

TOGETHER

a year together

2023 - 2024

TOGETHER
 **TRUST**
charity

Registered charity number 209782



This year's annual review is introduced by one of the fantastic volunteers who help keep the Together Trust's wheels turning – quite literally in Mike Berry's case as he's a driver for us.

Mike started volunteering with us in early 2024 and normally drives for two half-day outings organised by Bridge College each week. With students and staff on board, Mike clocks up 50 miles on his return trips to Heyhead Farm, near Bolton, and The Toy House, a Flixton-based charity.

This is Mike's first ever volunteering experience and the driver role was "the quickest and best way for me to start work with the Together Trust."

Mike says "I had some time during the week and wanted to be useful and give something back to help the community. I also felt it would be good for me to learn new subjects and meet new people. I looked online for opportunities and liked what the Together Trust is about.

The volunteering team has been great, super welcoming and supportive. The training was great and I learnt a lot about the pupils and their environment.

On Fridays we go to a farm with educational facilities and I love how much the students get from these visits. I've really enjoyed getting to know the young people a little bit more every week."

Mike, who's recently received his 100 hours volunteering certificate, adds that he likes "helping people who need it" and gets "a real sense of achievement and wellbeing from that."



Mike Berry
Together Trust
Volunteer Driver

“The trust does incredible and difficult work. It has fantastic people and it's a real privilege to be associated with them. I'm really proud that I get to play a small part in it with them.”

Here's what to expect

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Who we are

We are the Together Trust

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

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



Winner

**Most Inspiring Teacher
SHINE Awards**

Judit Tolnai
Inscape House School

Winner

**National Nurturing
Schools Award (NNSA)**

Inscape House
Nurture Team

Finalist

**National Learning
Disabilities & Autism Awards**

Inscape House
Employment Team

Winner

**Justteachers'
Teacher of the Term**

Jemma Golden
Bridge College

Finalist

**Stockport Rocks
Awards**

Drivers
Volunteer Team

Who we are

Our mission

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

Together we

- care
- learn ←
- support
- grow ←

Our values

Positive

We take pride in celebrating the difference we make

Professional

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

Passionate

We encourage creative ideas and inspire one another

Supportive

We are considerate and caring towards one another

Our vision

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



What we do



What we do

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

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

Everyone deserves a place to call home

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

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



Specialist learning environments

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

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

Be brave, be brilliant, be a foster carer

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

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



What we do



Family support

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

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

Community support

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

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



Therapy and specialist support

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

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



Campaigning

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

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



What we've achieved



3,300

children, adults
and families
supported



58

young people fostered
by our carers



79

adults supported



402

mediations completed



1,476

SENDIASS responded
enquiries



5,000+

hours given by volunteers



47

successful school leavers



100%

of parents would recommend
our sleep services



**Outstanding
or good**

rating for all children's homes



Good

rating for adult services



What we've achieved

B is now sleeping much earlier, and the bedtime plan has brought more peace to the household, improving everyone's sleep. Really pleased and happy. Thank you.

– Parent, Rochdale Sleep Service

Sleep Tight has been an incredible resource for my family. With triplets, including an autistic child and one with sensory challenges, sleep deprivation was affecting my well-being. The personalised advice has greatly improved bedtime routines. The consultation with Jo Pritchard was excellent. Sleep Tight is amazing!

– Parent, Sleep Tight Trafford

These lessons have been great. On a scale of 1 to 10, I give it a 10,000! Alison is an amazing teacher, I will miss her and these lessons.

– Student at Meols Cop

Eight years have flown by, and Chris, along with the amazing staff, should be incredibly proud of the young man he has become. As parents, we deeply value and appreciate the support given to Chris and to us throughout these years.

– Parent of Chris, former Inscape Student

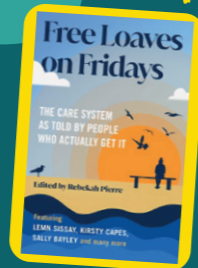
The support you give Maddie and us as a family means more than you know. You've always got Maddie's mental health at the forefront of all your suggestions.

- Parent of Maddie, Inscape student

I would like to thank you all for your time, support and guidance for Alex over his time at Inscape. A time where he has felt safe, comfortable and valued. I really couldn't have asked for a better provision for him.

