Charity number: 1165512

ACTION TOGETHER CIO

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

ACTION TOGETHER CIO

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Annual report 2025/2026

Highlights of our impact in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside

Annual Report 2025/2026

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1. Introduction from our Chair

It is with immense pride and gratitude that I introduce Action Together's Annual Report for 2025/2026. This report tells the story of a year rooted in place, relationships and community power across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside. It reflects the strength of our voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector, the dedication of our staff and volunteers, and the determination of local people to respond to challenge with care, creativity and hope.

Our values remain the cornerstone of all our work: believe it's possible, strengthen others, and be true. Alongside this, our strategic objectives continue to shape our work as we deliver on our five-year strategy. The report shows how these values and objectives have been lived out in practical ways: through one-to-one capacity building support, volunteering, training, funding advice, grant investment, partnership working, advocacy and programmes that support and respond to people and communities.

The scale of this work is significant. In 2025/2026, 2,279 people registered to volunteer through Action Together, 1,740 instances of one-to-one capacity building support were provided to organisations, 54 training sessions and events were delivered, and more than £2.8 million was directed into the sector. Behind every number is a story: a resident finding confidence through volunteering, a grassroots group becoming more sustainable, a community organisation securing investment, or a local network influencing the decisions that affect people's lives.

In Oldham, the report shows the value of neighbourhood working, volunteering pathways, participatory grant-making, Social Prescribing and stronger VCFSE voice. From supporting sanctuary seekers into volunteering, to helping residents move closer to employment, to investing in community-led responses to hardship and health inequalities, our work has helped connect people with opportunity, belonging and practical support. As ever, we can't include every story but to hear just a sample of the impact our teams have through volunteering, support for organisations and Social Prescribing is incredible.

In Rochdale, we have seen the power of lived experience, community leadership and local action to shape wider change. The influence of our networks on national conversations, the growth of recovery-led activity, youth leadership in neighbourhoods such as Freehold and Darnhill, and the development of community-led prevention through Live Well all demonstrate what is possible when people closest to the issues are supported to lead. To see the Anti-Poverty Foundation Group mentioned in parliament and influencing the repeal of the two-child benefit cap was truly amazing and a credit to the work of our staff, partners and the people of Rochdale Borough.

In Tameside, our work has focused on strengthening community-led wellbeing, supporting local organisations to grow, and investing in the social infrastructure that helps people stay connected. The Live Well Accelerator, Community-Led Wellbeing Principles, Miles of Smiles, Tameside Toy Appeal and a wide range of capacity building and funding support show the importance of locally-rooted organisations in tackling inequality, reducing isolation and improving everyday life. After a difficult period in the previous year, our team's commitment and energy continues to inspire.

Across all three boroughs, common themes emerge. Volunteering continues to transform lives and strengthen organisations. Capacity building helps ideas become action and supports groups to become more confident, resilient and sustainable. Partnerships built on trust help

connect community insight with public sector priorities. Investment, when combined with relationships and development support, enables grassroots organisations to respond to need and create lasting change. Our leadership and advocacy work continues to make the VCFSE sector more visible, valued and influential.

This year has also shown the importance of our role beyond our boroughs. Through 10GM, Live Well, the refreshed Greater Manchester VCFSE Accord, the State of the Sector research and the major investment secured for Live Well Spaces of Hope and Connection, Action Together has helped connect local insight with Greater Manchester-wide influence. We are proud to play our part in building healthier, fairer and more connected places, while ensuring that community-led activity is recognised as central to prevention, wellbeing and social change.

None of this would be possible without the commitment, skill and compassion of our staff, volunteers and trustees. Thank you for the care you bring to your work, for staying true to our values, and for continuing to believe in the power of people and communities. I also want to thank our partners and funders for their trust, collaboration and willingness to work with us.

Most importantly, thank you to the wider VCFSE sector across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside, and to the people and communities you support every day. You are at the heart of this report. Your leadership, generosity, creativity and resilience make our places stronger, kinder and more connected. It is a privilege for Action Together to work alongside you.

- Camilla Guereca. Chair, Action Together

2. Who we are and what we do

Action Together is the infrastructure organisation for the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector in Oldham, Rochdale, and Tameside.

We connect people with what's happening in their community, develop community ideas into action, strengthen local organisations, and provide strategic influence for the charity and voluntary sector. Membership of Action Together is free and open to any voluntary organisation, charity or social enterprise in Oldham, Rochdale, or Tameside.

Action Together supports people to volunteer in their area, and assists local organisations in developing volunteer programmes, policies, and roles.

We provide support for voluntary, community and charity organisations to establish, develop, and build their capacity including specialist information, advice, and training for staff, volunteers and trustees.

Action Together works in partnership with other charities, infrastructure organisations and public bodies and collaborates on key thematic work. We also lead and advocate for the work of organisations locally, and across Greater Manchester and the wider area.

We invest in the sector, and members can apply for funding from our grants programmes. We also provide support for groups seeking and applying for investment, and direct members to appropriate sources of funding.

3. Our year in numbers

- 2,279 people registered to volunteer through Action Together
- We provided 1,740 instances of support for organisations with one-to-one capacity building assistance, advice and mentoring
- We hosted 54 training sessions and events
- 512 people attended our training and events
- 1,972 attendees at our partnership and thematic networks
- We directed over £2.8 million into the sector
- 3,465 people were referred through our Oldham Social Prescribing service

4. Our Purpose and Values

Our purpose and charitable objects

'To strengthen the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector, maximising opportunities to create positive social change, promote social justice and harness social benefit.'

Our charitable objects are to:

- promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the public, principally but not exclusively in the local government areas of Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside and the surrounding area and, in particular, to build the capacity of third sector organisations and provide them with the necessary support, information and services to enable them to pursue or contribute to any charitable purpose.
- promote, organise and facilitate co-operation and partnership working between third sector, statutory and other relevant bodies in the achievement of the above purposes within the area of benefit.

Our mission is to strengthen the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector, increase individual social action, and work across organisational and sector boundaries to maximise every opportunity to harness social good and create social change.

Public Benefit - how we decide who to help

We make decisions in line with the Public Benefit guidance (2014) and ensure:

- Decisions are taken in line with our charitable objects
- That we adhere to our values in the decision we take

- We prioritise our services to help those that would be unable to pay for the support and / or who are tackling a significant social injustice
- We identify and minimise risks
- There is no personal benefit (or advantage) given to trustees or staff

Our values

Action Together's values underpin all our activities including our strategy, operational plan, workforce development and recruitment. We want to be held to account on our values, as ways of working that we will always strive for.

Believe it's possible

Vision and ideas matter. We have confidence in the power of people and communities and strive to release their potential to create the widest possible benefits whilst promoting social justice.

Strengthen others

We work in ways that strengthen people, places, and partnerships. We achieve this by working collaboratively, sharing skills, and developing relationships between people, groups and agencies.

Be true

We are brave enough to share constructive insight to make progress. Our unique insight comes from our connections with, and amplification of, the diverse range of voices of people and groups that we work with.

5. Our Strategic Objectives

We launched our five-year strategy in December 2022, to take us from 2023 to 2028.

The strategy is central to our core work in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside, with these shared strategic priorities:

5.1 Strengthen social infrastructure for connected communities

We will do this by:

- Working in neighbourhoods to build deep relationships with groups and strengthen what they do
- Addressing barriers and making Action Together's offer accessible to all parts of our communities of place, identity and experience
- Strengthening community ownership and control of local land, buildings and assets

- Developing and championing volunteering to empower more local people to share their skills, capacity and social capital

5.2 Advance our approach to social change

We will do this by:

- Developing our social change networks so they are owned by members with shared learning, power and decision-making
- Investing in networks to identify opportunities for social change, take shared action and make a demonstrable impact in communities
- Developing our skills so that every team across Action Together understands their role in enabling social change
- Strengthening community leadership and the role of community anchors in shaping neighbourhoods

5.3 Grow and transform as a local funder

We will do this by:

- Establishing a strategic investment fund in each borough for public and private partners
- Committing to being an open and trusting grantmaker, making longer-term, strategic investments into the core of what our members do
- Connecting and enhancing our development support so we invest time and skills as well as money
- Supporting our members to have a stronger collective voice influencing local funding priorities and bringing investment into their communities

6. Borough overview: Oldham

6.1 Local context and priorities

Oldham's voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector continued to play a vital role in responding to local priorities during 2025/2026, supporting residents through cost-of-living pressures, health inequalities, economic inactivity, community cohesion challenges and the needs of sanctuary seekers. Action Together's work in Oldham was rooted in neighbourhoods and delivered through strong relationships with local groups, residents, public sector partners and borough-wide networks.

Across the year, our priorities focused on strengthening the VCFSE sector, enabling volunteering and social action, supporting community-led health and wellbeing, improving access to funding, and ensuring local voices influenced decision-making. Work across Oldham's five

districts helped connect community insight with strategic priorities, ensuring that support was responsive, inclusive and shaped by lived experience.

6.2 What we delivered in Oldham

Action Together delivered a broad programme of support across Oldham, combining neighbourhood-based community development, volunteering brokerage, training, funding advice, strategic representation and systems change work. Our Volunteer Centre Hub model continued to embed volunteering support in local communities through online and in-person brokerage, Volunteer Hubs, outreach activity and training for both volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations.

We supported groups through organisational health checks, Quality in Action Award development, social enterprise support and tailored one-to-one capacity building. Our Community Development Workers worked alongside groups to strengthen governance, sustainability, funding readiness, partnership working and organisational confidence. We also delivered targeted programmes through UKSPF, Live Well, Local Motion, GM Refugee Welcome, the Economic Inactivity Trailblazer and a range of grant programmes designed to meet local needs.

Forums and networks remained central to our delivery, including Community Explorers Forums, the Community Health Champions Network, Oldham VCFSE Women's Network, Oldham VCFSE Men's Network, Oldham Poverty Action Network, the Engagement and Insight Network, the Community Centres Forum, and the Public Sector and VCFSE Forum.

6.3 Impact highlights in Oldham

The year's impact was visible both in the scale of activity delivered and in the depth of change experienced by residents and groups. Through the Volunteering Pathways into Employment project, 100 Jobcentre clients received one-to-one support to explore volunteering as a route into confidence, skills development and future employment. The annual Oldham Volunteer Fair also demonstrated the continued appetite for volunteering locally, bringing together 29 groups, recording 905 conversations and generating 77 volunteer applications on the day.

Action Together's support for sanctuary seekers continued to show how volunteering can create belonging as well as opportunity. In Q4, 18 sanctuary seekers were supported through volunteering activity and 9 were matched into volunteering roles. Alongside this, our capacity building work helped strengthen the local VCFSE infrastructure, with 14 Organisational Health Checks completed and several organisations achieving the Quality in Action Award. By year end, 23 groups were working towards the award, showing a strong commitment to quality, governance and continuous improvement.

Community-led investment also generated significant reach. The Live Well Accelerator in East Oldham supported participatory grant-making, including 62 small grant applications, more than 80 attendees at the Power to the People event, and 1,305 public votes across online and in-person voting. The Economic Inactivity Trailblazer awarded £89,910 to VCFSE groups and supported 161 economically inactive individuals through community-led employment support activities in Q4. Through Household Support Fund 7, £340,000 was awarded to 28 groups and organisations to support residents facing hardship.

6.4 Partnership working and system leadership in Oldham

Action Together continued to strengthen the voice and influence of Oldham's VCFSE sector through strategic representation, forums and partnership spaces. The Oldham Voices model was developed and launched to improve how sector representatives connect with local groups, gather insight and feed community priorities into strategic decision-making. VCFSE representatives were supported to engage in partnership boards, Live Well governance and wider system spaces.

The Public Sector and VCFSE Forum, delivered with Oldham Council, created an important space for shared strategy, fair funding discussions, commissioning, the GM VCFSE Accord, the Faith Covenant and the development of Oldham's VCFSE strategy. Alongside this, the Engagement and Insight Network helped improve coordination of engagement activity across Oldham, informing the development of an Engagement Framework and supporting more joined-up use of community insight.

Systems change work through Oldham Local Motion and Oldham Positive Action Network continued to grow, valuing lived experience, community conversations and co-production to shape practical action. Workstreams around housing, financial resilience, solidarity lockers, sanctuary seeker support, community-led housing and young people's lived experience demonstrated the value of long-term relational work in influencing change.

6.5 Investment and funding support in Oldham

Investment and funding support remained a major part of Action Together's role in Oldham. Through the One Oldham Fund and wider networked funding approaches, we supported groups to access resources for community-led activity, hardship support, employability, health, family support, cohesion, sanctuary seeker support and capital improvements. The One Oldham Fund is our strategic single investment fund that uses pooled resources for the borough's VCFSE sector. Funding is provided by Oldham Council, bolstered by our historic Action Oldham Fund.

During the year, significant investment was channelled into Oldham's communities through a mix of local, regional and networked funding programmes. Household Support Fund 7 included ringfenced support for Oldham Foodbank, helping local organisations respond directly to hardship and cost-of-living pressures. The Trailblazer programme increased economic participation among Oldham residents, with funding awarded to VCFSE groups through the Community-Led Employment Support and Volunteering grants strand.

Funding also supported families, health, community spaces and inclusion. Family Hubs Phase 2 awarded £58,925.64 to 10 organisations, while £62,500 was awarded to 18 Community Health Champions through pooled health-related funding. The Community Regeneration Partnership Capital Grants programme made provisional awards totalling £4,866,235.34 to 54 organisations, supporting improvements to physical community spaces across the borough. The GM Refugee Welcome programme made £100,000 available to support sanctuary seekers in Oldham, and the Oldham Community Lottery continued to provide a flexible source of local giving, supporting 71 good causes and raising £43,107 to date.

Alongside grant administration, Action Together provided practical funding support to groups, helping them strengthen applications, improve governance, diversify income and develop sustainable plans for the future.

