# LinkAble Woking Impact Report

**For the year ending 31 March 2026**



# Thank you!

**Our supporters, friends and dedicated team – you are why LinkAble can support so many families.**



**Every person with a learning disability and every autistic person deserves the opportunity to live as independently as possible, and to be happy.**

This is why Team Link works tirelessly to support children, young people and adults to develop the skills and confidence they need to live the life they choose.

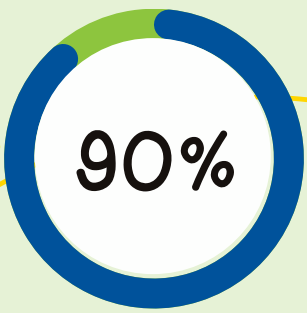
We are incredibly proud of our welcoming community, where people with additional needs can be themselves, learn, and make real, lasting friendships.

## This year we...

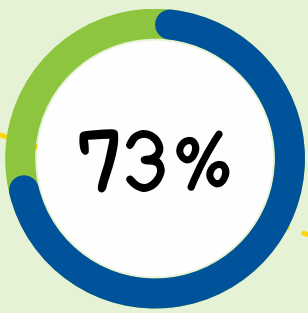
- **Supported 290 people and their families.**
- **Provided 878 activity sessions.**
- **Delivered 36,766 hours of support.**

> **"It's such a joyous experience to see both my kids scrambling to get out of the car once they've seen we've arrived at LinkAble!"**
>
> Mum of two LinkAble attendees

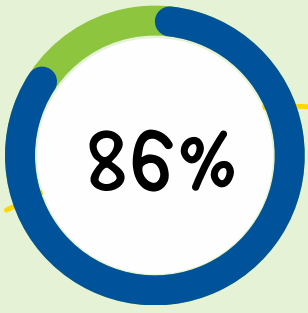
## How many parents and carers said LinkAble has helped the person they care for to:




**Grow their confidence**




**Learn a new skill**




**Feel less isolated**



## This is why LinkAble exists. These are not just statistics – they are lives, families, and futures.

**93%** of unpaid carers of disabled children have felt lonely or isolated, (Carers UK / Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness)

**33%** of people with a learning disability said they didn't feel part of their local community. (HFT, 2022)

**3 in 4** parents gave up work/career to care for their disabled child. (Disabled Children's Partnership, 2023)

**9X** Autistic people are 9 times more likely to die by suicide than the general population. (Priory, 2026)

**39%** deaths of people with a learning disability are avoidable, vs 9% in the general population. (LeDeR NHS, 2025)

**80%** of parents say their disabled child isn't getting support to fulfil their potential. (Disabled Children's Partnership, 2023)

# Play

**Engaging activities for children aged 5 - 12.**

**100% of parents and carers said that LinkAble's Play groups are vital for their family.**

## In the 2026 LinkAble survey, 78% of families with children aged 5 - 12 report being worried about either:

- **Feeling isolated as a family.**
- **Lack of services to meet their child's needs.**
- **The cost of caring for a disabled child.**

### What this means

Families often find these pressures reinforce each other, with little support to break the cycle.

This can affect parents' mental health, limit a child's development, and leave the whole family increasingly stretched with nowhere to turn.

### How we helped

- ✓ **Reduced exclusion via the welcoming, non-judgemental LinkAble community.**
- ✓ **Delivered specialist services for a wide range of complex needs.**
- ✓ **Provided planned short breaks, supporting families to stay in work.**

**83% of carers said being part of LinkAble helped them to feel less isolated.**

**100% said LinkAble playschemes are appropriate for their child's specific needs.**

**67% LinkAble's support helped them /someone in their family to stay in work.**

**"My son loves going to LinkAble, and it allows me to work more hours, which benefits our family."**
Katy, Mum

### Impacting John's whole family

John is 9 years old. He is autistic, has ADHD, and experiences high levels of anxiety. He can often become overwhelmed in busy environments.

Family life has had to adapt around John's complex needs, and trusting others to care for him has been understandably difficult.



**Before LinkAble, John had never been left anywhere independently.**

But everything changed after Mum Laura found LinkAble. John can now experience fun, and connection in a place where he won't feel overwhelmed.

He looks forward to coming and talks about LinkAble, often mentioning staff by name!

For the first time, Mum and Dad have regular time to rest. This is life-changing for their family. Caring for a child with additional needs can be constant and exhausting, but John's family now has precious time to reset.

