

Report and Accounts

for the year ended 31 March 2025

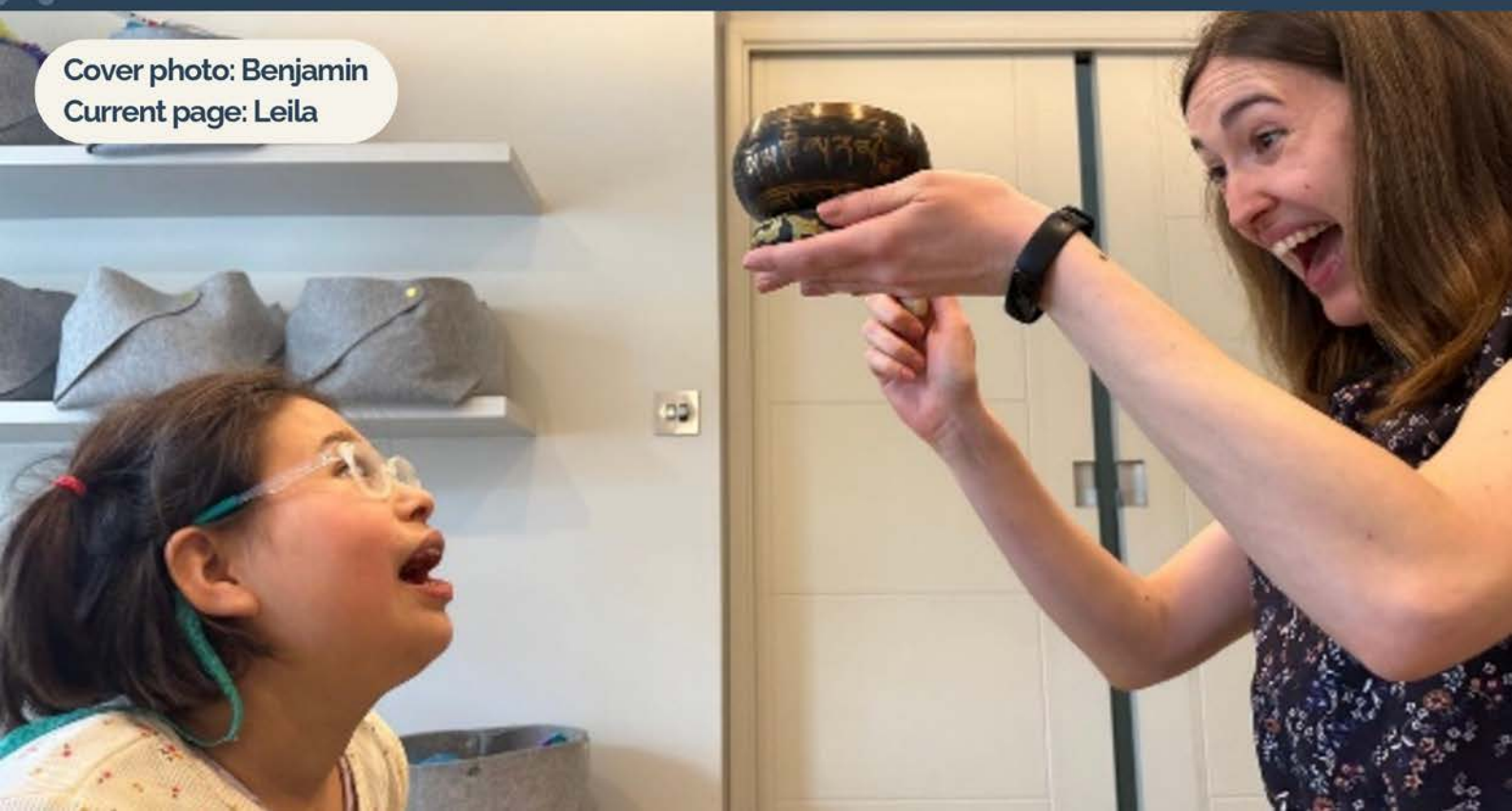


**Music is not just a pastime,
*it's a lifeline.***

Contents

Chair's Introduction.....	3
About Amber.....	4
Young Musicians' Stories.....	7
Initiatives and Collaborations.....	12
Fundraising, Events, and Other News.....	14
Objectives and Achievements for the Year.....	18
Plans for the Future.....	19
Thank You.....	20
Summary of Financial Activities.....	21
Structure, Governance and Management.....	22
Financial Statements.....	26
Independent Examiner's Report.....	27
Statement of Financial Activities.....	28
Balance Sheet.....	29
Notes to Financial Statements.....	31
Legal and Administrative Information.....	40

Cover photo: Benjamin
Current page: Leila



Chair's Introduction



The year 2024–2025 represented an exciting period of change and development for The Amber Trust.

Sophie Amstell, our new CEO, who joined us in September from her position of Deputy Hub Lead at Wiltshire Music Connect, brought a fresh vibrancy and energy to Amber as we approach our 30th year as a registered charity. Her networks within the statutory arts sector (particularly Music Hubs and Services) proved invaluable as we sought a higher level of partnership working with other organisations.

Our greatest challenge over the past five years has been the increase in demand of more than 50% across all of our programmes, and the number of families applying for support during 2024–2025 was particularly high. This growth, while a welcome signal of a greater level of awareness of music's potential to enhance the lives of blind and partially sighted children, meant that, for the first time in Amber's history, we had to set up a waiting list for new applicants. Clearly, no amount of fundraising could ever address the musical needs of all 29,000 blind and partially sighted children in the UK¹, so, led by Sophie, we are seeking to work closely with Music Services to ensure they can meet their diversity obligations set out in the new National Plan for Music Education.