Participatory grant giving and Live Well investment in East Oldham

The Live Well Accelerator in East Oldham helped us test a more community-led approach to local investment. Building on Greater Manchester's Live Well movement, the work began with residents, community leaders, voluntary organisations and public sector partners exploring what helps people live well, and how funding decisions could be shaped closer to the communities they affect.

Rather than designing a traditional grants programme, we used participatory grant giving to give residents a meaningful role in shaping priorities, developing the process and deciding where investment should go. Three working groups tested ideas around community engagement, local funding decisions and community research, each supported with coaching and a £5,000 prototyping budget.

As the work moved into delivery, eight residents and community leaders helped design application forms, support applicants, agree scoring and monitoring, and plan public voting. Through the Accelerator, £500 microgrants supported local health and wellbeing activities, with 62 applications received and close to £29,500 allocated. Voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise groups could also apply for £1,000, £2,000 or £5,000 investment. At the Power to the People marketplace event, more than 80 residents heard directly from groups and voted to allocate £32,000.

Residents continued to shape decisions through online and library-based voting, with 1,305 votes cast and a further £6,000 awarded as top-up investment. A second microgrant round opened in Q4 and received 48 new applications. The impact was not only the funding distributed, but the shift in power: residents helped turn local ideas into funded activity, groups built stronger connections with their communities, and investment was rooted in local knowledge and lived experience.

Learning from East Oldham is now informing wider plans, including peer learning in Oldham and the roll-out of participatory grant giving through the Live Well Implementation Fund. Our next step is to build on what has been tested, support more residents to take part in decision-making, and embed participatory investment as a more normal way of working across Oldham.

6.6 Oldham case studies and stories of change

Stories from across Oldham show the practical difference that Action Together's support makes to residents, groups and communities. Through volunteering, sanctuary seeker support and capacity building, people built confidence, developed skills, strengthened connections and created more sustainable community organisations.

Pathways into Employment through Volunteering

Jak was referred through Oldham Jobcentre to explore volunteering as part of his journey towards employment, wellbeing and greater independence. At the point of referral, he was quiet, lacked confidence and needed additional support to take the next step. Action Together worked with him at his pace, exploring different opportunities and helping him reflect on the type of environment that would suit him. When the first opportunity did not progress, the team

continued to provide encouragement and practical support rather than allowing the setback to become a barrier.

A new opportunity was identified with Ambitions, where Jak was able to visit, meet the organisation and understand the role before committing. With support to complete paperwork and regular check-ins once he started, Jak quickly settled into volunteering. Within weeks, staff saw a significant change in Jak: he was more talkative and visibly proud of the contribution he was making. Jak described feeling "amazing" and said he would not be where he was without the support he received.

As well as rebuilding confidence and developing routine, volunteering is a brilliant way to practically support people into employment. Our Jobcentre Volunteering Project will continue to support Oldham residents like Jak to find work locally.

"I am very happy at Ambitions. I feel amazing and cannot thank you enough. I would not be where I am if it wasn't for you." - Jak

Volunteering for sanctuary seekers

Action Together's work with sanctuary seekers showed how volunteering can support inclusion, language development and a stronger sense of belonging. Enas, a sanctuary seeker living in Oldham, was introduced to the volunteering team through a local Volunteer Hub. She was looking for an opportunity that would help her practise English, meet people and build confidence in a supportive environment. The team provided one-to-one guidance, helped her explore options and supported her through the practical steps of applying for a role.

A retail volunteering role at Dr Kershaw's charity shop in Royton was identified as a good fit. Action Together helped Enas prepare for an informal interview and gave reassurance throughout the process. Once she began volunteering, she found the staff supportive and welcoming, and the role gave her regular opportunities to practise English, contribute to the local community and feel part of everyday life in Oldham. Enas said the experience had helped her feel supported in her learning and more confident in speaking to others.

The impact of this story is that volunteering created a bridge into community life, helping Enas build language confidence, relationships and a stronger sense of connection.

"Thank you so much for your support! This is my second week, and I've found the staff very supportive and helpful. Whenever I need some support, they're always happy to assist me and help in my learning." – Enas

"Volunteering helped me feel like myself again. I was isolated before, but now I feel part of something."

Strengthening local organisations

Capacity building support helped a range of Oldham organisations move from ambition to action by strengthening governance, funding readiness and organisational sustainability. Become United received tailored funding support that helped the organisation develop a strategic approach to applications, leading to successful awards for core costs, digital skills work and a minibus that could support both service delivery and future income generation. Oldham Pride Collective was supported through the process of becoming a Charitable

Incorporated Organisation, giving the group a stronger legal structure, opening up new funding routes and helping secure the long-term future of Pride in Oldham.

Other groups benefited from practical and specialist support. Shaw and Crompton Meals on Wheels received support through the Our Business programme to develop its digital presence, including a new website and training to help the organisation manage and grow its online profile. Epic Venom CIC was supported to formalise as a Community Interest Company, giving the organisation the credibility and structure needed to pursue funding, build partnerships and support musicians from underrepresented communities. The impact of these stories is that targeted organisational development helped local groups become more resilient, visible and equipped to deliver lasting community benefit.

"This demonstrates that with hard work, unwavering dedication, and the combined efforts of the organisation and its partners, remarkable success can be achieved. It's a testament to what's possible when collaboration and commitment come together toward a shared goal." – Become United

"Thanks so much for the policy information and templates, and for funding the consultancy support for our website development. We are off to a really good start with the CIC and the future is positive – really appreciate your support." – Shaw and Crompton Meals on Wheels

LocalMotion and OPAN: turning lived experience into action

Through Oldham LocalMotion and Oldham Positive Action Network (OPAN), we continued to test how long-term systems change can be rooted in relationships, lived experience and practical action. The work grew from a shared belief that people closest to an issue should help shape the solutions, and that communities need time, trust and support to move from conversation into change. During the year, our team took part in LocalMotion's national Deep in Place and Practice learning programme, bringing ideas back to Oldham around relationship-led practice, systems change and deep democracy.

OPAN developed its own co-production model around three stages: amplifying voices, co-producing ideas for change, and turning those ideas into positive action. This approach shaped work on housing, financial resilience, sanctuary seeker support, community-led housing and young people's lived experience. More than 60 residents were involved in conversations about financial support in Oldham, helping identify barriers and themes for action. Learning from earlier housing workshops also led to practical workstreams, including a 12-month test and learn project for solidarity lockers for people rough sleeping, peer support to address housing misinformation for sanctuary seekers, and renewed work around community-led housing.

The impact of LocalMotion and OPAN has been the way it has helped people move from being consulted to actively shaping change. Lived Experience Advisers have been recruited, supported and connected into wider work, with new coaching and training being developed to help them share their knowledge safely and confidently. OPAN also tested participatory budgeting through its wider network, generating ideas around belonging, emerging leaders and storytelling. Alongside this, Truth of the Youth with SPARK Oldham has continued to grow, supporting young people to develop their own spaces, skills and community reporting approaches.

As the work develops, the focus is on deepening relationships, supporting more people with lived experience to lead and influence change, and turning learning into practical action across Oldham. An upcoming LocalMotion learning visit will bring partners and funders from across the UK to Oldham, offering an opportunity to share the borough's journey and reflect on the impact so far. The story of LocalMotion and OPAN is about changing systems by valuing people's stories, strengthening community leadership and creating the conditions for residents, groups and partners to act together.

6.7 Key learning and priorities for Oldham

Learning from 2025/2026 reinforced the importance of trusted relationships, neighbourhood presence and flexible support. Groups and residents benefited most when support was person-centred, accessible and delivered through familiar community settings. The year also highlighted the value of peer learning, community-led decision-making and lived experience in shaping services and investment.

Priorities for 2026/2027 will include continuing to strengthen Oldham's VCFSE voice and influence, supporting groups to become more sustainable, developing volunteering pathways into employment and community connection, expanding inclusive support for sanctuary seekers, embedding learning from Live Well and participatory grant-making, and supporting stronger collaboration between the VCFSE sector and public sector partners.

Action Together will continue to work alongside communities, groups and partners to ensure Oldham's VCFSE sector is visible, valued and equipped to respond to local priorities, influence system change and improve outcomes for residents.

7. Borough overview: Rochdale

Across 2025–2026, Action Together's work in Rochdale Borough has been rooted in relationships, trust and community power. The year's story is not simply one of programmes delivered or funds distributed, but of people and groups growing in confidence, finding their voice, building connections and shaping the systems around them. From young people in Freehold creating new spaces of pride and belonging, to community leaders influencing national conversations on child poverty, Rochdale's voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector has shown the power of local action to create lasting change.

7.1 Local context and priorities

Rochdale's communities continued to face significant pressures during the year, including poverty, health inequalities, social isolation, community safety concerns, the cost of living, and barriers experienced by refugees, asylum seekers and newly arrived communities. Alongside these challenges, the borough also demonstrated strong community leadership, creativity and resilience. Action Together's role was to work alongside people and organisations already embedded in place, helping them strengthen their voice, access support, build partnerships and influence change.

Several priorities shaped the year: tackling poverty and inequality; strengthening neighbourhood working; supporting community-led prevention through Live Well; growing volunteering as a route to confidence, wellbeing and employment; supporting grassroots groups to become more sustainable; and ensuring people with lived experience were central to decision-making. These priorities were reflected in work with the Anti-Poverty Foundation Group, Women's Foundation Group, Refugee and Asylum Seeker Forum, Rochdale Recovery Communities, Community Voices, the South Asian Forum, and place-based partnerships in Freehold, Darnhill, and in each township across the borough.

7.2 What we delivered in Rochdale

Action Together delivered a broad programme of support across Rochdale, combining practical help for groups with deeper systems change work. Community Development Workers supported organisations with governance, constitutions, safeguarding, funding applications, quality assurance, business planning and long-term sustainability. This ranged from helping new grassroots groups take their first formal steps, to supporting established organisations through periods of change, uncertainty or growth.

Volunteering support remained a vital thread throughout the year. The team worked with residents who were looking for confidence, structure, purpose or a route back into work, while also supporting organisations to recruit, retain and celebrate volunteers. Stories such as Lewis, Shifa, Thomas and Kyra show the value of patient, personalised support. For some people, volunteering was not a straightforward journey; it required listening, adjustment and persistence. But where the right opportunity was found, it became a route to confidence, connection and new possibilities. Watch the Rochdale Volunteers Fair video; read more about bringing Volunteer Managers together across Rochdale.

We also supported investment into community-led work through Rochdale Communities Fund and a wide range of themed funds, including Live Well, Household Support, Health Inequalities, Climate Co-operators, Home from Hospital, Recovery Communities and smaller Seed and Micro Grants. The strongest story behind this investment is how modest, timely support helped people test ideas, build confidence and bring others with them: from community gardens and creative writing groups, to recovery circles, youth leadership, food support, cultural health work and neighbourhood celebrations.

7.3 Impact highlights in Rochdale

"Many thanks to anti-poverty campaigners and community workers in Rochdale, whose passion and commitment helped us make the case for change." - Paul Waugh, MP for Rochdale

One of the clearest impacts of the year was the growth of community voice and influence.

Through the Anti-Poverty Foundation Group, local VCFSE leaders, community organisations and people with direct insight into poverty have created a space to understand the root causes of inequality, share what families are experiencing, and work together to influence the decisions that affect their lives.

In May 2025, Action Together hosted a Child Poverty Taskforce roundtable at Deeplish Community Centre with Paul Waugh MP, Alison McGovern MP, officials from the Department for Work and Pensions, Anti-Poverty Foundation Group members, school representatives and

system partners. The session gave participants the opportunity to describe the challenges facing families in Rochdale, while also highlighting the strength of local action already taking place across the borough to reduce the impact of child poverty.

The group used the roundtable to make a clear case that local efforts to support children and families were being held back by national policy, particularly the two-child benefit cap. Following the event, Rochdale's anti-poverty work was recognised in Parliament during the debate about the planned abolition of the cap from April 2026. Paul Waugh MP also wrote personally to thank Heather Madden, Action Together's Systems Change Co-ordinator, recognising the role she and the group had played in helping shape a national policy change that will lift thousands of children out of hardship. Watch the parliamentary recognition video.

"The power of lived experience in changing policy is so clear... We work hard for change, and when we do that together, great things can happen!" – Joanne Barker-Marsh, Anti-Poverty Foundation Group member

"Heather was absolutely brilliant at facilitating the Ministerial roundtable. She ensured all participants were able to speak, whilst managing their allocated time with empathy, compassion and care. In her summing up, she was also bold and direct in explaining to the Minister the changes the group would like the government to make." – Paul Waugh, MP for Rochdale

Find out more here: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-rochdale-communities-came-together-help-repeal-two-child-bp4je/

Another highlight was the way community-led prevention became more visible through Live Well. Rochdale played a key role in shaping Greater Manchester's developing approach, while locally the Live Well Summit brought organisations together to co-design grant-making processes and think differently about everyday support in neighbourhoods. The principle of "good enough for now, safe enough to try" captured the borough's willingness to learn by doing, share power and build processes around trust rather than bureaucracy.

The year also saw significant impact through place-based work. In Freehold, creative activities, cultural leadership, resident-led events and partnership working helped transform how partners listen and work alongside communities. In Darnhill, the Violence Reduction Unit Alliance supported young people through sport, arts, leadership and mentoring, with one young person progressing through Thai boxing to become a British heavyweight champion. These stories show how prevention works when it is relational, locally rooted and shaped around young people's strengths. Read the BBC story about Divine's Muay Thai success; watch the Live Well video featuring youth projects in Heywood.

"If you ask me now, I have things to do. I actually have something on that I have to commit to." – Divine, young person supported through VRU-funded activity

7.4 Partnership working and system leadership in Rochdale

Partnership working in Rochdale deepened across the year. Action Together worked closely with Rochdale Borough Council, Public Health, Adult Social Care, Greater Manchester partners, Rochdale Boroughwide Housing, schools, community centres, voluntary organisations, local businesses and community leaders. The focus was not only on coordination, but on changing how decisions are made and whose knowledge counts.