**"If we didn't have LinkAble, I really don't know what we would do."**
Laura, Mum

# Next Steps

**Support on the journey to adulthood, for people aged 12 - 18.**

**78% of parents said LinkAble supports their mental health**
**(as carers of a young person with additional needs).**

## Adolescence: a new challenge

For young people with additional needs, the journey to adulthood can be overwhelming.

Routines shift, social expectations change, and pressure grows as exhausted parents guide their disabled children, often with little support from services unable to meet their needs.

**"LinkAble has been a lifeline for our daughter socially. As parents, it is invaluable to give us time to recharge. We're so grateful to be able to access these services".**
Helen, Mum

## Feedback from families:

**53% are worried about what happens post-16.**

**35% are concerned about their child's mental health.**

**"LinkAble really helps with my son's dysregulation, keeping him busy in a safe environment with lovely staff."**
Parent

## How we responded

- ✓ **Launched LivAbility to support young people into jobs or volunteering.**
- ✓ **Supported people to learn new skills and make friends, boosting self esteem.**
- ✓ **Invested in our training programme, ensuring staff have a wide range of skills.**

**60% of parents said attending LinkAble will support their child's post-16 transition.**

**82% said attending LinkAble improves the mental health of their young person.**

**82% say LinkAble are very knowledgeable in supporting youths with additional needs.**

## Supporting James and his brother

My son James is nearly 14 and has a rare genetic disorder called Phelan McDermid. His condition means that he is non-speaking, so he can get frustrated trying to express his wants and needs.

**James needs constant attention. You have to be constantly alert to risks, never really "off duty".**

This is why LinkAble plays such a big role in our lives. It gives us the time to balance what we need to do for our whole family.

My wife and I both work, and James has a younger brother, Toby, who also needs our support.

But, it's not just about being able to do other things whilst James is at LinkAble, it also makes such a difference after he's been there.



James thrives on attention and being active, if he's been to LinkAble he's always calmer in the evening. It makes family life easier.

For us, LinkAble is a lifeline. The staff are great, James is happy and we have a bit of space and time.

**"It feels like we can breathe when he's there".**

Ben, Dad to James and Toby.

# No Limits

**Skill-building and social activities for adults.**

**95% of LinkAble families said the adult they care for has increased their confidence through LinkAble.**

## 59% of LinkAble families said they are worried about what happens when they can no longer provide care.

Many of the adults we support have ageing parents, who have spent many years caring and now face the worry of who will care for their children in the future.

### How we supported them

- ✓ **Encouraged adults to try new things and achieve, boosting their self-worth.**
- ✓ **Guided adults to learn skills that will best support them in their daily lives.**
- ✓ **Provided a reliable, trustworthy, support system, taking some pressure off parents.**

**91% of parents said LinkAble improve the mental health of the person they care for.**

**75% said the person they care for has developed new skills through LinkAble.**

**68% said LinkAble support them to have better mental health as a carer.**

**"What would my daughter do without LinkAble? She would have nowhere to go where she can be safe and have a fun social time. She would be extremely isolated."**
Pamela, Mum

**"LinkAble is a place where everyone is seen as a valued person in society."**
Parent

### It all starts with confidence.

We talk a lot about building confidence at LinkAble. It's a fundamental skill that enables people to create the life they want to live. From trying new things to living more independently, confidence impacts every aspect of daily life.

### What trying new things did for Will.

Will is 39 and has been attending LinkAble for 10 years. Whilst he enjoys drawing, 1980s music, jazz and exploring new places, anxiety can often make it difficult for him to do the things he wants to do.

**"I know I need to do things outside of my comfort zone, but I worry I'll mess up or be no good at it."**

For Will, anxiety can feel like a constant barrier, which he describes as "like there is a shadow or pressure hanging over me", which prevents him from trying new things.

Despite these worries, Will has achieved things he once thought were beyond him. Through Linkable, he's tried canoeing, raft building and theme parks!

Although Will describes himself as someone who naturally enjoys his own company, being part of Linkable has helped him discover the value of friendship and community.

"Socialising is my favourite part of Linkable. I used to prefer being on my own, but now I find that if I'm part of a group it makes me want to do more."