Financially, we were very fortunate to receive a generous transfer of funds from the charity Webster & Davidson Mortification for the Blind, which has now been wound up, and which strengthens our position going forward, though a phasing issue meant that this was received just after our year-end. The detail is explained in our accounts.

Looking ahead, we continue to support new research initiatives, always seeking to improve the services, strategies and resources that we offer. These include a doctoral study by Claire Bowes, who is herself a blind musician, into memorisation strategies for pianists learning by ear or through Braille, and the ongoing development of the 'Mugo' – a new device for converting movement into sound – with trials taking place across the UK.

Professor Adam Ockelford, *Chair of Trustees*

About Amber

The Amber Trust was founded in 1995 with the aim of providing blind and partially sighted children, including those with additional disabilities, the best possible chance to meet their musical needs and aspirations.

There are 29,000 vision-impaired children and young people in the UK, and it is our aim to enhance the lives of as many of these children as possible through high-quality music provision, both directly (through our Awards and Services) and indirectly (through training and resources for teachers).

Why does Amber exist?

Children with a vision impairment, including those with additional disabilities, are less likely than their sighted peers to receive specialist music education. This is often due to unintended discrimination brought about through people's misunderstanding of the implications of being blind or partially sighted.

Moreover, as many blind children in the UK live in relative poverty, they can suffer a double disadvantage, since their families cannot afford to give them the musical experiences that can make such a difference to their lives.

Children with a vision impairment, including those with additional disabilities, are less likely than their sighted peers to receive specialist music education. This is often due to unintended discrimination brought about through people's misunderstanding of the implications of being blind or partially sighted.

Moreover, as many blind children in the UK live in relative poverty, they can suffer a double disadvantage, since their families cannot afford to give them the musical experiences that can make such a difference to their lives.



For many blind and partially sighted children, learning to play an instrument or to sing can add immeasurably to their lives.

With the right encouragement, some can develop their talents to remarkable ends, break down barriers and fulfil their potential as individual musicians. For others, music can provide a medium for enhancing communication, fostering friendships and supporting emotional regulation.

What we do

The Amber Trust offers Music Awards and Services that provide direct support to blind and partially sighted children. These include:

- instrumental and singing lessons
- the purchase of musical instruments or items of specialist musical technology
- travel and accommodation to access opportunities for making music
- family music-making sessions delivered at home (for under 5s and those with additional disabilities)
- the provision of resources to aid music making
- online music-making sessions
- workshops for schools

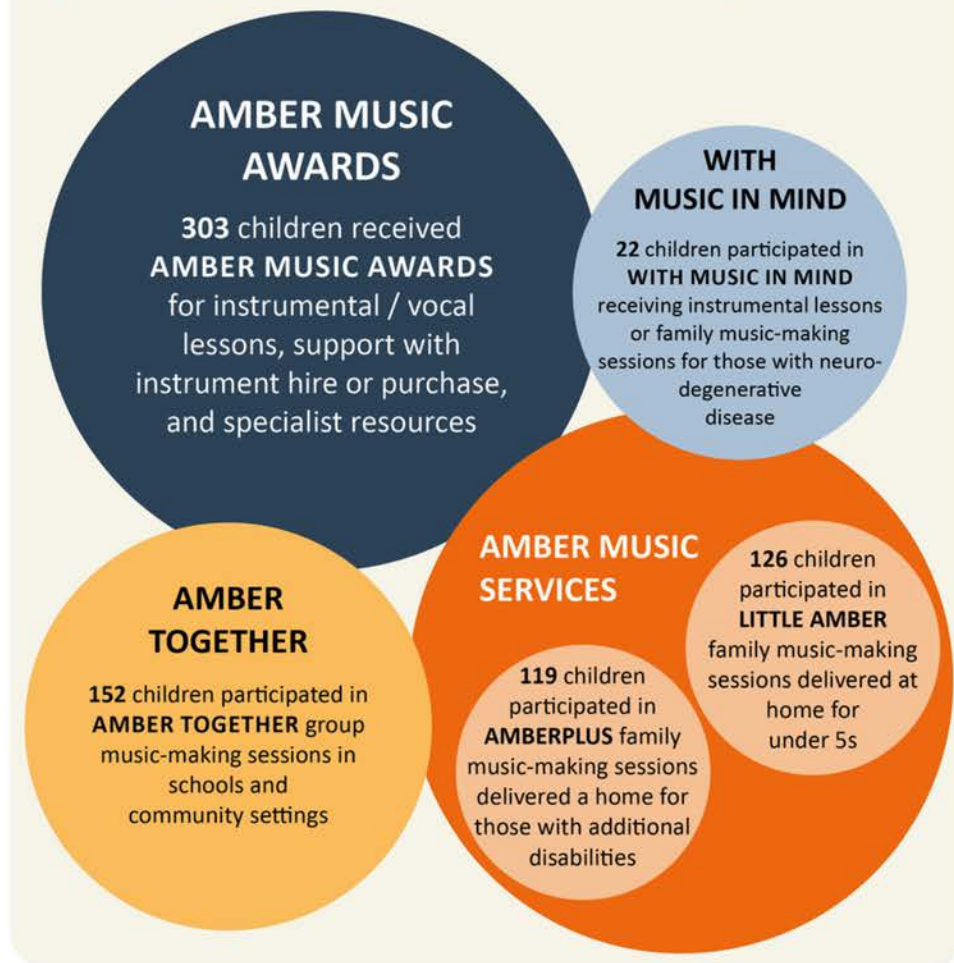
In addition, our indirect services include training for music teachers and practitioners, online resources (that are available free of charge worldwide), and advice and guidance for other music education providers.