- Parent of Alex, former Inscape student

Our campaigning impact



'Free Loaves on Fridays'

book collaboration supporting care leavers

Successful national campaign

highlighting illegal unregistered accommodation for children

Chosen as national representative organisation

to give evidence to parliament's education committee

40,000

viewings of our video highlighting our 'Keep Caring to 18' campaign



430+

national SEND survey responses on young people's and carers' post-school or college experiences



Rail ticket offices

remain **open**

our campaigning helped reverse government's decision

5 government consultations responded to

123

people wrote to their MP about teenagers living in semi-independent accommodation

'My Voice, My Vote'

pre General Election campaign to mobilise voting across our adult services



Together we care

Most people enjoy taking a break, and that's especially true for Kaiden, a resident of Haines House. He starts counting down to his next holiday at Whithaugh Park as soon as his current one ends!

Thirteen-year-old Kaiden has been to this Scottish outdoor activity centre 8 times in the last 4 years. He loves his 'Holiday House' and residents from Haines visit twice a year. Their last holiday there was Easter this year.

Nestled in the Scottish borders, Whithaugh Park offers Kaiden, and its other young visitors, exciting activities such as canoeing, archery, gorge walking and a zip wire run. There's also the chance to enjoy nature and many other outdoor activities.



Kaiden says “The zip line is really fast and high up. I get excited coming down, but it is a long walk back up for another go! The boats are good, we paddle them ourselves and play games on the lake. I like to run my hand in the water as we go along.”

“For Kaiden it is as much about the anticipation of doing something he really enjoys” says Kevin Clarke, Registered Manager at Haines House. “We talk about it all the time and have photographs from our trips

round the home. It is a thread that runs through the whole year.”

Normally, Kaiden wears reins when out in the community as he has little awareness of danger, but at Whithaugh Park he doesn’t wear them. “I can run around the site without my reins on and there are lots of streams and woods to play in. It has lots of space and places to play.”

Kevin says:

“Going away and sleeping somewhere else then coming back affirms Haines as his home. Kaiden loves the whole experience, every day is a good day for him and just being able to be less restricted in his movement and routines is a big thing for him.”

You can find out more about our residential care services by heading to:

togethertrust.org.uk/caring-homes

Together we learn

Our new 'Sleep Tight' programme in Yorkshire got off to a flying start with nearly 300 referrals in the first 6 months since the service launched in October 2023.

Working in Yorkshire is a new step for us as our Together Trust care, support and education services are all based in the North West.

'Sleep Tight' helps 2-11-year-old children in the Bradford area, who have problems sleeping, by providing online and face-to-face support to their families.

"It's been tremendously busy since we started."
said Therapy and Specialist Support Services
Business Manager, Gina Howard, who got the



Together we

Learn

service up and running. **“Our commissioning partner likes our ‘in person’ approach, the quality of our service and our ability to access a wide range of other related services within our own charity.”**

“In addition to their remit, our practitioners have also picked up on and tried to resolve, with other organisations, associated issues which impact sleep such

as unsuitable living circumstances and medical conditions.”

Sleep Tight Bradford provides several services such as 1-2-1 sleep clinics, family workshops and sleep chat phone calls. Our practitioners also train other professionals to help families experiencing sleep difficulties.

In our first half year, we’ve had positive results and good feedback from Sleep Tight parents.

“I found everything you told me 100% useful. I can’t believe how quickly things have changed. C gets to sleep really quickly and is sleeping through the night, it’s amazing. Thank you so much.”

- Parent of C, 5 year old

“The best part - that my son has learned to sleep through the night without waking up every 40 minutes to an hour.”

- Parent of son, 2 year old

Sleep Tight is being provided for Bradford District & Craven Health and Care Partnership.

Together we achieve

Owen, a 21-year-old student, shows how Bridge College's work experience programme is helping change the employment prospects for people with disabilities.

The programme currently provides 50 students with placements to help them develop their confidence, learn employment skills and understand what is needed to be successful at work.

After identifying that Owen wanted to be a cashier, the college found him a once-a-week placement at the Mencap charity shop in Openshaw.



Together we

achieve

Owen says: "I love doing it. I love working. My favourite thing about work is serving the customers because, as they say, customers come first and the customer is always right."

Owen, who's worked at the shop for 18 months, added "I needed a lot of support because it was a new job but the more I did it the more independent I can be."

Lisa Daniel, Work Experience Coordinator at Bridge College, adds "I've seen Owen really progress at the shop. He now works on the till on his own, can handle change, take card payments and log donations on the computer. His sense of humour means he's built good relationships with the regular customers. **Together with a wonderful personality, Owen has both the employment and soft skills to gain full-time, paid employment.**"

"I've got no doubts that the students can work in most workplaces. It's a positive step towards spreading the word about disability and not making it a disadvantage, but an ability to do something." says Owen's boss, Mencap Store Manager, Sam Turner.

As well as this retail experience, Owen is also using his considerable, self-taught musical talents to entertain Age UK clients at a nearby resource centre once a week. He can play the keyboard, guitar and accordion.