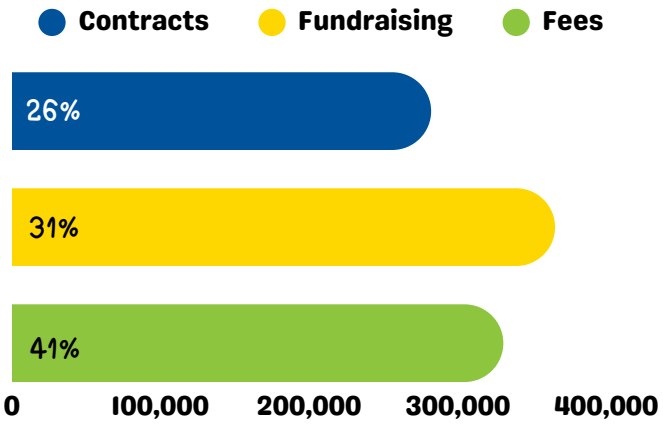


**"Coming to Linkable reminds me of what I can do, who I am, and that I can do more than I think."**

# It costs £2,671 per day to keep LinkAble running.

**Here's how we raise it, and where it goes.**

## Income split £

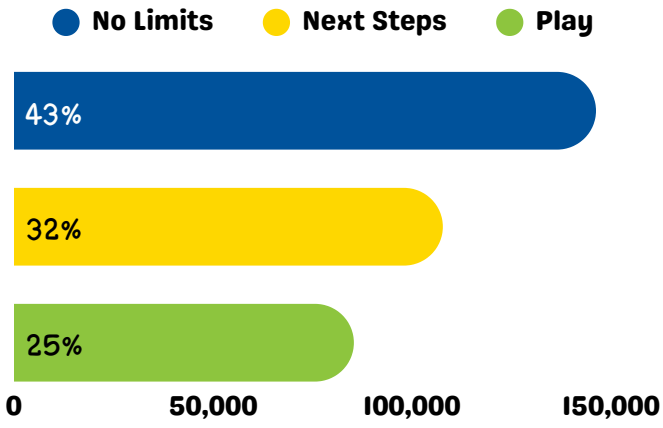



## Volunteers saved us £37,942!

## Income v charitable expenditure £




## Expenditure by programme £




## Term v holiday activity expenditure £



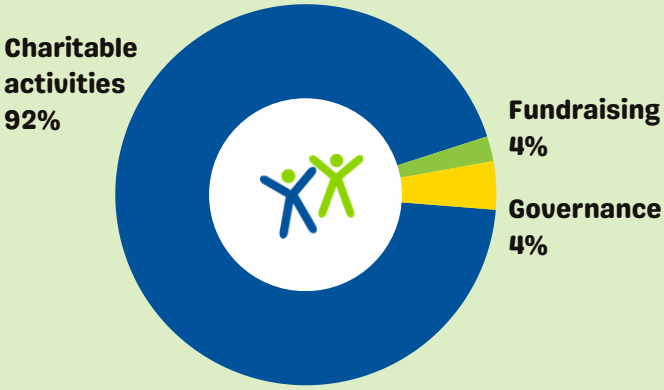

## Direct costs v governance




## Superstar funders

- The Fidelis Foundation - £50,000
- Postcode Lottery Trust - £50,000
- National Lottery Awards for All - £20,000
- Kaye Family Fund - £20,000
  (via Community Foundation for Surrey)
- Garfield Weston Foundation - £45,000*
- St Faiths Trust - £30,000* (*over 3 years)

## Cost ratio % £ spent on









**LinkAble is a godsend for our entire family.**

**Jenny, Mum**

# We need you.

**LinkAble needs to raise £25.35 for every hour of support we provide. We cannot do this without you.**

**Whether you give an hour, a week or a whole year, you will become part of a community who says no to isolation and lack of opportunity for people with additional needs.**