The VCFSE Leadership Group became an increasingly important space for larger voluntary sector organisations to engage with system leaders around commissioning, social value and partnership opportunities. Conversations with senior council leaders and Adult Social Care commissioners created space for honest dialogue about what the sector needs, and how commissioning can better reflect community value.

"I found today's meeting really positive and was completely impressed by your understanding of, and commitment to, the third sector... It was both refreshing and constructive." – Philip Bramson, Rochdale & District Mind

Action Together also played a strong leadership role in boroughwide and Greater Manchester programmes. Through Live Well, Spaces of Hope and Connection, Community Voices, Rochdale Recovery Communities and the Refugee Welcome Programme, we helped connect local insight to wider investment and strategic planning. The confirmation of Greater Manchester-wide Spaces of Hope and Connection funding creates a major opportunity for Rochdale to continue developing inclusive, community-led spaces that support belonging, solidarity and prevention. Find out more about Live Well Spaces of Hope and Connection.

7.5 Investment and funding support in Rochdale

Investment in Rochdale was most powerful when it was combined with relationships, guidance and trust. Throughout the year, funding support helped grassroots ideas become real, supported established organisations to adapt, and enabled community leaders to test approaches shaped by lived experience. The Seed Fund and Micro Grants were particularly important in helping people move from an idea to action, while larger themed funds enabled organisations to respond to poverty, health inequalities, recovery, climate action, hospital discharge and community-led prevention.

Examples across the year show how funding became a catalyst for wider change. Tchon Di Esperança used early support to build youth-led cultural and sporting activity in Freehold, later developing work with women and girls through Active Sisters. Cabbage Patch Crew used Seed Funding to make gardening accessible to residents with mobility needs, turning a shared outdoor space into a place for wellbeing and connection. Heywood Scribblers rebuilt after the loss of their project leader and grew into a creative community at Heywood Library. Heywood Uniform Hub responded directly to the cost of the school day by redistributing donated uniform to local families.

"Action Together opened doors that previously we couldn't seem to get through and made what felt like a complicated process very simple." – Gerry Ward, Heart and Soil

Funding support also strengthened the sector's longer-term resilience. Through E26, Beyond Grants and the Funding Coaching Programme, organisations explored traded income, social impact, leadership, finance and bid writing. Feedback showed that this work increased confidence as much as technical skill, helping groups feel better equipped to sustain their work and tell their story to funders. Find out more about support for social economy organisations in Rochdale; listen to Action Together on Roch Valley Radio.

7.6 Rochdale case studies and stories of change

From idea to identity: Tchon Di Esperança.

Tchon Di Esperança began as a grassroots group created by young people of Cape Verdean heritage on the Freehold Estate. With Action Together's support, the group developed its purpose, governance, safeguarding approach and funding confidence. What started as a need for positive social spaces grew into football tournaments, cultural workshops and activity led by and for the community. The group's story reflects a wider Freehold journey: from activities delivered in a place, to residents shaping pride, culture and connection in their neighbourhood.

Women's health and voice: Endometriosis North West.

Endometriosis North West approached Action Together at an early stage, needing support to turn passion and experience into a sustainable organisation. With guidance from a Community Development Worker, the group secured funding, connected into networks and registered as a charity. It has become a stronger voice for women living with endometriosis in Rochdale, particularly those who have felt ignored, dismissed or stigmatised.

"Your support helped me stay focused on our goal — supporting women living with Endometriosis in Rochdale... Our aim is to empower them and give them a voice." – Dr Anita Sharma, Endometriosis North West

Volunteering as a route to confidence: Thomas and Kyra.

Thomas came to volunteering after mental health challenges had affected his confidence and work. Through a role with Angie's Angels Men's Group, he found a way to use his lived experience to support others, while rebuilding his own sense of purpose and social confidence. Kyra's story also shows the value of relational support: initially hesitant, she was helped to explore suitable opportunities and is now volunteering regularly at Barnardo's, with increased confidence, structure and clearer direction towards employment.

Recovery led by lived experience: Rochdale Recovery Communities.

Rochdale Recovery Communities grew in visibility and confidence during the year, launching platforms, events and grants that put people with lived experience at the centre. Recovery's Got Talent and the new micro recovery grants helped challenge stigma, celebrate recovery and create opportunities for people to test their own ideas. The approach is about more than funding activities; it is about helping people build ownership, confidence and a positive recovery identity. Visit Rochdale Recovery Communities.

Health inequalities and trusted spaces.

Through the South Asian Forum, Rochdale Ethnic Communities Network and Community Voices, Action Together supported community-led approaches to health insight and prevention. Community leaders challenged how data is understood, shared lived experience, and helped design trusted approaches to vaccination, CVD and diabetes prevention, healthy eating and culturally relevant health support. The work demonstrated that data becomes more meaningful when it is held alongside trust, relationships and community knowledge. View the Rochdale Community Mapping tool.

7.7 Key learning and priorities for Rochdale

A key learning from 2025–2026 is that impact in Rochdale often starts with trust. The most meaningful change came where Action Together stayed alongside people and groups over time: helping them navigate complexity, reflect on their purpose, build confidence, access resources and connect to others. This was true for individuals looking for volunteering opportunities, groups formalising for the first time, and community leaders stepping into strategic influence.

Another lesson is that community-led decision-making is strongest when people are supported to participate well. The Anti-Poverty Foundation Group, Live Well grant design, Recovery Communities micro grants and Community Voices all show the importance of creating the conditions for people with lived experience to shape priorities, not simply respond to them. This requires time, coaching, accessible processes and a willingness from systems to share power.

Looking ahead, Rochdale's priorities are to build on the momentum of Live Well, strengthen inclusive community spaces through Spaces of Hope and Connection, deepen neighbourhood working, grow participatory grant-making, and continue developing community-led approaches to poverty, recovery, health inequalities, youth violence and violence against women and girls. The borough will also continue investing in the resilience of the VCFSE sector, supporting organisations not only to survive, but to lead change rooted in the lives, strengths and hopes of Rochdale's communities.

8. Borough overview: Tameside

8.1 Local context and priorities

Across 2025/26, Action Together's work in Tameside was shaped by the borough's strong community assets, persistent health and social inequalities, and the growing recognition that local voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise organisations are central to prevention, wellbeing and community resilience. The year saw continued pressure on communities through poverty, isolation, poor health outcomes and rising demand for support, while local groups continued to respond with creativity, care and practical action. Our priorities focused on strengthening community-led prevention, supporting groups to become more sustainable, increasing investment into grassroots activity, and ensuring that the voices and experiences of local people helped shape wider system change.

8.2 What we delivered in Tameside

Throughout the year, we delivered a broad programme of support for Tameside's VCFSE sector, combining one-to-one development work, training, volunteering support, grant investment, network building and borough-wide partnership activity. Our Community Development Workers supported local groups with governance, funding, service development, policy development, quality assurance and organisational health checks. We also delivered summits, workshops and networks that brought people together around shared priorities including Live Well, community power, social economy development, early years, refugee welcome, health inequalities and community transport. Alongside this, projects such as Miles of Smiles, the

Tameside Toy Appeal, Our Business, the Live Well Accelerator and Refugee Welcome Programme provided practical support to residents and helped local organisations build capacity and confidence.

8.3 Impact highlights in Tameside

The impact of this work was visible across the borough. In 2025/26, Action Together provided one-to-one capacity building support to 236 local VCFSE groups and supported the creation of 28 new community-led activities. We matched 235 local people with volunteering opportunities and supported the development of 85 new volunteering opportunities. Through Miles of Smiles, community transport continued to help residents maintain independence and access health, care and social opportunities, while the Tameside Toy Appeal demonstrated the strength of local generosity, with 5,870 gifts donated and 854 children receiving a gift at Christmas. Across all of this work, the common thread was practical support that helped people feel more connected, more confident and better able to live well in their communities.

8.4 Partnership working and system leadership in Tameside

Partnership working was central to our approach. Through the Live Well Accelerator Programme, Action Together helped create a shared vision for community-led, system-enabled wellbeing in Tameside. The Community-Led Wellbeing Principles were co-designed with more than 130 VCFSE groups and system leaders and were adopted as a foundation for prevention work and community investment. We convened system and community leadership spaces, bringing together public sector leaders, community anchors and local groups to explore how great everyday support can be strengthened in every neighbourhood. Work in St Peter's provided a practical example of this approach, with trusted VCFSE partners commissioned to speak directly with residents about what helps them live well and what is missing. This strengthened cross-sector relationships, increased confidence among community leaders and helped embed the role of the VCFSE sector in shaping local prevention and health inequality work.

8.5 Investment and funding support in Tameside

A major focus during the year was attracting, managing and distributing investment into community-led activity. Funding programmes included the Tameside Communities Fund, Robin Estill Fund, Best Start for Life, GM Early Years Fund, Refugee Welcome Programme, CVD/Diabetes Microgrants, NHS Engagement Grant and targeted community engagement funding. These funds supported a wide range of activity, from arts and mental health projects, baby banks and early years support, to ESOL provision, food insecurity work, vaccination awareness, cardiovascular disease and diabetes prevention, and local engagement around NHS services. The Tameside Communities Fund was particularly important in investing in community-led prevention, using the Community-Led Wellbeing Principles to guide decision-making and ensuring local knowledge shaped where resources were directed.

8.6 Tameside case studies and stories of change

The following stories show how Action Together's support helped local people, groups and community organisations in Tameside turn ideas into action, strengthen their services, attract investment and improve outcomes for residents. Each story reflects a different aspect of our

work: capacity building, community leadership, volunteering, social enterprise, funding support and partnership working.

Roving Museum: opening up culture through community leadership

Roving Museum began as an idea from local community leader Agnes Fough, who wanted to make museums, heritage and cultural activity feel more accessible to communities who often face barriers because of poverty, culture, background or a feeling that museums are "not for them". Action Together supported Agnes to explore the right legal structure, develop a constitution, recruit trustees and prepare an application to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. This gave the project the foundations it needed to move from an ambitious idea into a formal, sustainable organisation, with a constitution, trustee board and submitted CIO application creating a strong platform to make cultural opportunities more inclusive and community-led.

"I was initially nervous because I have never set up a Charity Organisation before. However, I soon realised that I needn't have been because Dawn knew exactly what I was talking about and how she could help... She is my 'GO-TO' Development Officer." – Agnes, Roving Museum

Power of Resilience: growing grassroots wellbeing support

Power of Resilience started with a simple aim: to build emotional and practical resilience in the local community. Action Together helped the group develop from an early idea into a Community Interest Company by supporting next steps, governance, policies, trustee recruitment and connections with other local organisations. The group went on to develop wellbeing activity, a 24/7 community pantry and creative sessions that support mental health, connection and inclusion, supporting over 1,500 people through wellbeing sessions, distributing more than 10,000 items through its community pantry and engaging over 200 people in creative and gardening activities.

"With Jon's support and encouragement, we took our first steps... As the impact grew, so did our vision, and with Action Together's continued support, we registered as a CIC." – Julie Mallinson, Director

New Life Church: securing long-term investment for a community anchor

New Life Church is a community anchor in Ashton, supporting people experiencing homelessness, disability, domestic abuse, substance misuse and other complex life circumstances through activities including ESOL, Wednesday Welcome, Thursday Feast and a Parents and Tots group. Action Together worked with the organisation to strengthen its evidence base, complete a SWOT analysis, connect with the National Lottery Officer and facilitate focus groups with ESOL learners, parents, volunteers and residents. This helped New Life Church build a strong case for Reaching Communities investment, securing just under £300,000 to strengthen staffing, volunteer management, monitoring and evaluation, and long-term sustainability.

"For all the support from Action Together to us over the last five years, this has really helped us to make a positive, life affecting impact in the community... accessing a larger fund will help us make more of a difference to the lives of the people that we are currently serving." – Stuart, New Life Church

Karen's Haven for COPD: turning lived experience into support for others

Karen's Haven for COPD was created from Emma Liston's personal experience of caring for her mum Karen, who died from COPD. Emma wanted to create practical and emotional support for people affected by COPD and life-limiting illness, but needed help to turn the idea into a structured organisation. Action Together supported Emma to explore governance and legal structures, recruit additional Directors, identify activities such as peer support, and connect with wider networks and social enterprise support. Karen's Haven for COPD is now established as a CIC, has accessed social enterprise development support and is building a sustainable offer for people affected by COPD.

"Working with Dawn from Action Together has been the most invaluable support I've received and I am truly grateful... Nothing was too much trouble and Dawn was really helpful in explaining terminology that I had not otherwise used before." – Emma Liston

Read more about Karen's Haven for COPD Karen's Haven for COPD CIC – A supportive space for people affected by COPD | Action Together

EJV Aspire CIC: strengthening support for young women

EJV Aspire CIC works with young people, particularly young women facing barriers to education and social and emotional support. Although the organisation had developed its model and begun working with young women, it needed support to build confidence in business planning, financial forecasting and sustainability. Through a Social Enterprise Health Check and the Our Business Programme, Action Together helped the organisation clarify its vision, strengthen its business plan and access mentoring support. EJV Aspire CIC went on to secure Tameside Communities Funding, move into premises, recruit staff and expand vocational education opportunities for more young people.

"Without them, none of this would be possible. We've been able to make a huge impact on Tameside's young people and their families in such a short space of time, truly making a difference that can positively change lives." – Emily Milner, EJV Aspire CIC

Ridgehill Together CIO: sustaining community momentum

As major programmes in Ridgehill came to an end, there was a risk that the community would lose the additional support and momentum built over recent years. Action Together worked with residents to develop a sustainability plan, explore governance options and establish Ridgehill Together CIO as a new umbrella organisation. The group is now positioned to support smaller local groups, secure funding and develop a stronger joined-up offer for residents. Ridgehill Together CIO has also secured Tameside Communities Fund support and is developing a three-year business plan.

