through continued investment in people, services, infrastructure and partnerships, the Charity will remain focused on its mission of creating brighter futures for autistic people, supporting them to lead fulfilling, meaningful and self-directed lives within their communities.

Fundraising Review and Approach

Each year our Fundraising Strategy is reviewed, to ensure it is relevant to current fundraising trends, and that the Fundraising team is attaining the very best return on investment of their time.

Fundraising targets are increased annually, which can understandably prove difficult during the current economic climate. So, despite increasing our target, they raised over £299,000 in the year.

During 25/26 all of the charity's fundraising has taken place in-house by fundraisers directly employed by the charity.

Types of fundraising include events, legacy, lottery, trusts and foundations, regular giving and corporate.

Autism Together is registered with the Fundraising Regulator and complies with the Fundraising Regulator Code by referring to it in all Fundraising policies and publications. These policies are used to inform/ train in-house and external fundraisers.

The Head of Fundraising is a member of the Institute of Fundraisers and has attained their Diploma qualification.

There have been no compliance issues with the Fundraising Regulator.

Autism Together has not worked with any 'on behalf of' fundraisers in the past 12 months.

Autism Together has received no complaints in the past 12 months.

Autism Together has a "Fundraising with young and vulnerable people" policy. This policy outlines expected conduct when interacting with others, emphasising that fundraisers need to ensure that they treat people fairly and with respect, explain the cause in a way which does not mislead people, and be sensitive to people who may be in vulnerable circumstances.

As a charity supporting vulnerable people every employee, whether fundraisers or not, receive in depth training in recognising possible vulnerability. Anyone identifying vulnerability in a supporter passes the details to the Head of Fundraising for further investigation. All actions taken are recorded on the individuals CRM record to alert anyone having further conversations. Policies are reviewed every three years or whenever the Fundraising Regulator changes its advice.



Acknowledgement and Thanks

The Trustees would like to express their sincere gratitude to all those who have supported Autism Together during the year. The Charity continues to benefit from the generosity, commitment and partnership of individuals, businesses, charitable trusts, community groups and public organisations who share our vision of creating brighter futures for autistic people.

Their support has enabled Autism Together to enhance services, develop new opportunities, improve facilities and deliver experiences that enrich the lives of the people we support. Whether through financial contributions, sponsorship, volunteering, fundraising or in-kind donations, every contribution has played an important part in helping the Charity achieve its objectives.

Corporate Supporters

The Trustees would particularly like to acknowledge the support of the following organisations:

West Wallasey Fleet Hire for sponsoring the Autism Together Staff Awards.

M&S Bank for providing corporate volunteers and ongoing support to the Charity.

Clearground for sponsoring the Autism Together Staff Awards.

Leverhulme Estates for sponsoring the Autism Together Staff Awards.

Magenta Living for supporting the Charity's Autism-Friendly Christmas Grotto.

JJ Kelly for sponsoring the Autism Together Staff Awards.

Atlas Fire and Security for sponsoring the Autism Together Staff Awards.

Baker & Baker for donating items in support of Charity events and activities.

Argyle Satellite for sponsoring the Autism Together Staff Awards.

Fundraising Supporters

The Trustees are also grateful to the many individuals and community groups who have raised funds on behalf of the Charity throughout the year.

We would particularly like to recognise:

Merseyside Ghostbusters, whose continued fundraising support through events, including Liverpool Comic Con, has generated valuable income and increased awareness of Autism Together.

A dedicated member of staff who once again organised a highly successful annual community cake sale and raffle, raising significant funds to enhance facilities and opportunities for people supported within our services.

Trusts and Foundations

The Charity is grateful to the trusts and grant-making organisations whose funding has enabled a number of important projects to take place during the year.

Our thanks go to:

The National Lottery Awards for All programme for providing funding towards the installation of specialist hot tub facilities at the Raby site, enhancing therapeutic and sensory opportunities for the people we support.