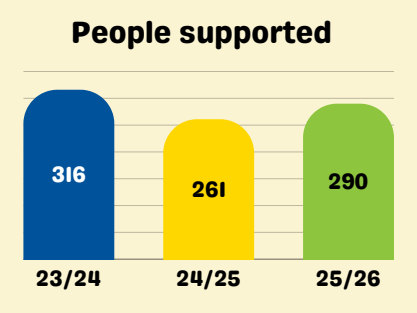
## Donate here

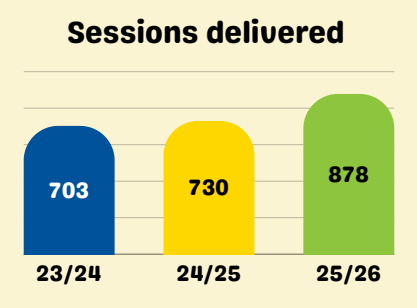
# End of year recap

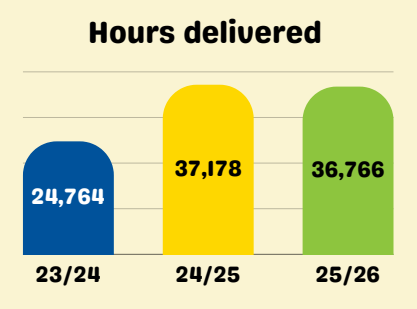
**And our plans for the future.**

## Year-on-year trends

Participant numbers dipped in 2024/25 after a significant three-year grant ended. Since then, we've worked to replenish lost funds through fundraising, income diversification and bringing new expertise into our team. These efforts have helped drive the rise in participants seen in 2025/26, and we're committed to building on this momentum as we move into 2027/28 and beyond.




In 2024/25, LinkAble launched a new After School Club (ASC), running four days a week. This service saw us supporting many of the same children multiple times a week, growing our hours delivered but not our participant numbers. A positive outcome has been the chance to build deeper relationships with the children we support at ASC, as we see them so regularly.

The quality of our services continues to grow, reflected through the rise in sessions delivered and consistently high delivery hours. Participants are choosing to spend more time with LinkAble.

## Expanding our services

The last year has seen so many developments for LinkAble. We expanded into a second venue, the Maybury Centre, giving adults a dedicated base and increasing the number of people we can support. This allowed us to launch a new dual service, with on-and-off-site activities running most days, giving participants greater choice and flexibility. New opportunities this year include:

- **Global Explorers** – learning about different countries through culture, food and music.
- **Cook and Craft** – developing practical life skills and creative hobbies.
- **Saturday Social** – tackling weekend isolation, building friendships and confidence.
- **Community Allotment** – a donated site, supported by RHS Wisley, where adults learn to grow, harvest and cook their own produce.

These activities do more than fill time. By supporting people to build relationships and life skills, they play a more active role in their communities and reduce reliance on statutory services. Over time, this builds a more inclusive society, where people with a learning disability and autistic people are valued and included as members of their community.

The move to Maybury has allowed us to refurbish The Link, now a dedicated centre for children and young people, with an upgraded sensory room, new quiet space and playground, all made possible by our local community's generosity.

A well-resourced, accessible environment like this helps children and young people build independence, communication and social skills, laying the foundations for future confidence and resilience.

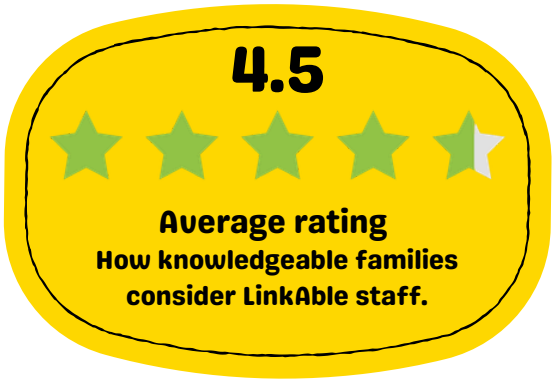
## Investing in Team Link

Of course, facilities alone don't change lives. Our trained, committed staff and volunteers make the real difference, and we support them every step of the way. Through the LinkAble Training Academy, staff receive:

- **Essential training** in safeguarding, first aid and manual handling.
- **Specialist training** in de-escalation techniques, Intensive Interaction, and Attention Autism, so support can be tailored to individual needs.

**In 25/26 82 people were upskilled through LinkAble's Training Academy.**

**This training enables staff to feel more confident supporting people with a range of complex needs.**




## Employment for young people

For many young people, LinkAble acts as a first step into a career in healthcare. At a time when over 1 million people aged 16 to 24 are not in employment, education or training, we are proud to offer jobs, training and a first step into working life for young people in Woking.

It's a meaningful way we can help address this national challenge, and demonstrates the wider impact LinkAble has on our local community.

**We provided employment for 13 16 - 21 year olds, many of them taking the first step in their career.**

## Demand and need

Demand for our services is growing, and at the same time, the needs of the people we support continue to grow in complexity.