Only 42.7% of disabled adults are currently employed in Greater Manchester. If you could offer a work experience placement to a Bridge College student, email:

lisa.daniel@bridgecollege.ac.uk

Together we

grow

Twenty-three-year-old Jacob, a past student at Inscape House School, is translating his long-standing interest in video games into an exciting future career option.

Jacob joined Inscape in 2013, after attending mainstream education and then being home schooled for a year. He stayed on to complete his post-16 education and is now about to start a degree in computer science with cyber security at the University of Salford.

“I’m thankful for the opportunities that Inscape has given me and how it’s supported me” says Jacob. “It’s a wonderful place ... such a friendly environment for people with autism.”



Together we

grow

One of the best opportunities – “his lucky shot”, as Jacob calls it - was one of Inscape’s careers fairs, where Jacob discovered Access Creative College (ACC). He went on to gain a level 3 extended diploma in games development at the college.

As well as studying ICT and other subjects at Inscape, **Jacob credits the school and its staff with “just letting me be myself’ and gaining “a lot of independence.”**

Talking about the staff Jacob continued: “Their doors were always open to anyone if you had concerns or anything like feeling anxious.”

“We do our very best to ensure that students overcome barriers and surpass expectations” said Hannah Stollar, Inscape’s Headteacher. “Staff also help our learners to identify a pathway for their futures. Jacob positively embraced what Inscape has to offer and we’re delighted that he’s found his professional calling.”

Already gaining work experience, as a senior programmer with ACC’s Slingshot Studios, Jacob is working towards a professional role in computer science or cyber security. He’s looking forward to “unique challenges and new experiences that will help me grow as an individual.”

We wish Jacob the best of luck with his degree and work ambitions!

To find out more about our specialist learning environments across the North West, head to:

togethertrust.org.uk/education

Fostering spotlight

Not everybody celebrates their special day with the arrival of three children, but that's what happened to our foster carer and 'birthday boy', David Gilder and his wife, Jessica.

Back in March 2022, David enjoyed his birthday cake with pre-teen and teen siblings, two girls and a boy, who were his and Jessica's first foster children, staying for five months.

For most of the time since then, the couple, who are in their 40s, have been caring for three under-10s brothers.

With no children of their own, **David and Jessica decided to start fostering to help children who didn't have a "stable home and positive family experiences"**.



After being approached by approximately 50 organisations initially, the husband-and-wife team eventually chose the Together Trust as the agency they would like to foster with.

"The trust was very responsive during the whole process", said David. "There was always someone you could speak to on the phone. It felt more like a family, and we wanted to be with an organisation reasonably local to us."

Although their fostering experiences have, at times, been "challenging", David and Jessica both see the benefits.

Jessica, who has worked with nursery age children, reflects that **the boys living with them have "changed a lot" since they arrived and are "now very settled"**.

Good ongoing support and training from the Together Trust has helped the couple flourish in their fostering roles.

Fostering spotlight

Friendships have been made with other foster carers and children on the two annual trust-organised short breaks the family have attended. **“The boys made good friends and there were tears on the last day” says Jessica.**

David’s advice about choosing a fostering agency is to ‘go with the one you feel most comfortable with’, while Jessica adds “go with your heart”.

In fact, they’ve already recommended the Together Trust, giving a big thumbs-up to the sales assistant who helped them with their sofa purchase!



To learn more about our fostering service, go to togethertrust.org.uk/fostering



Our volunteers

Our wonderful volunteers have continued to support services and people across the Together Trust. In addition to the time contributed by our trustees and governors, they donated **5,000 hours to our services and 562 hours to our events.**

In the autumn of 2023, we launched our new **Volunteer Driver scheme.** This special group transported vulnerable children and young people across our education and residential services on important journeys, including to school, work experience, sports tournaments, educational trips, as well as collecting donations for our fundraising team. In the second half of the year, they completed no fewer than 177 journeys and collected 185 boxes of donations.

In addition to driving, volunteers have continued to support in multiple other ways including:

Campaigning

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

Community services

Supporting our Youth Club members to have fun and advising parents at our SENDIASS service.

Residential care

Creating sensory gardens.

Fundraising

Taking photographs of clothing for us to sell and raise money online and helping to make our events a success.

Education

Supporting our Bridge College students with their studies, including sport, music, horticulture, art, and catering as well as welcoming visitors to the site.

Family support

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

Central support services

Helping us share information through writing articles, proofreading, and editing our podcasts.



How have our volunteers made a difference this year?

As well as the incredible amount of time they have given, the skills, empathy and humour our volunteers brought during the year has had a big impact.