"By placing the community at the heart of everything we do, we continually listen, learn, and adapt. This ensures our work delivers meaningful support where it is needed most." – Margaret Doherty, Ridgehill Together

Hand in Hand Community CIC: rebuilding confidence and capacity

Hand in Hand Community CIC provides trauma-informed, culturally appropriate support to Afro-Caribbean families, with a focus on mental and emotional wellbeing. After the death of a founding Director, the organisation paused delivery and needed to rebuild capacity. Action

Together supported the remaining Directors through an organisational health check, business mentoring, marketing development and the Social Accelerator Programme, helping the CIC clarify its offer and plan for sustainability. Hand in Hand Community CIC now has three Directors, a clearer service offer, paid workshops, funding for a monthly parenting group and stronger plans for income generation.

"The support helped me to gain clarity, confidence and I know my target audience and the services we offer. Thank you for the support." – Nelly Kwasinwi

Tameside People 4 Wildlife: creating an inclusive community garden

Tameside People 4 Wildlife approached Action Together for support to complete the final stage of its Community Wildlife Garden in Denton. The group wanted to create a welcoming and inclusive green space for nature walks, creative activity and family events. After an unsuccessful application to the Tameside Communities Fund, Action Together helped the committee strengthen the project, demonstrate community benefit and explore alternative funding routes. The group secured £20,000 from National Lottery Awards for All to complete a safe, accessible wildlife garden that will support wellbeing, reduce isolation and connect residents with nature.

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"The help given to portray our vision on paper and submit a successful funding application was extremely valuable. We look forward to working together again in the future and bringing new opportunities to our local community." – Danny McKay, Chair of Tameside People 4 Wildlife

Tameside Toy Appeal: community generosity in action

The Tameside Toy Appeal brought together residents, community centres, local businesses, libraries, volunteers, Family Hubs and partners to make sure children in need received a gift at Christmas. Local people donated gifts and money, volunteer drivers collected and delivered toys, and Family Hubs identified families most in need. The appeal demonstrated the power of coordinated community action and the generosity that exists across Tameside, receiving 5,870 donated gifts, supporting 438 referrals and ensuring 854 children received a Christmas gift, with 16 volunteer drivers completing 40 toy collections across 359 miles.

8.7 Key learning and priorities for Tameside

The year reinforced the importance of community-led approaches that are trusted, locally rooted and properly resourced. Local groups are often closest to the people most affected by inequality, but they need flexible funding, development support and meaningful influence within wider systems to sustain and grow their impact. Learning from Live Well has shown that prevention is strongest when communities and public sector partners work together around shared outcomes, local insight and practical action. Looking ahead to 2026/27, our priorities in Tameside will be to build on the Live Well implementation work, strengthen community engagement and insight, continue to support the sustainability of VCFSE organisations, grow

the social economy, develop volunteering and community transport, and make the case for investment that matches the ambition, creativity and value of Tameside's communities.

9. Working across our boroughs

Action Together works across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside as three distinct localities with shared strengths, challenges and ambitions. Each borough has its own identity, priorities and community infrastructure, but the themes running through our work are strongly connected: trusted relationships, community-led prevention, volunteering, organisational resilience, lived experience, collaboration, and investment that reaches grassroots groups.

This cross-borough work is one of the main ways we deliver our three strategic objectives:

1. strengthening social infrastructure for connected communities
2. advancing our approach to social change
3. growing and transforming as a local funder

Working across all three boroughs allows us to respond to local context while also sharing knowledge and creating more joined-up support for the VCFSE sector.

Across the year, our locality teams have shown how place-based infrastructure can connect community insight with wider system change. In Oldham, this has included neighbourhood working, participatory grant-making, volunteering pathways and stronger VCFSE voice through Oldham Voices and partnership forums. In Rochdale, the focus on community power, lived experience and prevention has helped local groups influence anti-poverty work, recovery, health inequalities and youth-led activity. In Tameside, community-led wellbeing principles, social economy development and practical capacity building have demonstrated the value of locally rooted support. Together, these examples show how Action Together brings people, organisations and systems together around shared goals while keeping community voice at the centre. They also show that our strategy is working by being embedded in the work of our teams in each locality.

9.1 Volunteering

We are the VCQA accredited Volunteer Centre in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside, and volunteering has always been a core function of our organisation.

Volunteering supports people to build confidence, develop skills, improve their wellbeing and contribute to their communities. In Oldham, volunteering pathways supported Jobcentre clients and sanctuary seekers gain confidence, employment, connection and a sense of belonging. In Rochdale, personalised volunteering support helped people overcome barriers linked to confidence, mental health, isolation and work readiness. In Tameside, residents were matched with opportunities across local groups and projects, with volunteering also playing a practical role in community transport and the Toy Appeal. Despite changes to our teams, we continued to offer support across all three boroughs, supported by our digital offer and online Volunteering Directory.

Across the localities, the impact of volunteering was not only measured in numbers of roles or matches, but in the personal changes people experienced. Volunteering helped residents rebuild routine, practise English, make friends, feel useful, support others and take steps towards employment or further learning. It also helped organisations extend their reach, build stronger teams and respond to local need. By working across the three boroughs, Action Together can share approaches to volunteer brokerage, volunteer manager support, inclusive recruitment and person-centred matching, while adapting our delivery to each locality.

This directly supports our objective to strengthen social infrastructure for connected communities by developing and championing volunteering as a way for local people to share their skills, build social capital and take part in community life. It also contributes to our approach to social change by helping people move from isolation or uncertainty into confidence, connection and action.

9.2 Capacity building

Capacity building, or organisational development support, is central to our work in every borough. Our model means we have locally-based Community Development Workers assigned to specific areas in each borough. Our hyper-local approach mirrors the nature of the sector in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside, where the majority of our members are classed as Micro or Small, and focused around a specific area. This means we can both share knowledge and skills across three boroughs, while responding to specific bespoke needs of local charities and voluntary organisations.

Groups across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside received practical support with governance, constitutions, policies, safeguarding, funding applications, quality assurance, business planning, organisational health checks and long-term sustainability. This support helped new grassroots groups formalise, enabled established organisations to grow or adapt, and strengthened the confidence of trustees, staff and volunteers.

Common themes emerged across the localities. Many groups needed help to move from an idea into a clear structure, as seen through organisations becoming CICs, CIOs or charities. Others needed support to become more resilient, diversify income, tell their story to funders, strengthen policies or develop clearer evidence of impact. Whether supporting groups through Quality in Action, funding coaching and social economy support, or organisational health checks, our focus was consistent: helping local organisations become more confident, sustainable and better equipped to deliver lasting community benefit.

This work is central to strengthening social infrastructure for connected communities because resilient, well-supported organisations are the foundations of connected communities. It also helps **advance our approach to social change** by helping groups develop the confidence, leadership and organisational strength needed to influence decisions, collaborate with others and respond to inequality in their places.

9.3 Partnerships and collaboration

Partnership working across the three boroughs showed the importance of connecting VCFSE organisations with public sector partners, funders, community leaders and residents. In each locality, Action Together created and supported spaces where people could share insight, coordinate activity, test new approaches and influence how services and investment are

shaped. These included borough forums, thematic networks, Live Well spaces, community voice structures, refugee and asylum seeker networks, health and wellbeing partnerships, and neighbourhood-based collaborations.

The strongest partnerships were those built on trust, shared purpose and a willingness to work differently. Across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside, community-led prevention became a key shared theme. Local groups were recognised not simply as delivery partners, but as organisations with relationships, insight and practical knowledge that can help systems understand what residents need to live well. This joined-up approach helped connect local action to wider priorities around poverty, health inequalities, social isolation, employment, community safety, early years, refugee welcome and belonging.

This partnership work directly supports our objective to **advance our approach to social change**. By investing time in networks, shared learning and collective action, we help create the conditions for organisations, residents and partners to identify opportunities for change, share power and make a demonstrable impact in communities.

9.4 Leadership and advocacy

Action Together's leadership and advocacy role was visible across all three boroughs through our work to strengthen VCFSE voice, amplify lived experience and ensure community insight informs decision-making. In Oldham, the development of Oldham Voices and the Public Sector and VCFSE Forum helped strengthen routes for sector representation. In Rochdale, community leaders influenced local and national conversations on poverty, while lived experience shaped work on recovery, health inequalities and prevention. In Tameside, the Community-Led Wellbeing Principles were co-designed with local groups and system leaders, helping embed community voice into prevention and investment decisions.

Across the localities, this work showed that leadership is not only about representing the sector in formal spaces, but also about creating the conditions for residents, volunteers and community organisations to speak for themselves. By supporting people with lived experience to participate, helping groups build confidence, and translating local insight into system conversations, Action Together helped make the VCFSE sector more visible, valued and influential.

This reflects our strategic commitment to advance our approach to social change by strengthening community leadership, supporting social change networks and ensuring that insight from people and groups closest to the issues shapes wider priorities. It also strengthens social infrastructure by making local networks and forums more inclusive, connected and accountable to communities.

9.5 Investment

Investment was a major enabler of community-led action across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside. Across the year, funding supported a wide range of activity including hardship support, health and wellbeing, employability, early years, sanctuary seeker and refugee welcome work, recovery, climate action, food insecurity, community transport, social enterprise development, cultural activity and improvements to community spaces. In each borough, Action Together's role went beyond administering grants; we helped groups strengthen applications, develop ideas, evidence need, connect with partners and plan for sustainability.

A common theme across the three localities was the value of flexible, timely and trust-based investment. We are an IVAR accredited Open and Trusting Grant Maker, ensuring that accessibility and openness is key to our grants process.

Small grants helped residents and groups test ideas, build confidence and respond quickly to local need, while larger funds supported more sustained development and infrastructure. Participatory and community-informed approaches, such as the Live Well Accelerator and local grant design processes, helped ensure that investment reflected local knowledge and community priorities. By working across boroughs, Action Together can share learning about what makes funding accessible, equitable and effective, while continuing to tailor investment to the needs of each locality.

This work directly demonstrates our objective to grow and transform as a local funder. Across the boroughs, we are continuing to develop accessible and community-informed approaches to grant-making, connecting investment with development support so that we invest time, skills, relationships and money in the work our members do. In doing so, investment also strengthens social infrastructure and supports social change by moving resources closer to communities and enabling local people to shape priorities.

Taken together, the work across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside demonstrates the strength of Action Together's locality model. Our teams are embedded enough to understand the distinct character of each borough, while connected with each other to share learning, identify common challenges and build collective approaches. This balance of local presence and cross-borough infrastructure enables us to support the development of stronger organisations, more confident volunteers, better partnerships, more inclusive decision-making and investment that reaches the people and places where it can make the greatest difference.

10. Our Programmes

Miles of Smiles

Miles of Smiles is Action Together's community transport project in Tameside, helping residents access health, care and social appointments when public transport is not suitable. The service supports independence, reduces anxiety around travel and helps people stay connected to essential services, social opportunities and community life. Volunteer drivers are central to this, providing reliable transport alongside reassurance and friendly connection.

During 2025/26, Miles of Smiles delivered 34,863 miles and 4,001 trips. This was an increase on the previous year, with mileage rising by 4,999 miles (+16.7%), and trips increasing by 395 (+11%). Despite the loss of the project car in April 2025, refusals reduced as a proportion of bookings, while social trips increased to 24.37% of total bookings, showing how community transport helps residents not only attend essential appointments, but also maintain relationships, access activities and reduce isolation.

The project also invested in its volunteers through appreciation events during Volunteers' Week and at Christmas, and through First Aid training delivered with Go! Train & Develop. Miles of Smiles also supported wider community activity, including Community Transport Week and the

Tameside Toy Appeal, where 16 volunteer drivers completed 40 toy collection journeys across 359 miles.

The impact of Miles of Smiles was felt in everyday independence, wellbeing and connection. The service helped Tameside residents attend appointments, access social opportunities and remain part of their communities, while strengthening the role of local volunteers in tackling isolation and supporting people to live well.

Passenger and family feedback shows the difference the service makes. Edith described the worry of losing the ability to drive, saying: "What at first seemed an insurmountable situation is now a thing of the past due to the Miles of Smiles Service! What a blessing this service is!" Another passenger described the project as "a godsend", adding that "the drivers are interesting and lovely. A marvellous service!" A family member also shared: "Thank you for providing transport for Kath over the last couple of years, you have never let us down."

Oldham Social Prescribing

"I wish there were more people like you in the world – I can't recommend you highly enough."

Oldham Social Prescribing continued to play a vital role in helping residents improve their health, wellbeing and confidence during 2025/2026. Delivered by Action Together through a strong partnership network with doctors' surgeries, local primary care partnerships, Oldham Council, Adult Social Care, community organisations and Greater Manchester health and care partners, the service provided free, personalised support for people facing physical, mental or social health challenges.

Demand for the service grew significantly. The team received 3,465 referrals during the year, 679 more than in 2024/2025. The impact was clear, with 79% of people supported reporting improved overall wellbeing.

Social Prescribing responded to a wide range of needs across Oldham, from loneliness, anxiety and low confidence to housing difficulties, caring responsibilities, financial hardship, employment support and long-term health conditions. Link Workers helped people identify what mattered to them, then connected them with the right activities, services and community support. This often meant going beyond a simple referral by building trust, breaking complex problems into manageable steps, accompanying people through difficult processes and staying alongside them while they regained confidence.

Partnership working was central to this impact. The team continued to attend regular meetings with health, care and community partners in Central and South Oldham, where professionals discussed residents' needs, shared updates and agreed additional mental health support where needed. They also joined meetings focused on people facing higher levels of risk, helping partners identify concerns early, coordinate timely support and agree practical next steps for some of the most vulnerable residents in the borough. Through this joined-up approach, Social Prescribing helped connect clinical care with wider community support, including work around frailty, long-term health conditions and informal community conversations such as Chatty Cafés.

