



“ I lost my husband & a few months ago lost my mum. Its just a way of giving back as I know what it's like to be lonely. Plus it gets me out & chatting. ”



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Message from The CEO

This year has been one of growth, reflection, and real encouragement.

Our Befriending project has gone from strength to strength, and it has been incredible to see the real impact our volunteers are having in Bolton. At its heart, this work has always been about neighbours looking after neighbours, and this year, we have seen that happen time and time again. Our service user reviews all speak of befrienders who go above and beyond, make them feel part of their family and remind them they are not forgotten. We are incredibly proud of the volunteers we have, people from Bolton who chose to make a difference.

With Jean stepping away from her role as co-CEO, it has also felt like a natural moment to pause and reflect. That space has allowed us to rethink how we support children and families, and I'm really excited about where this has led us. As we look ahead, our focus is sharpening around supporting SEND families, with new projects planned to launch in 2026 that respond directly to what families have told us they need most.

Behind the scenes, a lot of work has gone into strengthening the foundations of the organisation. This year we've restructured, improved governance, and taken important steps to ensure we are sustainable for the long term. We've appointed a Chief Operating Officer and a new Project Manager, and together with the CEO role, this forms our core team, a small but committed group focused on delivering well, leading with integrity, and staying true to our values.

I'm incredibly proud of what we've achieved this year, not just the outcomes, but the care, prayer, and intention behind them. None of this would be possible without our volunteers, staff, trustees, partners, and supporters, who continue to believe in the difference we can make.

We are so excited and expectant for 2026 and all it holds for us.

Thank you for being a part of this journey.

Angela Barry - Chief Executive Officer



“

Reach has been an invaluable resource for my family. Their support has truly made a difference in our lives. From the friendly and helpful staff to the wonderful service users, the organisation has notably assisted my youngest son in managing his anxieties. It is reassuring to know that we have someone to talk to and we have also forged many new friendships with others in similar situations, providing mutual support to one another. We genuinely look forward to the Thursday sessions, they are both engaging and enjoyable.

”

Vision, Mission & Values

Vision

That no one will feel excluded from society, lonely or forgotten but instead know that they are valued.

Mission

To promote social inclusion and improve the quality of life of both children and families and those who are elderly and disabled in the Bolton and Bury area.

Values

‘Loving others, giving out’ to always show love and care for those we support, always going the extra mile. To be reactive to the changing needs of the communities we work in.

A photograph of three elderly women sitting at a table, overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter. The women are engaged in conversation. On the table, there are several items: a white mug with a blue flower design, a plain white mug, a glass with a red floral pattern, and a dark-colored book or box. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a window with a view of a house.

BEFRIENDING

Case Study

Lizzy was referred to Reach in March after receiving the heartbreaking news that she had only two months to live. Due to the urgency of her situation, our usual volunteer befriending process was not appropriate, so our pastoral lead, Hayley, began visiting Lizzy immediately to ensure she was supported and not alone.

Over the following weeks, Lizzy was admitted to a hospice, where Hayley continued to visit two to three times a week. Whether Lizzy was awake or asleep, Hayley remained by her side—offering companionship, helping to make her comfortable, feeding her jelly when it was all she could manage, and giving her water when she was thirsty. When awake, Lizzy was chatty and clearly comforted by the visits, often calling out Hayley's name.

Lizzy sadly passed away in August. Her daughter later expressed her heartfelt thanks, sharing how much comfort it brought to know her mother had a loving and kind friend at the end of her life. Through Reach, we were able to make a meaningful difference during Lizzy's final months, ensuring she was cared for, comforted, and not alone.



What We Offer

Befriending 1:1

Our Befriending service has continued to go from strength to strength this year, and we have had so much to celebrate along the way. One of our proudest moments was celebrating our very first volunteers who have now reached five years of volunteering with Reach, a huge milestone that speaks volumes about the commitment, relationships, and heart behind this service. Even more amazing, we know there will be many more five year celebrations to come in 2026, and we couldn't be prouder.

Today, over 200 elderly and isolated individuals are part of our Reach family. We continue to work closely with local GPs, NHS services, churches, and community groups across Bolton, who refer some of the most elderly and vulnerable people to us. Each person is thoughtfully matched with a volunteer befriender who lives within their local postcode area, helping to build trust, consistency, and a real sense of connection.