In 2024/25 we supported 722 blind and partially sighted children across the UK

The Year in Numbers

The Amber Trust worked directly with 722 blind and partially sighted children across the UK during 2024-2025



74.2% of Amber beneficiaries have an additional disability as well as being blind or partially sighted

192 teachers across the UK delivered lessons to children in receipt of an Amber Music Award

75 practitioners were contracted by Amber to deliver music sessions through our Little Amber, AmberPlus and With Music in Mind services.

51% of Amber's beneficiaries identify as female, and 49% identify as male.

By the end of the year, we had placed 111 children on waiting lists for our Awards and Services.

Amber's beneficiaries span all four nations in the UK; 91% are based in England and the remaining 9% are spread across Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

The piano is the most popular instrument amongst the beneficiaries of Amber's Music Awards. This is closely followed by singing. Other instruments played include drums trombone, violin, ukulele, harp, guitar and saxophone.

Young Musicians' Stories

Marco's story

6-year-old Marco loves music. He was born with bilateral retinoblastoma, which was diagnosed when he was six weeks old. Marco underwent several chemotherapy treatments for the first two years of his life, which saved his eyes and restored some of his vision. He is now severely vision-impaired.



Marco is an Amber Music Award recipient, receiving funds for drumming lessons with his teacher, Alberto.

I love drumming because I like music, concerts and funky music. I like Alberto because he is my friend.
MARCO

Musical engagement can not only help with physical development, but it can also improve a sense of well-being and enjoyment. 'Making music is funny!' says Marco. 'I enjoy using different percussion all the time with Alberto.'

Marco's mother, Anna, reports that Marco's lessons are so engaging that 'sometimes the whole family joins in!'

Reflecting on his time working with Marco, Alberto says, 'Teaching Marco for the last two years has been a pleasure – his family are very welcoming. Marco is gifted musically and has an excellent sense of rhythm. He enjoys playing musical games with percussion instruments – he always wants to be the leader!'

It's wonderful to hear of the musical bond Marco shares with Alberto, and the young talent that is being nurtured.

Young Musicians' Stories

Sofia's story

17-year-old Sofia receives an Amber Music Award for braille music lessons, which support her love for song composition.



'I have a retinal dystrophy and I am registered as severely sight-impaired,' says Sofia. 'I have been song-writing since I was nine years old and I have always had a love for music and performing.'

'I started learning the piano at seven, but reading sheet music was very difficult, and I found exams stressful with the pressure of sight reading. Music exams were taking the enjoyment of music away from me. I continued learning piano by ear, which is my most useful tool.'

Sofia experienced some barriers related to her vision impairment when starting her music GCSE. 'I didn't feel I had the same access to resources and time to work through them as my peers. All the lessons were tailored to sighted people annotating scores.'

'I was encouraged to seek support in the blind community. This is how I met braille music teacher Kate Risdon and The Amber Trust.'

Sofia is one of 15 young musicians who currently receive an Amber Music Award for braille music lessons.

***Music and songs
are my way to
express myself.***

SOFIA

'Without Kate and Amber, I wouldn't be in the position I find myself in today.' Sofia is proud to have reached Grade 8 in her Music GCSE exam.

'I am currently training in musical theatre at The Brit School,' says Sofia. 'Braille music, and braille as a whole, has been so important in supporting my compositions and my current studies.'

Young Musicians' Stories

Little Amber: Cody's story

3-year-old Cody absolutely loves music and has been a Little Amber recipient since 2022. He has Familial Exudative Vitreoretinopathy, is completely blind and has developmental delay.

His mother, Ana, observes that 'Cody really enjoys his music lessons with practitioner Steve Harper. He loves listening to the different instruments and enjoys feeling the vibration with his hands and feet.



I love to see the smile on his face during his sessions.
CODY'S MUM, ANA

'Cody doesn't usually like being touched but he will happily sit on Steve's lap while Steve shows him different instruments,' Ana continues. 'We are so grateful to The Amber Trust for providing this opportunity for Cody. It makes a big difference to his development, and I love to see the smile on his face during his sessions. Steve is amazing with Cody.'

Little Amber caters for babies and children aged 0-5, including those with additional disabilities. Families receive percussion instruments, activity cards, and home visits from a music practitioner. Many children will graduate from Little Amber to an Amber Music Award or our AmberPlus scheme.

'I started visiting Cody when he was just eight months old,' says Steve. 'He was very unsure about people he didn't know when we first met, so we started slowly. It became clear very early on just how much he was inspired by sound, song, music and vibration.

'Over the years he has slowly "let me in" to his world. He hums tuneful patterns, loves finding phrases on the tuned bells, and can't restrain himself from exploring the joys of the floor drums – whether it is playing them, feeling them with his feet or lying down on them to get the full experience. It is always a pleasure to make music with Cody!'

Young Musicians' Stories

AmberPlus: Leon's story

Leon, 14, is blind, has stage 4 cerebral palsy and global developmental delay. He always looks forward to his AmberPlus sessions with music practitioner Steve Harper.

'I was searching for additional activities for Leon outside of school,' says Aga, Leon's mother. 'Given his complex disabilities, there is nothing in our local area that suits his needs. We felt he was left out completely. I reached out to Guide Dogs and they directed us towards The Amber Trust.'

Leon joined our AmberPlus scheme for children and young people aged 5–18, including those with additional disabilities. Children receive music sessions at home, which include the whole family as much as possible to encourage musical engagement outside of home visits.