The team strengthened links with Adult Social Care, receiving 73 referrals directly from Oldham's adult social care referral route and supporting people who needed joined-up help after contacting the Social Care front door. The service also worked with Oldham Council

around housing and older adult social care, supported families through safeguarding and family support meetings, and helped partners develop a more consistent support plan for people affected by hoarding in Oldham.

Oldham Social Prescribing also responded to wider local priorities around work, health and economic inactivity. In partnership with Get Oldham Working, Link Workers supported people affected by health conditions to return to work or remain in employment. The project continued to achieve strong results and contributed to an award nomination for Action Together. From October, two full-time Link Workers also worked as part of a new single access point for employment and health support, using Social Prescribing approaches to help residents move closer to work.

Staff development and shared learning helped the team keep improving the quality and safety of their support. Sessions with Welfare Rights and Children's Social Care colleagues strengthened knowledge around benefits, safeguarding and practical support for families. We delivered trauma and resilience training to the full Social Prescribing team, while staff completed training on conflict management, lone working and new digital systems. The service continued to host placement opportunities for district nursing colleagues and adult social work students, helping partners understand Social Prescribing in practice and share learning across services.

Promotion and outreach helped raise awareness of the service and reach people in different community settings. The team engaged with veterans at an event at Oldham Library, took part in a spinal health assessment day at Oldham Athletic Football Club alongside local health and voluntary sector partners, and held stalls at community events including Healthy New Year and International Women's Day at Oldham Library. For Social Prescribing Day, the team produced a video sharing what Social Prescribing means to them, highlighting the dedication and compassion of staff supporting residents across Oldham. Watch the video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kiNjgU0Mty8 and find out more about Social Prescribing Day here: https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/social-prescribing-day-2026

Joanne's story

Referred by her doctor, Joanne was living with anxiety, depression and significant stress. She wanted meaningful activities in her life but felt overwhelmed and unsure how to start. Her Link Worker met her in a community setting, listened without judgement and helped her develop a practical support plan. This included emergency food support, creative wellbeing activities, regular follow-up appointments, cookery sessions and additional mental health support.

By focusing on Joanne's strengths and interests, the team helped her take steps that felt achievable. She completed a 10-week arts and wellbeing course, took part in the final showcase and continued attending cookery sessions. Joanne said: *"Thank you. I loved it. I'm happy focusing on things that suit me. Thank you – I appreciate it all."*

Joanne's story shows how Social Prescribing can help someone rebuild routine, confidence and hope.

Stuart's Story

Stuart was caring for his father, who uses a wheelchair and has heart failure, and needed help to apply for supported accommodation. Because of his dyslexia, the online process and paperwork felt difficult to manage. The team arranged a home visit, helped him gather essential

documents, liaised with his doctor for a medical summary and completed the housing application with Stuart, his father and a family friend.

The support did more than complete a form. It built Stuart's confidence using digital tools, enabled him to place future housing bids independently and connected him with the local carers' service, where he accessed further help and peer support. His father has since been offered a more accessible home close to Stuart, reducing stress for the family and making continued caring more manageable. Stuart's story demonstrates the service's ability to provide practical, compassionate support when families are under pressure.

Across the year, Oldham Social Prescribing showed the value of a service rooted in relationships, local knowledge and community connection. Whether helping someone access food support, reconnect with creativity, navigate housing, manage a caring role or take steps towards work, the team helped residents feel heard, supported and more in control of their lives. In a year of rising demand, the service responded with warmth, persistence and practical action, making a positive difference to people and communities across Oldham.

Healthwatch

In Quarter 1, the Government proposed national changes to the NHS, involving significant changes to NHS structures, workforce, and commissioning decisions. The abolishment of Healthwatch was announced as part of these changes. This directly affects Action Together and our staff as we host Healthwatch services in Oldham and Tameside. We worked with Healthwatch Advisory Boards and commissioners in both boroughs to understand the implications locally, and maintained open communication with the staff involved throughout the year. This process will continue into the next year.

Healthwatch Oldham

"Our 2025-6 Annual Report highlights the work of Healthwatch Oldham over the past year.

Our work develops an understanding of patient's experiences of health and social care – particularly seldom-heard voices - and uses this to drive change to improve services for all.

Throughout the year, we have worked to ensure that local people are heard and we remain committed to making health and social care services more accessible, responsive, and inclusive for all. This report highlights the work carried out and amplifies the voices of those who have contributed.

Thank you to everyone who gave us feedback and supported our work this year.
You can access the report through the link below."

Healthwatch Oldham 2025 – 2026 Annual Report

Healthwatch Tameside

"This year has been one of challenge and resilience for Healthwatch Tameside. Following the Government's announcement that Healthwatch is to be abolished, our staff and volunteers, alongside colleagues across Greater Manchester and nationally, have worked tirelessly to champion the importance of retaining an independent voice for local people within health and social care.

We are grateful to system leaders, commissioners and local MPs who have taken the time to hear about our work and recognise the value of independent community insight in shaping services.

Despite uncertainty, our commitment to the people of Tameside has only strengthened. Throughout the year, we increased our presence across communities, extending our engagement offer to hear from a wide range of residents, including seldom heard groups.

This year, we also focused on strengthening our processes and relationships across the health and social care system. We worked more closely with system leaders to build stronger partnerships, while increasing follow-up with providers and commissioners on recommendations from work completed prior to 2025/26, helping ensure feedback continues to lead to meaningful action and improvement.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to ensuring the people of Tameside continue to have an independent voice within health and social care. We will continue working with local leaders to drive change, strengthen community influence and secure a future where local experiences shape services."

Healthwatch Tameside 2025 – 2026 Annual Report

Rochdale Culture Co-Op

Rochdale Culture Co-op, a partnership involving Action Together, Your Trust, Rochdale Development Agency, Public Health, Rochdale Borough Housing, The Co-op Group and Rochdale Borough Council, secured £1million from Arts Council England's Creative People and Places programme for 2026–29. The successful bid recognised the strength and ambition of the consortium's work to make culture more community-led, inclusive and rooted in Rochdale's co-operative heritage.

Action Together played a key role in supporting the partnership through the bid process, with our CEO chairing the consortium and partners working together to prepare for Arts Council interviews. As accountable body for the new funding, Action Together will help Culture Co-op continue empowering local people as Cultural Pioneers, shaping, creating and taking part in the arts and cultural experiences they want to see in their neighbourhoods.

We shared the news on our website: https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/major-ps1m-funding-boost-empower-local-people-through-culture-rochdale

To find out more visit https://www.theculturecoop.org/

11. Strengthening the VCFSE Sector in Greater Manchester

In 2025/26, Action Together continued to play a leading role in strengthening the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector across Greater Manchester. Through our leadership within 10GM, our partnership with local infrastructure organisations, and our close working with GMCA, NHS Greater Manchester and VCFSE leaders, we helped ensure the sector

was recognised as an equal partner in the region's reform, prevention and devolution ambitions.

Across the year, our work focused on three connected priorities: building the strategic voice of the sector, securing investment in community-led prevention, and strengthening the evidence, relationships and infrastructure needed for lasting systems change. This included shaping the implementation of GM Live Well, contributing to the Greater Manchester Strategy, supporting the development of the refreshed GM VCFSE Accord, and helping position community-led activity at the heart of Greater Manchester's approach to healthier, fairer and more connected places.

Strengthening the strategic voice of the sector

Action Together's CEO and Director of 10GM continued to represent the VCFSE sector in key Greater Manchester governance and reform spaces, including the GM Reform Executive, the GM Live Well VCFSE and Community-Led Activity workstream, and discussions linked to the integrated settlement, mayoral priorities and NHS reform. This representation helped bring the insight, experience and leadership of local communities into strategic decision-making at a time of significant change across Greater Manchester.

We worked alongside VCFSE leaders, local infrastructure organisations and public sector partners to connect locality priorities with Greater Manchester-wide reform. This included supporting advisory groups, facilitating engagement with sector partners, delivering presentations and learning sessions, and helping align strategic representatives across priority areas such as Live Well, prevention, climate justice, community accountability, economic inclusion and health reform.

Putting community-led prevention at the centre of Live Well

A major focus for the year was the implementation of GM Live Well and the Prevention Demonstrator. Action Together helped shape the coordination of Live Well across Greater Manchester, including through co-chairing the VCFSE and Community Workstream and acting as joint Senior Responsible Owner within GMCA for VCFSE activity. This work has helped strengthen the role of community-led support in prevention, wellbeing and place-based working.

Through 10GM and our locality partnerships, we supported the learning from the Live Well Communities Fund and worked with GMCA, NHS Greater Manchester and the GM Mayor's Charity to develop future investment. By the end of the year, GMCA and NHS Greater Manchester had announced three further years of Live Well implementation funding, with 50% guaranteed to the VCFSE sector. This is a significant step in recognising the sector's contribution to prevention and ensuring community-led activity is resourced as part of the wider system.

Securing major investment for Live Well Spaces of Hope and Connection

One of the most significant achievements of the year was securing £16.5 million over four years from The National Lottery Community Fund for Live Well Spaces of Hope and Connection. Led

through 10GM, with Action Together's CEO as Strategic Director for the programme, this investment will support a Greater Manchester-wide network of more than 100 inclusive, community-led spaces where people can meet, belong and find everyday support.

The programme was shaped through co-design with VCFSE leaders, local infrastructure organisations, GM=EqAl, the Innovation Unit, GMCA and NHS Greater Manchester, ensuring it builds on the leadership and creativity already rooted in local communities. Prioritising communities facing the greatest inequalities, the investment will strengthen social infrastructure, grow community action and power, and help embed community-led spaces within Greater Manchester's wider prevention ambitions.

For Action Together, this investment reflects the power of local insight connected to Greater Manchester-wide collaboration. It will create new opportunities for communities in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside, while contributing to nationally significant learning about how community-led spaces can thrive over the long term. Find out more: https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/live-well-spaces-hope-and-connection

"We're thrilled to have secured this major investment in Greater Manchester's VCFSE sector. Across our 10 boroughs, there are already hundreds of spaces of hope and connection. They're the lifeblood of our sector. But many are underfunded, overstretched and held up by just a few dedicated individuals fighting to keep the lights on. These leaders often face immense pressure, driven by a deep sense of responsibility to their communities. And too many people facing the most significant inequalities still do not have communal spaces to call their own.

"This investment will help us change that. Prioritising the communities facing the greatest inequalities, it builds on the leadership and creativity already rooted in local communities. It will help strengthen social infrastructure and put real power, resources and decision-making into local hands.

"Powered by the Live Well movement, we'll work with our VCFSE organisations, public services, and residents to share power, change systems and shape healthier, fairer, more connected places, so that everyone can live a better life."

Liz Windsor-Welsh, Action Together CEO and Director of 10GM

Building shared evidence and insight

We also contributed to the fourth Greater Manchester State of the VCFSE Sector research project, working with all Greater Manchester local infrastructure organisations and academic partner Nottingham Trent University. The survey launched in January 2026, with personalised survey links sent to Action Together members and local focus groups held across our localities. We also made use of our existing membership data to reduce the survey burden on responding groups.

Action Together staff supported the design, planning, promotion and delivery of the research, including through representation on the Core Working Group and direct support to local organisations to complete the survey. Our three localities were among the strongest performing areas for survey responses, helping ensure the experiences of groups in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside are reflected in the final Greater Manchester and locality reports. The findings will provide valuable evidence to support planning, advocacy, investment and impact reporting across the sector.

Refreshing the GM VCFSE Accord

Throughout the year, Action Together worked with the GM VCFSE Leadership Group Chair, GMCA and NHS Greater Manchester on the development of the refreshed GM VCFSE Accord. This included supporting strategic engagement, helping shape revisions, and contributing to the consultation that informed the final agreement.

The launch of the new GM VCFSE Accord at the end of March, alongside the Greater Manchester Mayor, local authority leaders and VCFSE leaders, marked an important milestone. It reaffirmed a shared commitment to working with the sector as a strategic partner and created a stronger foundation for locality governance, fairer collaboration and more consistent involvement of the VCFSE sector in decisions that affect communities.

Our impact across Greater Manchester

By connecting local insight with Greater Manchester-wide influence, Action Together helped strengthen the conditions for a more resilient, recognised and resourced VCFSE sector. Our work supported stronger relationships between the sector and public bodies, helped secure major new investment, amplified community-led approaches to prevention, and created better evidence about the role and impact of the sector.

Most importantly, this work has helped shift power, resources and decision-making closer to communities. It has strengthened the foundations for healthier, fairer and more connected places across Greater Manchester, while ensuring the creativity, leadership and knowledge of the VCFSE sector continue to shape the future of public service reform, prevention and community wellbeing. The coming year will bring more opportunities to make an impact across Greater Manchester, and our work in 10GM, GM VCFSE Leadership Group, Live Well and other spaces mean Action Together will continue to advocate for the sector to the benefit of the city region and our three localities.

12. Our Future Plans

As we look ahead to 2026/2027, Action Together is building from a position of strength. Our Local Infrastructure Quality Accreditation (LIQA) and ongoing feedback from members and partners confirm that we are a high-performing local infrastructure organisation. We have embedded the learning from LIQA, continue to exceed the core functions set out in the Power of Infrastructure research, and our strategic plan to 2028 remains a strong framework for shaping local and Greater Manchester policy agendas.

Our work is already influencing key agendas including Live Well, the Greater Manchester VCFSE Accord, Spaces of Hope and Connection, and locally funded programmes shaped by the priorities of Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside. These foundations give us confidence, but they also bring responsibility: to keep listening, keep learning and keep evolving so that we can meet the needs of our communities.

Where we are

We are proud of the progress made this year. Action Together is recognised as a trusted local infrastructure organisation, rooted in place and connected across Greater Manchester. We have strong relationships with members, partners, public services and communities, and we continue to play a distinctive role in translating between sectors, connecting grassroots insight with strategic decision-making, and helping people turn ideas into practical action.