At the heart of our Befriending service is a simple but powerful vision: neighbours looking after neighbours. Time and again, these matches grow into genuine friendships, bringing companionship, dignity, and hope to those who may otherwise feel forgotten. We remain incredibly proud of the impact this service has in reducing loneliness and helping people feel seen, valued, and part of a community.

Pastoral Support

This year, our pastoral support project has remained a vital part of our Befriending service, continuing to ensure that those most impacted by isolation are not left waiting for support. Anyone referred to us who is over the age of 80 or experiencing severe isolation is placed onto our pastoral project and will receive a visit within 3 weeks of referral. We have grown and strengthened our pastoral team this year, with two staff members now employed across a total of 15 hours per week, fully dedicated to this work, alongside a consistent and committed volunteer. A member of the pastoral team continues to visit each individual regularly until they are matched with a befriending volunteer, ensuring continuity of care and meaningful connection during what can often be a particularly vulnerable time. This project continues to have a significant impact and remains a key part of our Befriending offer, providing reassurance, dignity, and timely support to those who need it most.

Reach Together

Following the success of our Reach Together social eating project, this year we have seen the group continue to flourish. Attendance has grown so much that we've had to rearrange the room to make space for more people, a great challenge to have! The group is now supported by a growing team of five weekly volunteers and one staff member, ensuring consistency, care, and a warm welcome for everyone who attends.

The group continues to reflect the heart and ethos of Reach, going above and beyond what happens in the room. Team members regularly visit attendees at home when they are unwell or grieving, and the group celebrates birthdays and special occasions together. Alongside a free hot meal and a warm, welcoming space, members enjoy a range of activities, including singing for the memory, painting, and games. This year also included another much loved day trip, giving people the chance to enjoy time together beyond their local community.

We continue to see genuine friendships forming through Reach Together, with care, connection, and belonging at the centre of everything we do.

Above and beyond

We always aim to go above and beyond in the care and support we provide, remaining responsive to the changing needs of those we support. This year, we were once again able to access household support funding, which allowed us to provide food vouchers to service users who were struggling with the rising cost of living.

Alongside this practical support, we continue to prioritise the small but meaningful gestures that help people feel seen and valued. Every service user receives a handwritten birthday card, with special care taken to mark significant birthdays. At Christmas, we delivered hot Christmas dinners to those who are housebound, provided Christmas hampers to individuals spending the festive period alone, and, through our successful gift appeal, ensured that every service user received a Christmas gift. Through both practical help and personal touches, we remain committed to making sure that those we support know they are cared for, remembered, and never forgotten.

Statistics

7225

Visits & Calls

235

Total Service Users

221

Total Volunteers

9331

Volunteer Hours

101

New Service Users

48

New Volunteers

473

Extra Pastoral Hours

75

Extra Pastoral Users

1068

Hot Meals Provided



CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Case Study

Paul was referred to one of our parenting courses focused on managing anger within the family. Despite living on the other side of town, Paul was eager to access support and cycled to every session after dropping his child at school. As a single parent with no local support—his family lives over 40 miles away—these sessions were especially important to him.

Initially, Paul was very quiet within the group, but as his confidence grew, he became an engaged and articulate participant. Over the course of the programme, he moved from having little belief in himself or his parenting abilities to developing greater confidence and determination.

Paul expressed deep gratitude for the support he received and shared how valuable it was to speak openly with others about his challenges.



Update

This year has been a quieter one for our Children and Families project, and that pause has been intentional.

Due to challenges in securing funding, we were unable to deliver the full range of activities we had hoped for. While this was disappointing, it created space for us to listen, reflect, and refocus on what families are really telling us they need most.

Throughout the year, we continued to run our Parents Drop-In and Stay and Play sessions. These spaces have been invaluable. The honest feedback and shared experiences from parents, particularly those raising children with additional needs, have helped us to shape the future direction of the project, ensuring our support is more responsive, meaningful, and rooted in real lived experience of SEND families.

We also worked in partnership with the Community Locker and King's Church Bolton to deliver a School Uniform Day, which supported over 100 families with essential items. For many, this practical support made a real difference in helping their child access school with dignity and confidence, easing pressure at an already stressful time. While this year highlighted the financial challenges facing children and family services, we are choosing to see this season as an opportunity, a chance to regroup, strengthen partnerships, and develop new plans that are sustainable and truly meet local need.