Tesco Bags of Help for providing funding to support the delivery of the Charity's Autism-Friendly Christmas Grotto, enabling families to enjoy an accessible and inclusive festive experience.



Financial review

A net surplus for the year of £xxx has been recorded (2024: net surplus of £2,764k).

Income

Income increased xxx% compared to last year from £29,965k to xxxk.

Income in all major service areas has improved.

Expenditure

Expenditure has increased by xxx% from £27,201k to £xxxk in the year. This largely reflects the increase in income.

Payroll costs still represent over xxx% of our income and have increased xxx% against last year.

Capital Expenditure

This year we spent £xxxk (2024: £1,344k) on property improvements and equipment. The main expenditure largely aligns with the purchase of 2 residential properties, 14 Woodland Grove and 1/2 The Green, alongside the programme to improve our existing properties.

Cash Flow

An overview of the cash movements during the year are given in the statement on page xx. After adjusting for noncash items, such as depreciation, operations during the year generated positive cash flow of £xxxk (2024: £2,158k). The other contributors to cash outflow in the year have been investment in property and facilities of £xxxk (2024: £414k) and net cash used in financing activities of £xxxk (2024: net cash generated of £1,053k).

Future issues

With the support from several local authorities led by Wirral, we have been able to continue to pay our support staff the Real Living Wage as a minimum. In order to continue to support this, in addition to inflation, we need our local authority and health commissioners to reflect this in their fee uplifts in the future, and we will negotiate hard to achieve this.

Pension Liability

New and existing staff members are able to join a defined contribution pension scheme, where there is no recourse to the assets of the organisation. Since 1 November 2013 Autism Together has become subject to the regulations surrounding Automatic Enrolment and is using the National Employment Savings Trust (NEST) for this purpose.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees reviewed the reserves policy in 2025. The target for free reserves has been set at £3.5m, this level has been set based on income security. In setting this level of reserve, the Trustees have considered the risks around income streams including possible late payment of fees by key local authorities.

Free reserves are defined as unrestricted funds, excluding amounts held in the form of fixed assets, loans to purchase those assets and designated funds. As at 31 March 2025 free reserves were £xxxk compared to £3,546k at 31 March 2024.

Six discretionary funds have been previously set up and approved by the Board of Trustees as follows.

Development and Property Fund £2.5m (2024: £3m).

This has been set up for investment in line with our 5-year investment strategy which will support the organisation to further its work for the benefit of people with autism. This includes £800k to purchase 2 modular buildings for day service sites, £250k to refurbish the Courtyard into 5 flats, £450k to refurbish Raby Hall the legacy residential building, and £1m towards funding the building of a supported living complex.

Disaster Recovery Fund £100k (2024: £50k)

This fund was set up as a contingency for repair and restoration following a crisis situation.

Staff Recognition Fund £50k (2024: £50k)

This fund was set up to recognise our staff and enable the issuing of non-contractual gifts and rewards to staff

Staff Wellbeing Fund £20k (2024: £20k)

This fund was set up to support staff experiencing hardship

Employee Death in Service £50k (2024: nil)

This fund was set up to support bereaved families of employees, should this unfortunate event arise

Bromborough Pool Village Redevelopment £148k (2024: nil)

This fund was set up to support the regeneration of this site. The total cost of this project is £8m.

In addition to the funds designated for specific purposes, the Trustees hold a designated fund representing fixed assets, and less any specific funding for that purpose. This reflects the fact that these funds cannot be readily used for any other purpose. At 31 March 2025 this fixed asset fund amounted to £xxxk (2024: £5,360k).

Details of designated funds and of restricted funds may be found in notes 25 and 26 to the accounts.

Investment Powers and Policy

Under the Articles of Association, the charity has the power to invest in any way the Trustees think fit. Cash that is not immediately needed for day-to-day expenditure or that is being held for a future project is invested prudently in interest earning deposits with approved Bank of England UK institutions.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The Trustees regularly review the principal risks facing Autism Together through the Strategic Risk Register and Board assurance processes. Whilst effective systems of internal control cannot eliminate risk entirely, they are designed to reduce both the likelihood and impact of significant threats to the Charity's beneficiaries, staff, finances and reputation.