Where we are going

Our future direction is shaped by curiosity, learning and a commitment to staying close to communities. We are asking ourselves how we need to evolve to meet future needs; how we remain attuned to the diverse views of communities, grassroots organisations and local leaders; what our role as a Local Infrastructure Organisation should be; and what is uniquely Action Together about the way we work.

These questions will guide us as we continue to support a strong, resilient and influential VCFSE sector. They will also help us focus our energy on the areas where we can make the greatest impact with, and for, our members and communities.

Our areas of focus

- **Standing against division and hate.** We will stand with people and communities who are being marginalised, including migrants, people seeking asylum, trans people and others whose rights and safety are threatened. We will continue to build cohesion in ways that respond to local needs and strengthen solidarity
- **Strengthening citizen and community voice.** We have established VCFSE mechanisms, but we know there is more to do to develop diverse community leadership and make sure citizen voice is heard, valued and acted on
- **Building community wealth and social infrastructure.** We will support the development of social infrastructure that local people own, shape or steward. We know that strong networks, shared spaces and community-led assets can increase economic prosperity, improve life chances and strengthen local resilience
- **Supporting place shaping and regeneration.** Local people should have greater control over the design, use and ownership of public spaces. Opportunities such as Pride in Place, alongside our renewed focus on creative engagement, community organising and community development, will help communities shape the future of their neighbourhoods
- **Continuing to re-wire the public sector.** The contribution of people, communities and the VCFSE sector is increasingly valued, but there is still work to do. We will continue to champion local, grassroots development alongside Greater Manchester-wide initiatives
- **Working across Greater Manchester through 10GM.** Our connection with other local infrastructure organisations strengthens our collective capability and influence. Working with Greater Manchester Combined Authority, NHS Greater Manchester and other partners gives Action Together a stronger voice, while reminding us to prioritise the opportunities that will make the biggest difference to members and communities

What we need to do to make it happen

- **Strengthen Others:** Workforce development is critical to Action Together and other LIOS. We must also continue to develop our technological capabilities
- **Strengthen Others:** Grow locally rooted, powerful networks and connections, and share our knowledge and expertise
- **Believe It's Possible:** Lead with hope and enthusiasm, even in the context of multiple crises and growing pressures on communities, services and the VCFSE sector
- **Believe It's Possible:** Mobilise resources to make things happen beyond words, engaging partners beyond the public sector and turning shared ambitions into practical action
- **Be True:** Continue to act as translators across sectoral boundaries, bringing a practical, grounded approach that reflects our values and stays rooted in local reality

13. Structure, Governance and Management

Governance

The Board of Trustees is the governing body of Action Together and is ultimately responsible for everything the incorporated charity does. Action Together's board can have a maximum of 14 Board members, 12 of which are elected from its membership, with the ability to co-opt a further two people.

Action Together's Honorary Officers for 2025/26 were:

- **Chair** - Camilla Guereca
- **Vice Chair** - Andy Wiggans
- **Treasurer** - Mina Patel

We undertook an extensive trustee recruitment campaign ahead of our Annual General Meeting, aiming to recruit four trustees to fill roles of those who had stepped down or come to the end of their tenure. We targeted specific skills from new trustees and were delighted with the campaign and its response, as we welcomed four Board members with fantastic skills and experience: Danail Georgiev, Jacqueline McCann, Mohammed Miah, and Affy Rasheed.

Board members are supported in their role by receiving an induction and support from the CEO and other trustees. Trustees are encouraged to take up our training and development opportunities, as well as external training that is of interest.

A full list of the trustees can be found at https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/our-board

Action Together has a standing committee that steers the work of Healthwatch Tameside. This has its own terms of reference but ultimate accountability of the contracts and employment is with Action Together.

Structure and management

The day to day running of the charity is handled through a scheme of delegation to the Chief Executive, Liz Windsor-Welsh. The Chief Executive leads the Senior Leadership Team, which consists of the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Operations, and the three Directors responsible for the management of our locality teams in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside.

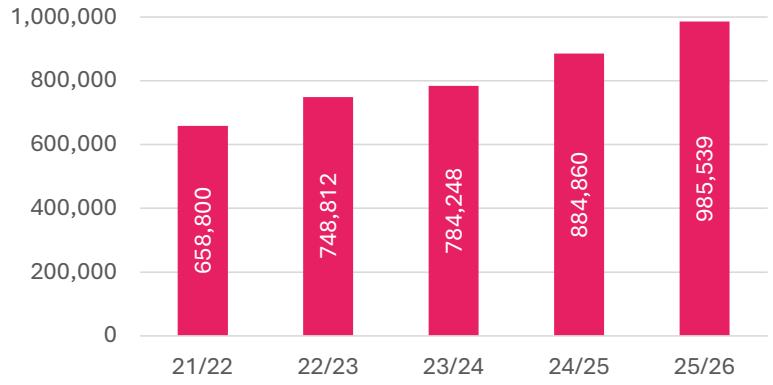
Risk management

We hold a detailed risk management document which is submitted to the Board of trustees of an annual basis. This risk register identifies potential risks to the organisation over a broad base of elements covering, governance, strategic, reputational, operational, safeguarding, financial and information governance. In addition, it sets out mitigations and controls that are in place to reduce the risk of such incidents as far possible. Where incidents do occur, each is logged and any subsequent learning reflected in a change to process and practice where appropriate. In addition to the risk register and incident log, a compliance report details controls in place over our internal systems, and this is submitted to the Board of trustees on an annual basis.

Our systems

Online

Online engagement continued to grow during 2025/2026, with visits to the Action Together website https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/ reaching a record 985,539 page views. This was an additional 100,679 page views, or an 11% increase, on the previous year, continuing the year-on-year trend of increased engagement with our website.



We continued to develop the website in response to the needs of members, partners and local communities. This included adding new Member Resources to the Member Login section and creating new sections of the site to support emerging services, information and user needs. In response to member and partner feedback, we introduced a new Community Spaces Directory, enabling member organisations to list rooms they have for hire and allowing visitors to filter by area and room size to find a space that meets their needs. Since its launch, the directory has proved popular with members and partners and has contributed to an uplift in Action Together membership requests, as local organisations seek to list their spaces on our site.

We also introduced a Member Feedback Form in the Member Login area, making it easier to collect, respond to and report on feedback and suggestions from members. Alongside these website developments, we amended our social media strategy to place greater emphasis on the stories and impact of the support we give our members. As website visits and contacts continue to grow, we trust users to find information directly through our online channels, rather than relying solely on us promoting specific services and events through social media.

This shift gives us more space to show how our teams are making a difference across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside. By sharing stories of support, development and impact, we aim to increase engagement with our content while raising awareness of the services we offer. We particularly want micro, small and currently unconstituted organisations to recognise their own challenges and journeys in the stories we tell, and to feel encouraged to contact Action Together so we can offer similar, bespoke support to help develop their ideas into action.

Internal Operations

Our internal operations focused on improving systems, data quality, digital infrastructure and organisational insight. We made significant progress in CiviCRM, including the implementation and refinement of the Grants module, improvements to Organisation Health Checks, development of the Community Spaces Directory, and agreed changes to support a new membership application and approval process. We also used CiviCRM to strengthen data collection for accreditations and to support partners.

We also improved how we use data to understand reach, performance and risk. Work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion data established a common data set and supported analysis of grant recipients, while operational plans and performance dashboards gave managers and directors clearer insight into delivery against key performance indicators. We also explored how to move from snapshot reporting towards more real-time analysis, supported by tools such as Felt to map membership and identify under-represented communities.

Data protection, cyber security and digital resilience were central priorities. Staff completed annual data protection training, managers and leaders received additional training, and we successfully published our NHS Data Security and Protection Toolkit submission and renewed our Cyber Essentials accreditation. Learning from high-profile cyber incidents informed improvements to staff login security, including plans to strengthen multi-factor authentication. We also maintained our digital infrastructure through laptop replacement cycles, secure management of end-of-life devices, and continued monitoring of our IT support arrangements following changes at our provider.

Staffing

Our team averaged a headcount of 83 and FTE was 73.15.

Across the year we filled multiple vacancies across all teams and localities resulting in 15 new staff joining the organisation. New roles were introduced including Deputy Director and Insight and Engagement Coordinator.

Six staff left the organisation, one due to redundancy and the remaining due to retirement and career progression.

Average tenure with the organisation during the period was 5.7 years.

Learning, Development and Employee Wellbeing

During 2025/2026, we continued to strengthen our support, development and wellbeing offer for staff. Key achievements included the development of a new staff handbook, the finalisation of an annual staff training plan shaped by strengths mapping, and targeted learning in coaching, leadership and management, conflict resolution, data analysis, wellbeing, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Our HR team also refreshed key policies, including absence, lone working, menstrual health and menopause, whistleblowing and other leave, ensuring managers and employees had clearer guidance and support.

Employee wellbeing remained a strong focus throughout the year, informed by staff feedback and delivered through practical guidance, information sessions and drop-in support. This included winter wellbeing guidance, sessions on pensions and retirement planning, prostate cancer awareness, and the launch of our Menstrual Health and Menopause Policy with supporting resources for staff and managers. We also continued to encourage staff to volunteer through our Employer Supported Volunteering policy, including a staff volunteering story at Wildbrook Community Garden: https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/pear-picking-peers-employer-supported-volunteering

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion remain central to Action Together's values, culture and practice. In 2025/2026, we continued to reflect on how we can create a more inclusive organisation for our staff, volunteers, members and communities, focusing on both practical action and the everyday behaviours that help people feel respected, represented and able to participate fully.

We used demographic data and feedback from our Workforce Wellbeing Survey to shape actions that support belonging, wellbeing and more diverse recruitment, including work to improve ethnically diverse representation at senior levels. We also strengthened learning across the organisation through Disability Awareness training, LGBT Foundation training, and mandatory learning on the Equality Act 2010 and wider equality legislation. The launch of our Menstrual Health and Menopause Policy further supported open conversations and practical support for colleagues. We continue to offer flexibility with an inclusive leave policy, which allows staff to take Bank Holiday leave on other days of the year appropriate for them.

We also responded to wider issues affecting our communities. This included publicly affirming our support for trans communities, developing internal guidance following the Supreme Court judgment, and submitting a response to the EHRC consultation on the planned Code of Practice. Alongside this, we strengthened our organisational response to the rise in far-right organising, working with Board members, staff, our Embrace Diversity working group and members to develop shared aims, training, communications and cross-locality action plans.

In the past year, completed actions from the plan have included: finalising our Critical Incident Policy to ensure our staff and members feel safe, supported and informed during periods of uncertainty or unrest, or following major disasters or instances of violence; conducting a deep dive with our Board to develop an organisational stance and agree on how we might use our reserves to fund work combatting fascism; and organising anti-fascism training for our staff team. We also updated and amended our Membership process, ensuring that our member organisations are aligned with our values. Throughout the year, we made connections with 10GM and other Local Infrastructure Organisations across Greater Manchester to share learning, best practice and co-ordinate campaigns and activity.

Our commitment to inclusion was reflected in our work with members and in how we came together as an organisation. We supported OPAN members with inclusive recruitment guidance, shared resources and myth-busting information for Refugee Week and created opportunities for staff to connect and celebrate through our annual iftar and Thank You Day. See more at https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/action-togethers-annual-thank-you-day

We took part in local and national campaigns and celebrations including:

- Black History Month
- Hate Crime Awareness Week
- National Inclusion Week
- South Asian Heritage Month
- Refugee Week
- International Men's Day
- International Women's Day
- UK Disability History Month

The year has reinforced the importance of combining reflection with visible action. We have made progress in strengthening policies, improving learning, responding to emerging challenges and creating spaces where people can connect and celebrate difference. In 2026/2027, we will continue to embed EDI across our systems, leadership, member support and community work, ensuring equity and inclusion remain central to how we make decisions and stand alongside the communities we serve.

14. Financial Review

Funds at 31 March 2026 amounted to £12,136,218 of which £10,439,043 were restricted. Expenditure in the year met the objectives that were required by the principal funding sources, as described in their funding agreements.

Restricted funds held at the end of the year have been carried forward for the future support of specific projects. Action Together recognises that it is responsible and accountable for public funds. It further recognises that it needs clarity and transparency in demonstrating how these funds are managed and, in particular, the level of funds that it judges appropriate to hold in reserve.

The Trustees have established a reserves policy which requires:

- Reserves are maintained at a level which ensures that Action Together has the ability to meet its ongoing commitments with sufficient reserves to cover a minimum of six month's running costs, redundancy costs and core committed costs
- A proportion of reserves are maintained in a readily realisable form
- The calculation of the reserves is an integral part of the organisation's planning, budget and forecast cycle and will take into account:
- Risks associated with each stream of income and expenditure being different from that budgeted
- Planned activity level
- Organisation's commitments

- The reserves fund is managed and monitored at each Finance Sub-Group meeting and reported back to the full Board of Trustees within the financial reporting procedures.

The calculated reserves fund will be reviewed quarterly to ensure it takes account of changing circumstances.

The reserves position as at 31 March 2026 is as follows:

- Total requirement of six months running costs, redundancy and committed core costs: £875,295
- Total unrestricted reserves, cash and investments (net of tangible fixed assets): £1,666,432

It should be noted that significant funds in the sum of £4,478,145 were received from Oldham Council in the week prior to the year end. This was anticipated funding specifically for the Oldham Capital Grants programme which began distributing these funds in early April. The timing of this receipt has therefore resulted in an unusually high level of restricted funds as at 31st March 2026.

The trustees have assessed the current financial standing of the organisation with reference to current activity, projections, cash flows and reserves and have concluded that the charity is a going concern.

Investment funds are held in medium risk portfolios with the aim of growing the funds over a medium to long term (depending on the withdrawals made during the year) but the volatility of the market as reported previously has continued particularly in the last two years meaning we have had some variation in the levels of gains/losses seen. Despite this volatility the investments have seen average growth over the last three years of between 2% and 6% per annum. The Board of Trustees through the Finance Sub-Group review the performance of those funds and are satisfied that they are still meeting the original aims of the investments made.