One of our students' Job Coaches says that "the students really appreciate all the work the volunteer drivers do as it has helped reduce a lot of anxieties getting to and from work when public transport has been late or not arrived."

Our subject specialist volunteers made great contributions to the learning environments for students at Bridge College, with their subject area coordinator saying of their horticulture volunteer:

“Tom makes everything so much more accessible for the students by promoting horticulture; he brings his skills and knowledge to the college.”



Hear from some of our amazing volunteers

Some of the things our volunteers have said this year include:

“There’s such a feel-good factor that comes with volunteering. Getting involved with the local community can make you feel so complete. Forming relationships with people you wouldn’t normally is such a positive thing to do and gives you something to get up for in the morning.”

- Tom, Horticulture Volunteer at Bridge College.



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

“When you give volunteering a try it opens up multiple avenues. I’ve learnt so much, made connections and gained excellent experience.”

- Kerri, Volunteer Researcher, with the Together Trust’s campaigns team, who conducted research for us into regulations and unregulated policies for children’s accommodation.

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

Our supporters

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

Haines House

Staff at Haines House have taken on the incredible task of raising enough money to completely refurbish the home's garden.

Over the last year the team has committed to the Three Peaks Challenge, celebrated the home's 5th anniversary and taken part in our annual Join Together Festival. Combined with funding secured from corporate and community supporters, Haines House has, so far, raised over £6,000!

“ We have raised a fantastic amount, so far, towards our garden project. The fundraising team has been incredibly supportive throughout our fundraising efforts. The success of the festival is a massive achievement and loved by all. Haines loves to be part of it and will always make an effort to be part of any fundraising activities. ”

- Lisa Oliver, Administrator, Haines House



Amaretti Chamber Orchestra

In February 2024, our fundraising team was delighted to be chosen as the Amaretti Chamber Orchestra's charity for a fantastic performance of Peter and the Wolf and the Beethoven violin concerto, with soloist Nathan Fenwick.

The story was narrated by local, award-winning CHADS actor, Richard Sails and various instruments depicted the different characters in the story. The fundraising team supported the event with a raffle and served refreshments to the attendees.



Ticket sales were incredible, with almost 300 guests including 65 children. A very generous £1,600 was donated to the Together Trust. Such an exciting and creative way to support us!

Happy Linen Company

Happy Linen Company is an affordable children's bedding company, dedicated to giving back to its local community.

During 2023, the company partnered with our autism sleep clinic to raise vital funds for the service and share knowledge and experience with their customers from our very own fantastic Sleep Practitioners. As a result of its giving-back scheme, the company donated almost £8,000 to the sleep clinic and also very kindly donated a weighted blanket.

“ We are over the moon with the donation to our little sleep service. It's absolutely amazing and I can't thank the Happy Linen Company enough for choosing us. **This is a significant amount of money that will help keep our services going.** ”

- **Kate Seasman, Together Trust Sleep Service Manager and Specialist Teacher**



Ways to support

Sign up to the lottery

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

togethertrust.org.uk/lottery

Shop online

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

search

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

easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/togethertrust

Nominate us

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

Attend our events

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

togethertrust.org.uk/events

Recycle with us

The Together Trust accepts a variety of different items; we recycle these in exchange for cash donations to our charity, raising vital funds and keeping items out of landfill. For a list of items we accept, visit:

togethertrust.org.uk/recycle-together-trust

Sponsor a support animal

Our SEND school's Animal-assisted Intervention (AAI) sessions help improve students' mental, physical, social and emotional functioning. Learners have weekly sessions with a variety of animals.

To say thank you and keep you updated on how your animal is doing, you will receive: a welcome letter, a poster, a fact card and email updates every 3 months.

togethertrust.org.uk/support-our-aa-animals-£3-monthly-donation



Future plans

Our workforce and the people we support are shaping our plans.

We are focusing on four key goals ↓

1

Delivering high quality, person-centred support to meet the life-long changing needs of people and families.

2

Partnering with and empowering the people we support to influence our work.

3

Growing to meet changing needs - including maximising fundraising opportunities.

4

Caring for and listening to our flexible, talented and diverse workforce.



Mark Lee

Mark Lee
Chief Executive



Giles Gaddum

Giles Gaddum
Chair of the Board of Trustees

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INVESTORS IN PEOPLE
We invest in people Gold

@SupportTogetherTrust

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thetogethertrust

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

Our latest Report and Accounts is available via the Together Trust website at: togethertrust.org.uk/charity-information

A digital copy of this publication can be downloaded at togethertrust.org.uk/what-we-do

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TOGETHER
TRUST
charity

Disability,
specialist education
and care