The Charity's principal risks relate to cybersecurity, regulatory compliance, workforce sustainability, financial pressures and health and safety. Cybersecurity remains a key area of focus due to the increasing sophistication of cyber threats and the Charity's reliance on digital systems. This risk is mitigated through Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation, staff training, penetration testing, cyber insurance and business continuity arrangements.

As a regulated care provider, Autism Together must continue to meet evolving Care Quality Commission (CQC) requirements. The Charity mitigates this risk through a comprehensive quality assurance framework, including internal audits, external mock inspections and management development programmes. Recent inspection outcomes have demonstrated continued improvement across services.

The Charity continues to monitor workforce risks arising from changes to immigration policy and wider recruitment challenges across the social care sector. These risks are mitigated through workforce planning, investment in domestic recruitment and ongoing monitoring of legislative changes. Financial sustainability also remains a key consideration, particularly the risk that fee uplifts from commissioners may not keep pace with increases in operating costs, including the Real Living Wage and employer costs. The Charity maintains close relationships with commissioners and robust financial planning processes to help manage this risk.

Additional areas of focus include health and safety, property-related risks and emerging environmental compliance requirements. The Trustees are satisfied that appropriate mitigation measures are in place and will continue to monitor the changing risk environment to ensure the Charity remains financially sustainable, resilient and able to deliver high-quality services to autistic people and their families.

Funds Held as Custodian Trustees on Behalf of Others

Where funds are held on behalf of residents or other individuals supported by the company, those funds are kept in separate client accounts and are subject to controls in accordance with Care Quality Commission's regulations. These are not included in the assets of the company and as at 31 March 2025 amounted to £1,011,602 (2024 - £955,377). This is monitored daily to ensure that the funds are correctly identified and apportioned.

Funds are held on behalf of residents and other people we support where the individuals concerned are unable to manage their own financial affairs without additional support, and that support is provided by the company as part of the overall package of support provided.

Pay Policy for Executive Team

The pay of the Executive team is reviewed annually, and the Chief Executive Officer makes recommendations to the Remuneration and Appointments Committee regarding any non-cost of living salary increases.

Governance and Leadership

Governing Document

Autism Together is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. The company was originally formed under Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 29 October 1991 which were replaced by new Articles of Association on 16 October 2021.

Trustees

The Trustees, who are also the Directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

- I N Cadman (Chair)
- E Behan (Vice Chair)
- C A F Battersby
- S Brealey (Resigned 24 February 2026)
- C Corton
- N M Kennedy
- S M Leech
- C R Sansome
- C Smart
- C Ward (Resigned 27 May 2025)
- N Whiteside (Resigned 4 December 2025)

None of the Trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. All of the Trustees are members of the company and guarantee to contribute £1 in the event of a winding up.

Other Officers of the Charity:

Secretary to the Trustees	Mrs A Hill
Chief Executive Officer	Mrs A Kemp
Director of Operations	Mr R McDonald
Director of People and Culture	Mrs H Bilton
Director of Finance	Mrs C S Davies
Director of Estates & Facilities	Mr C E J Cullen

Members

The Trustees are required to regulate the admission and classification of members of the charity (including the admission of organisations to membership), the rights and privileges of such members and the conditions of membership, the terms on which members may resign or have their membership terminated, and the entrance fees, subscriptions and other fees or payments to be made by members. No persons shall be admitted as a member of the charity unless their application for membership is approved by the Trustees. There were 76 members at 31 March 2025, each of whom agree to contribute such amount (not exceeding £1) to the charity’s assets if it should be wound up while they are a member, or within one year after they cease to be a member, for payment of the charity’s debts and liabilities.