Remuneration rates of key management personnel are set by the Board of Trustees via the Finance Sub-Group who use a number of benchmarks and parameters to set these rates. This involves reference to local authority spine rates published in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside, relevant job descriptions and levels of responsibility. In addition, further benchmarking against other charities of similar size are taken into account. Action Together is a supporter of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter.

15. Reference and Administrative Details

Registered charity name: Action Together CIO

Charity registration number: 1165512

Principal office:

80 Union Street

Oldham

OL1 1DJ

Trustees:

- C. Guereca
- A. Wiggans
- M. Patel
- N. Akhter
- M. Ashton
- D. Choudhury
- D. Georgiev (appointed 05.11.2025)
- J. McCann (appointed 05.11.2025)
- M. Miah (appointed 05.11.2025)
- A. Nazir
- A. Rasheed (appointed 5.11.2025)
- M. Widdup
- J. Yates (retired 5.11.2025)
- J. Mellor (retired 5.11.2025)
- J. Rehman (retired 22.09.2025)

Auditor:

Feltons Chartered Accountants

1 The Green

Richmond

Surrey

TW9 1PL

Bankers:

Unity Trust Bank PLC

9 Brindley Place

Birmingham

B1 2HP

CCLA Investment Management

Senator House

85 Queen Victoria Street

London

EC4V 4ET

Blackrock Investment Management (UK) Ltd

12 Throgmorton Avenue

London

EC2N 2DL

Castlefield

9th Floor

111 Piccadilly

Manchester

M1 2HY

Trustees' responsibilities statement

The trustees 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).

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

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

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP
- Make judgments and accounting 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 business

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and 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 Charities Act 2011, the applicable Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations, and the provisions of the Trust Deed. 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.

The trustees' annual report was approved by Camilla Guereca on behalf of the board of trustees.



Date: 9 October 2026

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ACTION TOGETHER CIO

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Action Together CIO (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 March 2026 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standards applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) in preference to the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice issued on 1 April 2005 which is referred to in the extant regulations but has been withdrawn.

This has been done in order for the accounts to provide a true and fair view in accordance with the Generally Accepted Accounting Practice effective for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2015.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2026 and of its incoming resources and application of resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the United Kingdom, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report other than the financial statements and our Auditors' Report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the Annual Report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' Responsibilities Statement, the Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements which give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an Auditors' Report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

- We assessed the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements, including the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and how it might occur, by holding discussions with management and those charged with governance.

- We obtained an understanding of laws and regulations that could reasonably be expected to have a material effect on the financial statements through discussion with management and those charged with governance, including financial reporting and taxation legislation. We considered that extent of compliance with those laws and regulations as part of our procedures on the related financial statement items.

- We inquired of management and those charged with governance as to any known instances of noncompliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations. We remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit

- We addressed the risk of fraud through management override by reviewing the appropriateness of a sample of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making key accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business that we come across throughout the audit.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Auditors' Report.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ACTION TOGETHER CIO (CONTINUED)

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditors' Report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and its trustees, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Feltons Chartered Accountants

Chartered Accountants
& Statutory Auditors

1 The Green

Richmond

Surrey

TW9 1PL

Date: 15/10/26

Feltons Chartered Accountants are eligible to act as auditors in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2026 £	Restricted funds 2026 £	Total funds 2026 £	*Total funds 2025 £*
Income from:					
Charitable activities	4	**-**	**12,552,817**	**12,552,817**	*7,734,570*
Other trading activities	5	**88,489**	**-**	**88,489**	*119,759*
Investments	6	**129,923**	**21,362**	**151,285**	*176,618*
Total income		**218,412**	**12,574,179**	**12,792,591**	*8,030,947*
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	7,8	**(3,518)**	**761**	**(2,757)**	*57,012*
Charitable activities	10	**51,766**	**7,369,506**	**7,421,272**	*6,284,398*
Total expenditure		**48,248**	**7,370,267**	**7,418,515**	*6,341,410*
Net income before net gains/(losses) on investments		**170,164**	**5,203,912**	**5,374,076**	*1,689,537*
Net gains/(losses) on investments		**9,000**	**48,952**	**57,952**	*(1,216)*
Net movement in funds		**179,164**	**5,252,864**	**5,432,028**	*1,688,321*
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		**1,518,009**	**5,186,179**	**6,704,188**	*5,015,867*
Net movement in funds		**179,164**	**5,252,864**	**5,432,028**	*1,688,321*
Total funds carried forward		**1,697,173**	**10,439,043**	**12,136,216**	*6,704,188*

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

The notes on pages 51 to 73 form part of these financial statements.

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 MARCH 2026

	Note		2026 £		*2025* *£*
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	15		**30,741**		*23,503*
Investments	16		**984,534**		*1,066,735*
			1,015,275		*1,090,238*
Current assets					
Debtors	17	**1,157,830**		*849,979*	
Investments	18	**991,268**		*952,557*	
Cash at bank and in hand		**9,289,528**		*4,174,106*	
		11,438,626		*5,976,642*	
Current liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	19	**(317,684)**		*(362,692)*	
Net current assets			**11,120,942**		*5,613,950*
Total assets less current liabilities			**12,136,217**		*6,704,188*
Total net assets			**12,136,217**		*6,704,188*
Charity funds					
Restricted funds	20		**10,439,043**		*5,186,179*
Unrestricted funds	20		**1,697,174**		*1,518,009*
Total funds			**12,136,217**		*6,704,188*

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on and signed on their behalf by: Camilla Guereca (Chair) 09/10/26



The notes on pages 51 to 73 form part of these financial statements.

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

	2026 £	*2025* *£*
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net cash used in operating activities	**4,848,403**	*935,738*
Cash flows from investing activities		
Dividends, interests and rents from investments	**151,285**	*176,618*
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	**(24,419)**	*(19,696)*
Proceeds from sale of investments	**328,113**	*17,112*
Purchase of investments	**(187,959)**	*(28,762)*
Net cash provided by investing activities	**267,020**	**145,272**
Cash flows from financing activities		
Net cash provided by financing activities	**-**	**-**
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year	**5,115,423**	**1,081,010**
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	**4,174,106**	*3,093,096*
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	**9,289,529**	*4,174,106*

The notes on pages 51 to 73 form part of these financial statements

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

1. General information

The charity is a public benefit entity and a registered charity in England and Wales and is unincorporated. The address of the principal office is 80 Union Street, Oldham, OL1 1DJ.

2. Accounting policies

2.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) - 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 Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair' view. This departure has involved following the Charities SORP (FRS 102) published in October 2019 rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

Action Together CIO meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy.

2.2 Going concern

There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue.

2.3 Income

All income is recognised once the Charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

Grants are included in the Statement of Financial Activities on a receivable basis. The balance of income received for specific purposes but not expended during the period is shown in the relevant funds on the Balance Sheet. Where income is received in advance of entitlement of receipt, its recognition is deferred and included in creditors as deferred income. Where entitlement occurs before income is received, the income is accrued.

Income from contracts for the supply of services is recognised with the delivery of the contracted service. This is classified as unrestricted funds unless there is a contractual requirement for it to be spent on a particular purpose and returned if unspent, in which case it will be regarded as restricted.

Receipts received during the year which are not to be expended until after the balance sheet date are not recognised as income for the year and are included in income deferred.

Income tax recoverable in relation to investment income is recognised at the time the investment income is receivable.

Other income is recognised in the period in which it is receivable and to the extent the goods have been provided or on completion of the service.

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.4 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Expenditure on raising funds includes all expenditure incurred by the Charity to raise funds for its charitable purposes and includes costs of all fundraising activities events and non-charitable trading.

Expenditure on charitable activities is incurred on directly undertaking the activities which further the Charity's objectives, as well as any associated support costs.

Grants payable are charged in the year when the offer is made except in those cases where the offer is conditional, such grants being recognised as expenditure when the conditions attaching are fulfilled. Grants offered subject to conditions which have not been met at the year end are noted as a commitment, but not accrued as expenditure.

All expenditure is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

2.5 Government grants

Government grants relating to tangible fixed assets are treated as deferred income and released to the Statement of Financial Activities upon the completion of the relevant performance-related conditions. Other grants that are not subject to performance-related conditions are credited to the Statement of Financial Activities as the grant proceeds are received. Grants received prior to the revenue recognition criteria being satisfied are recognised as a liability.

2.6 Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the Charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the institution with whom the funds are deposited.

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.7 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are initially recognised at cost. After recognition, under the revaluation model, tangible fixed assets whose fair value can be measured reliably shall be carried at a revalued amount, being their fair value at the date of revaluation less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

Revaluations are made with sufficient regularity to ensure that the carrying amount does not differ materially from that which would be determined using fair value at the end of the reporting date.

Fair values are determined from market-based evidence by appraisal that is normally undertaken by professionally qualified valuers. If there is no market-based evidence of fair value because of the specialised nature of the tangible fixed asset and it is rarely sold, except as part of a contributing business, a Charity may need to estimate fair value using an income or depreciated replacement cost approach.

Gains and losses on revaluation are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities, with a separate revaluation reserve being shown in the Statement of funds note.

An increase in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of a revaluation, is recognised in other recognised gains and losses, unless it reverses a charge for impairment that has previously been recognised as expenditure within the statement of financial activities. A decrease in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of revaluation, is recognised in other recognised gains and losses, except to which it offsets any previous revaluation gain, in which case the loss is shown within other recognised gains and losses on the statement of financial activities.

Depreciation is charged so as to allocate the cost of tangible fixed assets less their residual value over their estimated useful lives, using the straight-line method.

Depreciation is provided on the following basis:

Motor vehicles	-	25% straight line
Fixtures and fittings	-	25% straight line
Office equipment	-	25% straight line

2.8 Investments

Fixed asset investments are a form of financial instrument and are initially recognised at their transaction cost and subsequently measured at fair value at the Balance Sheet date, unless the value cannot be measured reliably in which case it is measured at cost less impairment. Investment gains and losses, whether realised or unrealised, are combined and presented as ‘Gains/(Losses) on investments’ in the Statement of Financial Activities.

2.9 Debtors

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

2.10 Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short-term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.11 Liabilities and provisions

Liabilities are recognised when there is an obligation at the Balance Sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably.

Liabilities are recognised at the amount that the Charity anticipates it will pay to settle the debt or the amount it has received as advanced payments for the goods or services it must provide.

Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the provision is based on the present value of those amounts, discounted at the pre-tax discount rate that reflects the risks specific to the liability. The unwinding of the discount is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities as a finance cost.

2.12 Financial instruments

A financial asset or a financial liability is recognised only when the entity becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at the amount receivable or payable including any related transaction costs, unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where it is recognised at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument.

Current assets and current liabilities are subsequently measured at the cash or other consideration expected to be paid or received and not discounted.

Where investments in shares or preference shares are publicly traded or their fair value can otherwise be measured reliably, the investment is subsequently measured at fair value with changes in fair value recognised in income and expenditure. All other such investments are subsequently measured at cost less impairment.

Financial assets that are measured at cost or amortised cost are reviewed for objective evidence of impairment at the end of each reporting date. If there is objective evidence of impairment, an impairment loss is recognised under the appropriate heading in the statement of financial activities in which the initial gain was recognised.

For all equity instruments regardless of significance, and other financial assets that are individually significant, these are assessed individually for impairment.

Any reversals of impairment are recognised immediately, to the extent that the reversal does not result in a carrying amount of the financial asset that exceeds what the carrying amount would have been had the impairment not previously been recognised.

2.13 Pensions

The Charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme and the pension charge represents the amounts payable by the Charity to the fund in respect of the year.

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.14 Fund accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the Charity for particular purposes. The costs of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Investment income, gains and losses are allocated to the appropriate fund.

3. Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgment

Estimates and judgments are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions:

The Charity makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates and assumptions will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

(i) Recoverability of receivables

If necessary, the Charity establishes a provision for receivables that are estimated not to be recoverable. When assessing the recoverability the trustees consider factors such as aging of receivables, past experience of recoverability, and the credit profile of an individual or groups of customers.

Critical areas of judgment:

(i) In assessing whether there have been any indicators of impairment of assets, the trustees have considered both external and internal sources of information such as market conditions, counterparty credit ratings and experience of recoverability. There have been no indicators of impairment identified during the current financial year.

4. Income from charitable activities

	Restricted funds 2026 £	Total funds 2026 £	*Total funds 2025 £*
Core Infrastructure	1,062,889	**1,062,889**	*812,423*
Healthwatch	291,185	**291,185**	*296,526*
Grants & investments in the VCFSE	7,557,408	**7,557,408**	*1,968,358*
Social Prescribing/Community wellbeing	1,129,968	**1,129,968**	*1,204,990*
LTO	-	**-**	*124,189*
Other projects & consultancy	2,511,367	**2,511,367**	*3,328,084*
	12,552,817	**12,552,817**	*7,734,570*
Total 2025	*7,734,570*	*7,734,570*	

5. Income from other trading activities

Income from fundraising events

	Unrestricted funds 2026 £	Total funds 2026 £	*Total funds 2025 £*
Activities for generating funds	88,489	**88,489**	*119,759*
Total 2025	*119,759*	*119,759*	

6. Investment income and bank interest

	Unrestricted funds 2026 £	Restricted funds 2026 £	Total funds 2026 £	*Total funds 2025 £*
Income from listed investments	6,237	21,362	**27,599**	*30,679*
Investment income - bank interest	123,686	-	**123,686**	*145,939*
	129,923	21,362	**151,285**	*176,618*
Total 2025	*153,173*	*23,445*	*176,618*	

7. Expenditure on raising funds

Support costs - fundraising expenses

	Unrestricted funds 2026 £	Total funds 2026 £	*Total funds 2025 £*
Centrally incurred support costs less those recovered from restricted funds	(3,518)	**(3,518)**	*56,084*
Total 2025	*56,084*	*56,084*	

The centrally incurred support costs amounted to £848,317 (2025: £739,557) of which £851,835 (2025: £683,473) were recovered from the administration and management of restricted costs.