'Steve comes to our house to play music on so many different instruments,' continues Aga. 'These lessons give Leon a lot of excitement, as well as teaching him new skills. Leon learnt how to play on bells and can repeat a sequence of sounds following Steve's instructions. He is exploring musical instruments with the use of his hands and feet and is less tactile-defensive. Steve has also managed to teach him a few words, which is amazing!'

Steve describes Leon as 'bright, cheerful and ready for action' during their sessions. 'He will choose the activities we work on, but at some point during each visit we will always tap rhythms on the floor, drum together (Leon with his feet), vocalise, and choose, play and feel a range of percussion and melodic instruments.'

'Leon's favourite activity is listening to and feeling the saxophone. There are lots of whoops of joy and excitement when I visit Leon – long may it continue.'

Initiatives and Collaborations

The Mugo - A new musical instrument

Amber was proud to work in partnership this year with University of Roehampton, Technology in Music Education (TiME), Sounds of Intent, and digital instrument maker Gawain Hughes in creating the 'Mugo', a new musical instrument that converts movement into sound.



The Mugo was originally designed for young people with Batten Disease, following a study commissioned by The Amber Trust and undertaken by the University of Roehampton (published in 2019). Batten Disease leads to sight and speech loss, and a decline in motor skills, but the Mugo enables children to continue making music, even when the more complicated movements needed to play conventional instruments are lost.

The team has now identified a much wider applicability beyond the Batten Disease community. The Mugo has the potential to benefit the thousands of children in the UK and beyond who have severe physical disabilities.

While the Mugo is currently in prototype form, the next steps for the project team are to refine it further and create supporting educational resources, before exploring the manufacturing potential.

Music Hub Partnerships

Amber's long-term goal is to work more closely with Music Hubs in England and so, towards the end of the year, we recruited three Music Services / Hubs to join a pilot project to explore the potential of partnership working. Our three new partners are Lancashire Music Hub, Merton Music Foundation, and Southampton & Isle of Wight Music.

Music For Youth

In March, a number of Amber beneficiaries performed at 'Together for Music 2025', a large-scale inclusive music festival run by Music for Youth. The event was hosted at B:Music's Symphony Hall in Birmingham, giving our young people a fantastic platform to showcase their talents on a national stage.

Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) Music Teacher Directory

Amber was commissioned by the Music Team at RNIB to create a new Music Teacher Directory, with funding from Arts Council England.

The directory is a straightforward and accessible tool designed to help families find suitable music teachers who understand the unique needs of pupils with vision impairments. The directory features music teachers proficient in a wide range of instruments. This includes those with expertise in teaching braille music and providing braille transcription services. The Music Teacher Directory was published on our website just after the financial year end.



The Amber Trust

Music Teacher Directory

Royal Society for Blind Children (RSBC) Workshops



We partnered with The RSBC on Early Years workshops at their Life Without Limits Centre in London in August and October of this year. Sessions were led by Amber practitioner, Caterina Dellabona. Parents and children took part in singing, movement and call-and-response songs, and enjoyed some inclusive games. Further sessions are planned, and we will work with the RSBC to ensure activity takes place in other parts of the country next year.

Statisticians for Society

We have continued to work with volunteer statistician Folasade Ariyibi, who gives her time through the Royal Statistical Society's Statisticians for Society scheme. Fola has helped us to organise and maximise our data for analysis so that we can improve our monitoring and evaluation processes.

Fundraising, Events, and Other News

A year of fundraising with One Step Ahead

Talia Monnickendam's music school, 'One Step Ahead', raised a phenomenal £1,144.24 in aid of The Amber Trust during the academic year. The music school put on several concerts at the end of each term, with HSBC doubling every donation through their matched funding scheme.

'It has been a pleasure to be able to support such an important charity,' says Talia. 'We believe music should be accessible to everyone, and that is something Amber believes in too.'

We are sincerely grateful to Talia and the pupils of One Step Ahead.



A concert and guitar auction in memory of Woody Mann

In March, Stevington Guitar Concerts held a very special concert in aid of Amber. The event was in memory of Woody Mann, an American guitarist, teacher, and film-maker. For this event, co-ordinator John Duffield not only arranged for musicians to perform, but also organised an auction of a unique guitar and the sale of bespoke artwork created especially for the event.

The event raised an incredible £1,900 - equivalent to 76 instrumental lessons for a blind or vision-impaired young person on our Amber Music Awards.

John told us: 'Woody Mann regularly performed and taught in Europe. He played for Stevington Guitar Concerts on several occasions, where he made many friends. Not only was Woody a wonderful player, he also went out of his way to help musicians wherever they were on their musical journey.'

'It was a pleasure raising funds for The Amber Trust. The amount was significantly increased due to all of the musicians, who knew Woody, performing for expenses only, the donation of the bespoke guitar made by Simon Hewlett and the artwork created for the event by Artist Jo Dennis. The work you do at The Amber Trust is wonderful and inspiring. You were the perfect charity to benefit from our concert.'

Team Amber at the Big Half

Georgiana Roe, Rob Watkins and Jan Inge Solberg undertook 'The Big Half' in September, running in aid of Amber. Together they raised an impressive £1,881 – the equivalent of 75 music lessons!

'It was lovely to run on behalf of The Amber Trust,' said Rob. 'I hope the money raised helps with the amazing work you're doing.'

Jan said he was 'truly grateful for the opportunity,' reflecting that the atmosphere of the event was 'unbeatable.'

Georgiana, a regular Amber fundraiser, said that 'raising money for such an amazing charity was very special.'