Alongside these changes, there has also been a transition within our leadership. Jean, our Co-CEO, who project managed the Children and Families work, has now stepped away from the role. We are incredibly grateful for her commitment since Reach Children and Families first formed. Moving forward, Angela will be taking the lead on the Children and Families project, supported by Helen, our newly appointed Project Manager.

As we look ahead, we do so with renewed vision and commitment to walking alongside children and families, especially those navigating additional challenges, ensuring they are seen, heard, and supported.

Statistics

112

Sessions (Face to Face)

301

Total Service Users

171

New Service Users

1107

Volunteer Hours

30

Volunteers

5

New Volunteers

A group of people are shown from the waist down, holding hands in a circle. They are wearing various shoes and socks. The word 'COMMUNITY' is overlaid in large, bold, white capital letters. The background is a solid red color.

COMMUNITY

17

Case Study

This Christmas we were able to support a family who were facing significant challenges following a child's diagnosis of kidney failure. The father made the selfless decision to donate his kidney, and as a result has been unable to work while recovering from major surgery. The mother was now caring for her partner, their child recovering from transplant surgery, and two other children — one of whom has learning difficulties. The family had to be reliant on DLA and benefits, and the loss of income alongside increased caring responsibilities had placed a lot of financial and emotional strain on the household.

With Christmas approaching, the mum reached out for support with gifts for the children. After a really difficult year marked by serious illness, surgery and ongoing recovery, the family was struggling to provide extras. Through the gift appeal, we were able to provide gifts which helped ease the financial pressure and ensure the children could experience some joy and normality during the festive period.



Christmas Gift Appeal

Our Christmas Gift Appeal is now in its fifth year, and it continues to grow in both scale and impact each year. In this latest appeal, we were able to support 315 families and 209 elderly individuals, distributing a total of 1,560 gifts across the community, a powerful reminder of what can be achieved when people come together with generosity and compassion.

Working in partnership with Kings Church, Bolton and The Community Locker, we once again invited local businesses across Bolton to act as collection points for new, unopened gifts for both children and the elderly. This year, we were especially encouraged to see many new local businesses getting involved as drop-off points, helping the appeal reach even further into the community. We were also grateful to be supported by our sponsors, Change Glazing and Locks alongside new sponsor Eagley House School Nurseries, whose support helped make the appeal possible.

Gifts were distributed through a one-off event, where families referred by local agencies were invited to choose three gifts per child, helping to preserve dignity and choice during what can be a financially challenging time of year. Gifts for elderly and isolated individuals were delivered directly to their homes by our Befriending volunteers, ensuring they felt remembered and valued during the festive season.

The feedback from recipients and the wider community was incredibly encouraging, and we are deeply grateful to everyone who helped make the Gift Appeal possible. Bringing the community together to care for one another remains at the very heart of this work.

Support Funding

This year, we were grateful to once again receive Household Support Funding, enabling us to support both families and elderly people with food vouchers, as well as helping to sustain our groups by providing warm spaces and peer support during the colder months.

The funding was shared across our Children & Families work and our Befriending service, helping to ease the pressure of ongoing cost of living challenges. Through this support, we were able to provide food vouchers to those who needed them most, offering practical help while also reducing anxiety and stress around basic necessities. Alongside this, the funding helped ensure our community groups could continue to offer a safe, warm, and welcoming space where people could come together, connect, and support one another.

The feedback we received powerfully highlights the reality many people are living with day to day:

“I won’t feel as worried about food shopping now. Thank you so much.”

“This will really help us get through the week — it takes such a weight off.”

“You are superstars, thank you for helping! So much appreciated!”

“Knowing there’s a warm place to go and people who care makes such a difference.”

To be able to offer this support, both practical and relational, and to make a real difference to those who need it most has been incredibly humbling. We are deeply thankful for the funding that made this possible and for the opportunity to continue walking alongside our community during challenging times.

Meet The Team

Core Team



Angela Barry

CEO



Michelle Hardman

Chief Operations Officer



Helen Norwood

Project Manager

KEY STAFF



Debbie Jenkinson

Volunteer Coordinator



Kirstie Hurst

Executive Assistant



Hayley Green

Pastoral Support Lead



Josh Barry

Digital Media Assistant



Sarah Welsby

Community Worker



Andrea Mason

Pastoral Support Worker



Ste Hardman

Graphic Design

Stakeholders / Partners





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