Appointment of Trustees

The maximum number of Trustees under the Articles of Association is 15. The Board of Trustees approve nominations for presentation to the AGM after consideration by the Remuneration and Appointments Committee. Details of Trustees who held office from 1 April 2023 to the date of this report are shown on page 16 of this report.

Trustee Induction and Training

New Trustees undertake an induction and training programme. All Trustees also complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure.

Trustees and Public Benefit

Autism Together exists for public benefit. The Trustees have received training on, and paid due regard to, the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission in determining the charity’s aims and objectives and in the way it delivers its services. Elsewhere in this report, the Trustees give information about the way in which it has delivered its charitable purposes for the public benefit.

Board Effectiveness, Skills and Succession Planning

The Trustees recognise the importance of maintaining a Board that possesses an appropriate balance of skills, experience, knowledge and diversity to support the effective governance of the Charity. The Board regularly reviews its composition to identify any skills gaps and to ensure that it has access to the expertise required to oversee a complex and growing organisation. Trustee recruitment is undertaken with regard to the existing strengths of the Board, future strategic priorities and the need to promote diversity of background, experience and perspective. Succession planning is considered throughout the

year to ensure continuity of leadership and governance, including the development of future Board roles. Trustees are encouraged to undertake ongoing training and development to ensure they remain informed about developments within the charity, health and social care, and governance sectors.

Organisation

The Board of Trustees carries responsibility for the efficient and effective management of the charity. The full Board meets monthly i.e. 12 times a year. In July 2024 the Board made the decision to discontinue sub-committee meetings, with all responsibilities transferring to the Board.

We have a Remuneration and Appointments Committee that meets on an ad hoc basis to consider nominations to the Board and the remuneration of the Chief Executive Officer and other operational Directors. The organisation obtains advice from the Charity Commission as required and the Trustees are aware of their responsibilities as Trustees of a charitable organisation.

The day-to-day management of the charity is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer, who attends all Board of Trustee meetings. The Chief Executive Officer heads an Executive team which comprises four other operational Directors: Director of Operations, Director of People, Director of Finance and Director of Estates and Facilities. Meetings of this team are held bi-weekly to monitor the progress of the charity.

Risk Management

Throughout the year the Board have reviewed risk registers at each meeting linked to the delivery of the strategic and operational plan. A strategic risk register that combines risk, controls and assurance is used by the Board to support risk management.

Equal Opportunities policy

We are an equal opportunities employer. All jobs are open to all applicants, subject to necessary occupational qualifications and all applications are given equal consideration. Training is provided for all employees to increase their knowledge and skills. Access to jobs and training is provided regardless of gender, age, domestic care responsibilities, race, disability, sexuality, beliefs, health, irrelevant criminal offences or any other personal characteristic. In order to allow opportunities for people with disabilities, the organisation will seek to ensure that, in accordance with the Equality Act. We also invest in co-production with some of our working practices to include the people we support who play a critical role within our charity.

Provision of Employee Information

The Working Together Group is the staff forum, which allows opportunities for staff across the charity to channel good news stories and suggestions to develop our services, which provides a more contemporary approach to staff engagement. Representatives for each key service area were chosen by the group to represent their teams. This group enables the staff to have a voice in shaping the charity's future and allows their feedback to be heard from the grass roots up to represent our diverse and inclusive workforce. We have a talented team who effectively channel and promote staff communication through various platforms to drive engagement and the participation of our workforce.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees, who are also the Directors of Autism Together for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company Law 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, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Auditor

In accordance with the company's articles, a resolution proposing that Mitchell Charlesworth (Audit) Limited be appointed as auditor of the company will be put at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

Disclosure of information to auditor

Each of the Trustees has confirmed that there is no information of which they are aware which is relevant to the audit, but of which the auditor is unaware. They have further confirmed that they have taken appropriate steps to identify such relevant information and to establish that the auditor is aware of such information.

The Trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.

I N Cadman (Chair)
Trustee
22nd September 2026