Rob



Jan



Georgiana

Caroline's First Marathon

Caroline Fisher raised an amazing £950 by running the 2024 TCS London Marathon. 'I've been running for 8 years,' says Caroline. 'I'm a keen musician and work for the Hospital Eye Service, so supporting Amber seemed like the perfect fit. Turning onto The Mall was an amazing and emotional experience – I couldn't believe I'd done it!'

Congratulations Caroline!



Caroline

Staff Changes

After four years at Amber, latterly as CEO, Angela Voyajolu left to pursue a career in academia. She was replaced by Sophie Amstell in September 2024.

Hannah ElMohankr, Fundraising Assistant, left Amber at the end of her fixed-term contract in December 2024.

Amber now has a core team of six employees:

- Sophie Amstell, CEO (F/T)
- Elissa Turay, Music Awards Manager (P/T)
- Patrick Shepherd, Music Services Manager (P/T)
- Dominic Millard, Music Administrator (F/T)
- Ying Lin, Finance Officer (P/T)
- Hannah Cykowski, Communications and Events Officer (P/T)

During the course of year, Amber has also benefitted from freelance support from the following individuals:

- Mikaela West, Communications Assistant
- Andrew Duhig, Website Development
- Nitzan Marinov, Salesforce Consultant

75 different music practitioners were contracted to deliver music sessions for Little Amber, AmberPlus, With Music in Mind and school workshops.

A further 192 teachers across the UK delivered individual music lessons to Amber's beneficiaries.

Amber's 2024 Annual Concert

We had a fantastic afternoon at Amber's 2024 Annual Concert on the 19th May. There was a diverse repertoire of music, from Dvořák, Sinatra and Queen. Our youngest performer, six-year-old Evan Tsang, performed Bach's 'Prelude in C', and rising star Lucy delighted the audience with a performance of Debussy's 'Arabesque No. 1'.

It was Steele's first performance at Amber's Annual Concert. Steele, 18, performed her own song, Squeeze My Hand, a personal and heartfelt piece that moved the audience to complete silence.

11-year-old Benjamin performed two Grade 7 pieces: one of Mendelssohn's Songs Without Words and Norton's New Kid. Children's newspaper First News invited Benjamin to write about the concert, where he described the event as 'quite the experience,' and 'an enjoyable afternoon.'

'What I like about piano playing is that it is fun and satisfying when I finally learn a tricky bit,' wrote Benjamin. 'Those two pieces were really nice to learn.'

Thank you to our performers, to St Paul's School, and to our volunteers for making the day so special.



Benjamin

Objectives and Achievements for the Year

- To maintain an annual income of at least £400,000 to provide sufficient funds for Amber's charitable activities. **Amber's total income was £315,673. A phasing issue meant that £200,000 in income from Webster and Davidson Mortification for the Blind was received just after the year-end.**
- To continue to gradually increase the reach of Music Awards and Music Services, where possible, to meet the needs of at least 750 blind and partially sighted children and families throughout the UK. **We reached 722 children through our Music Awards and Music Services in 2024/2025 compared to 708 children in 2023/2024.**
- To set up a Youth Board of young people who benefit from the awards and services that Amber offers, with Trustee representation, to ensure that the voices of those we serve are at the heart of what we do. **Six Amber beneficiaries, aged between 11 and 18 years, have been recruited to form our first Youth Board.**
- To take the midi-based instrument for children and young people with Batten disease and other conditions (now named the Mugo) that limit movement to the next stage of development, trialling prototypes with different potential users across the country, and to develop a partnership with a manufacturer to see the device ultimately put into production. **The Mugo has been trialled with multiple users, and a steering group has been formed to drive the project forward. A funding application to UKRI is underway to progress the manufacture and commercialisation of the instrument.**
- To ensure that all the children and young people whom Amber supports, who wish to, are entered for a Trinity Award. **Staff have undertaken training on the Trinity Award and practitioners and teachers are encouraged to enter children where appropriate.**
- To work with the newly constituted Music Hubs in England to ensure they are aware of the needs of vision-impaired children and young people in their region and of the services that Amber provides, and to support and encourage them to meet the needs of blind and partially sighted pupils and students themselves. **We have launched a pilot partnership with three of the new Music Hubs: Lancashire Music Hub, Merton Music Foundation, and Southampton & Isle of Wight Music.**

Plans for the future

To maintain an annual income of at least £400,000 to provide sufficient funds for Amber's charitable activities.

To improve our marketing and communications through segmentation of our audiences.

To broaden our sources of income to include Corporate Sponsorship, and increased Individual Donations.

To secure funding for the manufacture and commercialisation of The Mugo.

To move the 111 children currently on our Amber's waiting lists onto Music Awards and Services where possible.

To enter a minimum of 30 children for a Trinity Award during the course of the year.

To develop the new Amber Youth Board further to ensure that the voices of those we serve are at the heart of what we do.

To develop the working relationship with our first three Music Hub partners and secure a further five partners by the end of the year.

Thank You

Volunteers contribute to Amber's activities in many ways and their support has again been invaluable to us this year. We are grateful to Lady Julia Walport for sitting on our Music Awards Committee, to Folasade Ariyibi for her continued support with statistical analysis, and to all the volunteers who made our Annual Concert possible.

The Amber Trust is incredibly grateful for the generous support provided by trusts and foundations, community organisations, corporate donors, individuals, and regular donors.

We wholeheartedly thank all those who have given so generously, including those who supported Amber by taking part in a challenge, those who gave their time and energy to organise events in aid of Amber, and those who donated in memory of a loved one.