We are seeing increasing numbers of children and young people attending our services with high support needs and behaviours that can be challenging. The majority now require 1-2-1 support and, in some cases, two members of staff, particularly when out in the community

**47% of parents and carers told us they are worried about behaviours becoming more difficult to manage as their young person gets older.**

As local authority eligibility thresholds continue to rise, those referred to our services in future will have increasingly complex needs. This means we have to consider staffing, training, specialist equipment and therapeutic support to ensure safe, effective and personalised care.

Yet the support we provide can prevent future crises and the need for more intensive support down the line.

By offering families regular short breaks, specialist activities and trusted support, we help prevent family breakdown. This strengthens family resilience and enables many families to care for their loved ones at home, long term.

## Challenges

It is a challenging time for small charities like LinkAble. Changes to charity governance rightly place greater emphasis on demonstrating outcomes and evidencing impact. Although this takes resource, we fully support it and continue to strengthen how we evidence our work.

Alongside this, charities face ongoing financial pressures, including statutory funding constraints, the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on donations, increasing competition for grant funding, and, at the same time, growing demand for services. Meeting these challenges requires resilience, innovation and careful planning

## Community impact

Despite these pressures, we are helping families continue caring for their loved ones at home, supporting parents and carers to remain in employment, and reducing pressure on health and social care services.

We are operating against the backdrop of Surrey's Local Government Reorganisation, which will see most of our services fall within the new West Surrey authority area. The full implications of these changes are not yet clear, particularly for long-standing contracts such as our Short Breaks for Disabled Children provision.

Planning for the future against this backdrop of uncertainty is challenging, but we continue to monitor developments closely and prepare for a range of possible outcomes.

Meanwhile, LinkAble continues to deepen its connections with the local community, strengthening Woking's network of support through successful partnerships:



✅ **Working with Everyone Active, Active Surrey, The Fidelis Foundation, Wheels for All, Active Surrey, Wheels for All and Seymours**, to run the Inclusive Games. Attracting over 130 people for a day of accessible sports.

✅ **Partnerships with Freemantles and Pond Meadow SEN Schools** to provide an After School Club with 2,717 hours of support delivered.

✅ **Creation of a long-term partnership with RHS Wisley and Krinkels UK** to create an accessible allotment, supporting growing, wellbeing and community connection.

## The Future

Looking ahead, we have been planning strategically for a sustainable future. A key part of this is broadening the range of services we provide and developing new income streams.

Underpinning service delivery, we strengthened our central office function by creating a new Head of Operations role focused on delivering our Digital Transformation Programme.

During the year, we successfully embedded a new booking system and fundraising database, and we are now planning for the implementation of a new CRM system to further improve efficiency, reporting and communication.

**An exciting development for our children's services is the exploration of Alternative Provision opportunities for children who are not attending school for a variety of reasons.**

**The additional space at The Link provides an excellent environment in which to develop these services, with the ultimate aim of transitioning children back into education.**

**We are developing a Post-16 Transition Service to support young people in:**

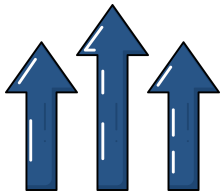
- **Building independence**
- **Developing life skills**
- **Moving towards employment, volunteering or other meaningful opportunities.**

**This is about giving people greater choice and control over their lives, enabling them to be active members of their communities and to create the life they want to live.**

This investment reflects our belief that people with additional needs should have the same opportunities as anyone else to contribute to their communities, develop relationships, achieve personal goals and lead fulfilling lives.

By supporting successful transitions into adulthood, we can help create long-term outcomes that benefit individuals, families and communities alike.

These developments will also help diversify our income streams, ensuring the future of LinkAble.



**At the heart of everything we do is a simple but powerful purpose: Supporting people with a learning disability, autistic people, and their families to live well and love life.**



Many of the people who attend LinkAble have families who provide significant levels of care every day. While caring can be immensely rewarding, it can also bring challenges, pressures and responsibilities that affect the wellbeing of the whole family.

Through our short breaks, after-school clubs, holiday schemes and activity programmes, we provide families with relationships built on trust practical support, and vital opportunities to recharge. No family should have to face it alone.






**LinkAble exists to ensure that nobody is excluded. We are driven by the belief that people with additional needs deserve opportunities to participate, belong and thrive in their communities. We feel confident this has been the experience for our attendees this year.**

# Stay in touch

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www.linkable.org.uk