8. Investment management costs

	Restricted funds 2026 £	Total funds 2026 £	*Total funds 2025 £*
Investment management fees	761	**761**	*928*
Total 2025	*928*	*928*	

9. Analysis of grants

	Grants to Institutions 2026 £	Total funds 2026 £	*Total funds 2025 £*
Grants, Grants & investments in the VCFSE	2,606,487	**2,606,487**	*1,927,873*
Grants, Social Prescribing/Community wellbeing	50,000	**50,000**	*94,694*
Grants, LTO	-	**-**	*34,879*
Grants, Other projects & consultancy	153,448	**153,448**	-
	2,809,935	**2,809,935**	*2,057,446*
Total 2025	*2,057,446*	*2,057,446*	

Information relating to grants made to institutions by the Charity can be accessed at https:www.actiontogether.org.uk.

10. Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

Summary by fund type

	Unrestricted funds 2026 £	Restricted funds 2026 £	Total 2026 £	*Total 2025 £*
Core Infrastructure	-	856,815	**856,815**	*757,147*
Healthwatch	-	282,074	**282,074**	*275,937*
Grants & investments in the VCFSE	-	2,921,011	**2,921,011**	*2,243,216*
Social Prescribing/Community wellbeing	-	1,171,146	**1,171,146**	*1,237,793*
LTO	-	101,222	**101,222**	*65,770*
Other projects & consultancy	40,266	2,037,238	**2,077,504**	*1,695,752*
Governance costs	11,500	-	**11,500**	*8,783*
	51,766	7,369,506	**7,421,272**	*6,284,398*
Total 2025	*71,416*	*6,212,982*	*6,284,398*	

11. Analysis of expenditure by activities

	Activities undertaken directly 2026 £	Grant funding of activities 2026 £	Support costs 2026 £	Total funds 2026 £	*Total funds 2025 £*
Core Infrastructure	720,567	-	136,248	**856,815**	*757,147*
Healthwatch	230,074	-	52,000	**282,074**	*275,937*
Grants & investments in the VCFSE	63,113	2,606,487	251,411	**2,921,011**	*2,243,216*
Social Prescribing/Community wellbeing	977,872	50,000	143,274	**1,171,146**	*1,237,793*
LTO	84,318	-	16,904	**101,222**	*65,770*
Other projects & consultancy	1,557,924	153,448	366,132	**2,077,504**	*1,695,752*
Governance costs	-	-	11,500	**11,500**	*8,783*
	3,633,868	2,809,935	977,469	**7,421,272**	*6,284,398*
Total 2025	*3,534,696*	*2,057,446*	*692,256*	*6,284,398*	

12. Auditors' remuneration

The auditors' remuneration amounts to an auditor fee of £7,300 *(2025 - £6,950)*, and accountancy fees of £4,200 (*2025 - £4,000*).

13. Staff costs

	2026 £	*2025 £*
Wages and salaries	**2,764,555**	*2,504,247*
Social security costs	**343,122**	*237,432*
Contribution to defined contribution pension schemes	**161,194**	*142,246*
	3,268,871	*2,883,925*

13. Staff costs (continued)

The average number of persons employed by the Charity during the year was as follows:

	2026 No.	*2025 No.*
Total employees	**83**	*79*

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	2026 No.	*2025 No.*
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	**1**	*1*
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	**1**	*1*

Key management personnel include all persons that have authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the charity. The total compensation paid to key management personnel for services provided to the charity including employer's national insurance was £169,509 (2025:£161,394).

14. Trustees' remuneration and expenses

During the year, no Trustees received any remuneration or other benefits *(2025 - £NIL)*.

During the year ended 31 March 2026, expenses totalling £NIL were reimbursed or paid directly to no Trustee *(2025 - £NIL*) for meeting expenses.

15. Tangible fixed assets

	Motor vehicles £	Fixtures and fittings £	Office equipment £	Total £
Cost or valuation				
At 1 April 2025	**24,299**	**9,872**	**81,077**	**115,248**
Additions	**-**	**576**	**23,843**	**24,419**
At 31 March 2026	**24,299**	**10,448**	**104,920**	**139,667**
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2025	**24,299**	**9,436**	**58,009**	**91,744**
Charge for the year	**-**	**362**	**16,820**	**17,182**
At 31 March 2026	**24,299**	**9,798**	**74,829**	**108,926**
Net book value				
At 31 March 2026	**-**	**650**	**30,091**	**30,741**
At 31 March 2025	*-*	*436*	*23,068*	*23,504*

16. Fixed asset investments

	Listed investments £	Unlisted investments £	Total £
Cost or valuation			
At 1 April 2025	**1,050,661**	**16,074**	**1,066,735**
Additions	**187,960**	**-**	**187,960**
Disposals	**(326,184)**	**(1,929)**	**(328,113)**
Revaluations	**57,952**	**-**	**57,952**
At 31 March 2026	**970,389**	**14,145**	**984,534**
Net book value			
At 31 March 2026	**970,389**	**14,145**	**984,534**
At 31 March 2025	*1,050,661*	*16,074*	*1,066,735*

17. Debtors

	2026 £	*2025 £*
Due within one year		
Trade debtors	**1,132,338**	*827,600*
Other debtors	**994**	*-*
Prepayments and accrued income	**24,498**	*22,379*
	1,157,830	*849,979*

18. Current asset investments

	2026 £	*2025 £*
Unlisted investments	**991,268**	*952,557*

Unlisted investments represent investment in a charity short term common deposit fund.

19. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2026 £	*2025* *£*
Trade creditors	**175,387**	*74,754*
Other taxation and social security	**95,151**	*106,455*
Other creditors	**1,510**	*1,429*
Accruals and deferred income	**45,636**	*180,054*
	317,684	*362,692*

	2026 £	*2025* *£*
Deferred income at 1 April 2025	**116,595**	-
Resources deferred during the year	**-**	*116,595*
Amounts released from previous periods	**(116,595)**	-
	-	*116,595*

The deferred income in 2025 relates to funding received in advance for the following year.

20. Statement of funds

The separate analysis of restricted funds overleaf shows the movements on the material restricted funds, with the balance of the funds shown as other restricted funds.

Statement of funds - current year

	Balance at 1 April 2025 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 March 2026 £
Unrestricted funds						
Designated funds						
Development of the database	**5,775**	**-**	**(5,327)**	**(448)**	**-**	**-**
Research and capacity fund	**47,000**	**-**	**-**	**(47,000)**	**-**	**-**
Transformation and standardisation of processes across localities	**-**	**-**	**-**	**80,448**	**-**	**80,448**
	52,775	**-**	**(5,327)**	**33,000**	**-**	**80,448**
General funds						
General Funds - all funds	**1,465,234**	**218,413**	**(42,921)**	**(33,000)**	**9,000**	**1,616,726**
Total Unrestricted funds	**1,518,009**	**218,413**	**(48,248)**	**-**	**9,000**	**1,697,174**

20. Statement of funds (continued)

	Balance at 1 April 2025 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 March 2026 £
Restricted funds						
Restricted Funds - all funds	**2,911,209**	**6,790,007**	**(7,107,581)**	**-**	**19,421**	**2,613,056**
Action Oldham Fund	**447,151**	**-**	**(36,849)**	**-**	**29,531**	**439,833**
Thriving Communities Social Prescribing	**353,007**	**5,966**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**358,973**
Oldham Local Motion	**1,474,812**	**-**	**(225,837)**	**-**	**-**	**1,248,975**
Oldham Capital Grants	**-**	**4,478,145**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**4,478,145**
Oldham Live Well Implementation	**-**	**531,097**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**531,097**
Rochdale Live Well Implementation	**-**	**415,000**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**415,000**
Tameside Live Well Implementation	**-**	**353,964**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**353,964**
	5,186,179	**12,574,179**	**(7,370,267)**	**-**	**48,952**	**10,439,043**
Total of funds	**6,704,188**	**12,792,592**	**(7,418,515)**	**-**	**57,952**	**12,136,217**

20. Statement of funds (continued)

Statement of funds - prior year

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	*Income* £	*Expenditure* £	*Gains/ (Losses)* £	*Balance at 31 March 2025* £
Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds					
Development of the database	*47,005*	*-*	*(41,230)*	*-*	*5,775*
Research and capacity fund	*47,000*	*-*	*-*	*-*	*47,000*
	94,005	*-*	*(41,230)*	*-*	*52,775*
General funds					
General Funds - all funds	*1,283,258*	*272,932*	*(86,270)*	*(4,686)*	*1,465,234*
Total Unrestricted funds	*1,377,263*	*272,932*	*(127,500)*	*(4,686)*	*1,518,009*

20. Statement of funds (continued)

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	*Income* £	*Expenditure* £	*Gains/ (Losses)* £	*Balance at 31 March 2025* £
Restricted funds					
Action Oldham Fund	*444,949*	*15,247*	*(23,298)*	*10,253*	*447,151*
Tameside 4 Good	*282,996*	*12,302*	*(38,867)*	*(6,783)*	*249,648*
Tameside Robin Estill Fund	*152,280*	*-*	*-*	*-*	*152,280*
Thriving Communities Social Prescribing	*312,603*	*646,858*	*(606,454)*	*-*	*353,007*
One Oldham Fund	*199,432*	*3,000*	*(184,934)*	*-*	*17,498*
Oldham Local Motion	*-*	*1,477,424*	*(2,612)*	*-*	*1,474,812*
Restricted Funds - other	*2,246,344*	*5,603,184*	*(5,357,745)*	*-*	*2,491,783*
	3,638,604	*7,758,015*	*(6,213,910)*	*3,470*	*5,186,179*
Total of funds	*5,015,867*	*8,030,947*	*(6,341,410)*	*(1,216)*	*6,704,188*

21. Summary of funds

Summary of funds - current year

	Balance at 1 April 2025 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 March 2026 £
Designated funds	**52,775**	**-**	**(5,327)**	**33,000**	**-**	**80,448**
General funds	**1,465,234**	**218,413**	**(42,921)**	**(33,000)**	**9,000**	**1,616,726**
Restricted funds	**5,186,179**	**12,574,179**	**(7,370,267)**	**-**	**48,952**	**10,439,043**
	6,704,188	**12,792,592**	**(7,418,515)**	**-**	**57,952**	**12,136,217**

Restricted funds held at the end of the year have been carried forward for the future support of specific projects. Action Together recognises that it is responsible and accountable for public funds. It further recognises that it needs clarity and transparency in demonstrating how these funds are managed and, in particular, the level of funds that it judges appropriate to hold in reserve.

The sum of £4,478,145 in respect of Oldham Capital Grants was received on 27th March, 4 days before the year end with funds being distributed from April onwards. This amount is included in restricted funds at 31 March 2026.

As well as the carry forward figure for designated funds of £80,448 the Board of Trustees has approved a further allocation of £38,600 in the 26/27 budget. This amalgamated sum is to be used to improve the organisation's internal processes over the next two years.

21. Summary of funds (continued)

Summary of funds - prior year

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	*Income* £	*Expenditure* £	*Gains/ (Losses)* £	*Balance at 31 March 2025* £
Designated funds	*94,005*	*-*	*(41,230)*	*-*	*52,775*
General funds	*1,283,258*	*272,932*	*(86,270)*	*(4,686)*	*1,465,234*
Restricted funds	*3,638,604*	*7,758,015*	*(6,213,910)*	*3,470*	*5,186,179*
	5,015,867	*8,030,947*	*(6,341,410)*	*(1,216)*	*6,704,188*

22. Analysis of net assets between funds

Analysis of net assets between funds - current year

	Unrestricted funds 2026 £	Restricted funds 2026 £	Total funds 2026 £
Tangible fixed assets	30,741	-	**30,741**
Fixed asset investments	345,434	639,100	**984,534**
Current assets	1,320,999	10,117,628	**11,438,627**
Creditors due within one year	-	(317,684)	**(317,684)**
Total	1,697,174	10,439,044	**12,136,218**

Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	*Restricted funds 2025 £*	*Total funds 2025 £*
Tangible fixed assets	*23,503*	-	*23,503*
Fixed asset investments	*330,910*	*735,825*	*1,066,735*
Current assets	*1,163,597*	*4,813,046*	*5,976,643*
Creditors due within one year	-	*(362,692)*	*(362,692)*
Total	*1,518,010*	*5,186,179*	*6,704,189*

23. Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities

	2026 £	*2025* *£*
Net income for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	**5,432,028**	*1,688,321*
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	**17,182**	*14,430*
Gains/(losses) on investments	**(57,952)**	*1,216*
Increase in debtors	**(307,850)**	*(691,109)*
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	**(45,009)**	*144,460*
Other interest receivable	**(151,285)**	*(176,618)*
Increase in current asset investments	**(38,711)**	*(44,962)*
Net cash provided by operating activities	**4,848,403**	*935,738*

24. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2026 £	*2025* *£*
Cash in hand	**9,289,529**	*4,174,106*
Total cash and cash equivalents	**9,289,529**	*4,174,106*

25. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 April 2025 £	Cash flows £	At 31 March 2026 £
Cash at bank and in hand	**4,174,106**	**5,115,423**	**9,289,529**
Liquid investments	**952,557**	**38,711**	**991,268**
	5,126,663	**5,154,134**	**10,280,797**

26. Pension commitments

The group operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the group in an independently administered fund. The pension cost charge represents contributions payable by the group to the fund and amounted to £161,194 (2025 - £142,246). contributions totalling £Nil (2025: £Nil) were payable to the fund at the balance sheet date and are included in creditors.

27. Related party transactions

10GM Ltd, is a company limited by guarantee, in which the founding members are Salford CVS, Bolton CVS, Action Together CIO and MACC. The Chief Executive of Action Together CIO is a Director of 10GM Ltd. Action Together CIO has received funding from 10GM during the period totalling £0 (2025: £24,000).