We thank the following community organisations for supporting our work this year: Age No Concern, All Saints Festival Choir, Chelmsford Guitar Orchestra, St Columba Church, Fareham, Stevington Guitar Concerts, Wedmore Festival

Every donation makes a difference and helps us empower blind and partially sighted children across the UK to engage in and pursue their love of music. On behalf of us all at The Amber Trust, thank you.

Grants from Trusts and Foundations are crucial for Amber to reach as many blind and partially sighted children as possible. For their vital support this year, we thank:

- Arts Council England
- Blue Skies Trust
- The Blyth Watson Charitable Trust
- The Charles Hayward Foundation
- CMS Global Impact Fund
- The Cosman Keller Art and Music Trust
- The DMF Trust
- The Douglas and Elaine Biart Charitable Trust
- The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust
- The GC Gibson Charitable Trust
- The Hedley Foundation
- The John Horseman Charitable Trust
- Kathleen Beryl Sleigh Charitable Trust
- The Linbury Trust
- The Mackintosh Foundation
- MariaMarina Foundation
- Masonic Charitable Foundation
- Middle Way Trust
- The Patricia Routledge Foundation
- The RN and G Maini Charitable Trust
- Schroder Charity Trust

We also thank those who have given generously but prefer no public acknowledgement.

Summary of Financial Activities

Charitable Activities

During the year to 31 March 2025, the charity raised funds of £305,730 including funds raised for specific projects of £161,244 which have been classified as restricted funds. The charity also received investment income of £9,942. The directors spent £470,886 on charitable activities and raising funds (with £214,978 pledged but not yet paid at the year-end) and £7,528 on the governance of the charity. The planned deficit aimed to reduce reserves that exceeded our policy limits, which was preventing the charity from applying to some major funders. The year-end balance was lower than anticipated due to a phasing issue relating to funds received from Webster & Davidson Mortification for the Blind. These funds of £200,000 were received after the year end, on 20 June 2025.

Investment performance

During the year, the charity sold investments to secure £123,780 for the daily operational costs. Therefore, the investments held by the charity on 31 March 2025 decreased in value by £105,178 compared to the start of the year, £318,408. The market value of investments at the year-end of £213,230 represents an increase in value of £64,016 when compared to the book cost of £149,214. At 31 March 2025 the charity also held cash with the charity's bankers and stockbrokers of £70,024 with sales proceeds and investment income due to be received shortly after the year-end of £3,414.

Internal and external factors

In common with many charities, The Amber Trust dealt with factors related to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis of 2024, and the growing number of children with SEND. There are no other significant internal or external factors currently affecting the charity.

Investment and Reserves Policy

The charity is reliant on income from Charitable Trusts, individual donors, and its own fundraising activities. Since this is difficult to predict, month by month, the policy of the trustees is to maintain a general reserve sufficient to cover six months' operational costs. In addition, the Charity holds monies committed at any one time to cover the awards made to beneficiaries, which can be between 1 and 12 months in the future. The directors have no plans to accumulate reserves beyond those it currently holds. At 31 March 2025, the charity had reserves of £71,691 with £6,993 being held in restricted funds, to be used for specific projects (see note 11 of the Financial Statements). The remaining funds are available for distribution and expenses necessarily incurred in furtherance of the charity's objectives.

Structure, Governance and Management

Principal funding sources

The charity's funds are derived from its fundraising activities and investment income.

Governing Instrument

The Amber Trust was established by a Trust Deed dated 9 June 1994 and was incorporated as a private limited company registered with Companies House on 25 October 1995. The Trust's Memorandum and Articles of Association were amended by special resolution on 26 October 2022 to provide for the appointment of a vice chair and to bring the Trust's governing documents in line with current company and charity law and good practice.

Recruitment and Appointment of New Directors

The power to appoint new directors of the charitable company is vested in the directors who are its trustees for the purpose of charity law. Under the requirements of the Articles of Association, one third of the directors are required to retire from office each year and are eligible for re-appointment. Simon Vincent, Adam Ockelford, and Victoria Oruwari retired this year by rotation. Simon Vincent, Adam Ockelford and Victoria Oruwari, being eligible, stood for re-election and were re-appointed. In looking for new directors, the directors bear in mind the experience and qualifications of the existing directors and possible candidates. The successful candidates are appointed by a meeting of the existing directors.

Induction and Training of New Directors

The directors share responsibility for the induction and training of all new directors of the charity. New directors are provided with copies of:

- The Articles of Association
- The latest accounts of the charity
- The Trustees Handbook

New directors are asked to read and familiarise themselves with Charity Commission guidance notes CC3 – 'The Essential Trustee'. In addition, directors are encouraged to read Charity Commission and other newsletters and to attend courses designed to keep them abreast of their duties and responsibilities.

Organisational Structure

The directors of the charitable company are the same as its company law members. The directors manage the charity generally and together with the Chief Executive Officer, ensure that the charity delivers its aims and objectives and take responsibility for the charity's performance and strategy. Day to day activities are the responsibility of the Chief Executive who reports to the trustees. Sophie Amstell is Chief Executive Officer and Adam Ockelford is Chair.

Wider Network

The charity is not part of a wider network.

Public Benefit Statement

The directors consider that the charity's activities, as set out in its Objectives and Achievements for the Year are for the public benefit. The directors confirm that they have complied with their duty under s17(5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the guidance published by the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

Related parties

The charity works closely with the Research Centre for Teaching, Learning and Human Development at the University of Roehampton to fund specific projects. Adam Ockelford, a director of The Amber Trust is Professor of Music in the School of Education. Professor Ockelford received no personal benefit from the grants. The charity has no subsidiaries.

Risk Management

The directors have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place. Risks are considered in the context of a complex, evolving external environment and an increasingly challenging fundraising landscape.

In the last year, we have seen the rise of artificial intelligence, increased regulations around topics such as bribery and fraud, and internal and external financial challenges affect both small and large charities.





Approach to Risk Management

Our risk register considers operational, financial, compliance, strategic and reputational risks. The directors have reviewed the risks to which the charity is exposed and consider that they have established sufficient systems and procedures to mitigate those risks.

Both Risk and Safeguarding are agenda items at each directors' meeting. In 2025, we developed and reviewed our Digital Safeguarding Policy to respond to emerging risks and updated regulations in this space. We have made risk-based decisions to ensure we can continue to support our existing beneficiaries in a challenging fundraising market. During the year, a risk professional joined the Board of Trustees to support a greater focus on risk and our ambition/plans to do more risk-based work in 2025-26.

Principal Risks

The principal risks and related controls during the year were:

	Rating	Mitigation		Further Controls
1. Risk of financial deficit caused by inability to fundraise to meet growing demand		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waiting lists were established to manage demand • A new fundraising was developed which identified broader income streams including corporate income, increased individual donations and community fundraising 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular monitoring of waiting lists to anticipate demand more effectively
2. Risk of harm to our vulnerable beneficiaries if safeguarding practices are not sufficient. Mitigation:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Safeguarding review meetings. • Updated criminal record check processes. • Regular training for staff, trustees and teachers / practitioners. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy review • Teacher/ practitioner consultation

This year ahead

In 2025, we aim to develop our corporate governance and risk management maturity. We plan to build out our existing risk register to consider risks that require operational management versus those that require strategic direction and ensure those risks are owned by the appropriate risk owner. We will report on progress of the mitigation of our top risks at each Board meeting as part of the standing agenda, enabling productive risk conversations and ensuring risk gets the focus it needs at all levels.

Amber's President

In 2024 Amber's President, Her Majesty the Queen (formerly HRH the Duchess of Cornwall), continued to be a great support to Amber. Her involvement has been invaluable in ensuring that Amber's important work with blind and partially sighted children maintains a high profile.

Directors

The following directors held office during the year:

Adam Ockelford, (Chair), Chun Wai Shum (Vice-Chair), Angelica Bomford, Fiona Costa, Veronica Franklin-Gould, Victoria Oruwari, Simon Vincent, Kym Smith and Charles Aktins.

Professor Ockelford and Simon Vincent are trustees of the charity Sounds of Intent, which promotes the music education of young people with a focus on neurodiversity. Professor Ockelford is a trustee of Live Music Now, a UK-wide charity offering music for social benefit, and a trustee of SEMPRE, an organisation that encourages music education and music psychology research.

The directors who held office at the end of the financial period have no beneficial interest in the Company. All new directors are elected on the collective agreement of the present directors.

Financial Statements

Independent Examiner

The accountants, Burgess Hodgson Limited, have indicated their willingness to continue in office and a resolution concerning their appointment will be proposed in due course at the appropriate juncture.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small entities.

Statement of Directors' Responsibilities in Respect of the Accounts

Company law requires the directors to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the surplus or deficit of the company for that period. In preparing those accounts the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the accounts on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

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

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
AND SIGNED ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD



Professor Adam Ockelford
Chair



Fiona Costa
Director and Trustee

23 September 2025

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of The Amber Trust

I report to the charity Trustees on my examination of the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025, which comprise the statement of financial activities, statement of financial position and the related notes.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees (and also its directors for the purposes of company law), you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent Examiner's statement

The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe:

- a) accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; or
- b) the accounts do not accord with these records; or
- c) the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- d) the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities (FRS102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Colin Reid FCA
Independent Examiner



**Burgess Hodgson Limited, Camburgh House, 27 New Dover Road, Canterbury,
Kent, CT1 3DN.**

The Amber Trust - Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2025 including income and expenditure accounts

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Incoming resources:					
Donations	3	122,010	161,244	283,254	255,037
Income from fundraising events	3	22,476	-	22,476	48,651
Investments		9,942	-	9,942	10,640
Total incoming resources		154,429	161,244	315,673	314,328
Resources expended:					
Charitable activities	4a)	155,368	220,920	376,288	431,438
Raising funds	4a)	94,598	-	94,598	101,034
Governance costs	4b)	7,528	-	7,528	7,977
Total resources expended		257,494	220,920	478,414	540,449
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year		(103,065)	(59,676)	(162,741)	(226,121)
Other recognised gains/(losses)					
Gains/(losses) on investment assets	6	7,470	-	7,470	21,027
Net movement in funds		(95,595)	(59,676)	(155,271)	(205,094)
Funds brought forward at 1 April		160,293	66,669	226,962	432,056
Funds carried forward at 31 March		64,698	6,993	71,691	226,962

All of the company's activities are classed as continuing and there are no other recognised gains and losses other than the net movement of funds for the financial periods presented.

The Amber Trust - Balance sheet as at 31 March 2025

	Notes	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Current assets:			
Debtors	7	3,414	4,144
Investments		213,230	318,407
Cash at bank and in hand		70,024	180,774
		286,668	503,325
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	8	(214,978)	(276,363)
Net current assets		71,691	226,962
The funds of the charity:			
Unrestricted - undesignated funds	11	64,698	145,024
Unrestricted - designated funds	11	-	15,270
		64,698	160,293
Restricted funds	11	6,993	66,669
Total charity funds		71,691	226,962

The trustees are satisfied that the charity is entitled to exemption from the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 (the Act) relating to the audit of the financial statements for the year by virtue of section 477, and no member or members have requested an audit pursuant to section 476 of the Act.

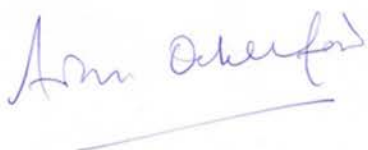
The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for:

- I. ensuring that the charity keeps proper accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act; and
- II. preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity as at the end of the financial year and its profit or loss for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of section 393, and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Act relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charity.

These statements have been prepared in accordance with FRS 102 1A for smaller entities.

These accounts were approved by the board of directors on 23 September 2025.

Signed on behalf of the board



Professor Adam Ockelford
Chair



Fiona Costa
Director and Trustee

23 September 2025

The Amber Trust - notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025

1. Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102 1A for smaller entities and in accordance with the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the entity.

2. Accounting policies

a) Income

Donations are recognised as income when received. If paid under covenant or gift aid, the related tax recoverable is recognised when the original donation is received.

Other income is recognised when received.

b) Expenditure

Charitable activities are those activities undertaken to achieve the charity's objectives. Expenditure on charitable activities is recognised when the Charity's Music Awards Committee has agreed a grant to a beneficiary or when payment is due.

Expenditure on raising funds comprises costs incurred in generating voluntary income, including fundraising events.

Governance costs are incurred on constitutional and statutory requirements.

Support costs have been allocated to charitable activities and fundraising activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

c) Funds

The charity's funds have been classified as unrestricted and restricted. Unrestricted funds may be used at the trustees' discretion in furtherance of the charity's objectives and aims. Where the trustees have set aside a part of the unrestricted fund to be used for specific projects, this fund is described as 'designated'. Restricted funds may only be used in accordance with the donor's wishes.

d) Investment valuation

Investments are valued at their year-end market values.

The Amber Trust - notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025

e) Taxation

No provision has been made for either income tax or corporation tax, the company being exempt as a registered charity. The Amber Trust is not registered for Value Added Tax.

f) Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported. These estimates and judgements are continually reviewed and are based on experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

g) Financial Instruments

Financial liabilities and equity instruments are classified according to the substance of the contractual arrangements entered into.

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in the profit and loss account in other administrative expenses.

Loans and borrowings are initially recognised at the transaction price including transaction costs.

Subsequently, they are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method, less impairment. If an arrangement constitutes a finance transaction it is measured at present value.

The Amber Trust - notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025 *continued*

3. Incoming resources

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Donations:				
From Trusts and Foundations	66,775	159,869	226,644	184,504
From individual donors	46,862	1,375	48,237	43,360
Corporate	-	-	-	11,000
Legacies	-	-	-	-
Gift Aid recovery	8,374	-	8,374	16,173
	122,011	161,244	283,255	255,037
Income from fundraising events:				
Major fundraising events	10,449	-	10,449	29,058
Community fundraising	12,027	-	12,027	19,594
	22,475	-	22,476	48,651
Investments	9,942	-	9,942	10,640
Total incoming resources	154,429	161,244	315,673	314,328

The Amber Trust - notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025 *continued*

4. Resources expended

a) Analysis of total resources expended

	Direct activity £	Support costs £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Charitable activities				
Expenditure on programmes:				
Music Awards	147,101	47,608	194,709	241,902
Little Amber	26,650	27,346	53,996	52,351
AmberPlus	22,494	27,346	49,840	51,464
With Music in Mind	15,906	18,625	34,531	30,554
Workshops	13,062	12,097	25,159	46,299
	225,213	133,021	358,234	422,568
Discretionary	4,713	-	4,713	205
Development of resources	13,341	-	13,341	8,664
	243,267	133,021	376,288	431,438
Cost of raising funds:				
Fundraising and events	24,177	67,657	91,834	98,508
Investment fees	2,763	-	2,763	2,526
Governance costs	7,528	-	7,528	7,977
	277,735	200,679	478,414	540,449

The Amber Trust - notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025 *continued*

b) Analysis of total support costs

	Charitable activities	Cost of raising funds	Governance	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Music programmes management	133,021	-	-	133,021	103,859
Fundraising events	-	5,733	-	5,733	11,160
Fundraising administration	-	30,252	-	30,252	24,699
Office Costs/ General Administration	-	46,311	-	46,311	52,414
Office IT costs	-	12,302	-	12,302	12,760
Legal fees/bank charges	-	-	4,924	4,924	6,019
HR/Audit fees	-	-	2,602	2,604	1,958
	133,021	94,598	7,528	235,147	212,870

c) Wages and salaries

Total support costs include the following amounts in respect of staff costs:

	Total 2025	Total 2024
Wages and salaries	183,397	162,289
Social security costs	11,780	9,426
Pension costs	5,502	4,806
	200,679	176,521

Average headcount during the year was 7 (2024: 6.5).

No employee received employee benefits of more than £60,000 during the year (2024: Nil).

The Amber Trust - notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025 *continued*

5. Directors' fees and expenses

No remuneration, benefits or expenses were paid to the Directors during the year.

6. Realised and unrealised investment gains and losses

a) Realised gains and losses

	TOTAL 2025 £	TOTAL 2024 £
Profit/(loss) on sale of investments	37,786	18,564

b) Unrealised gains and losses

	TOTAL 2025 £	TOTAL 2024 £
Value of investments at beginning of year	318,408	284,236
Less: value of investments sold	(84,401)	(33,470)
Add: cost of investments purchased	9,540	65,088
Adjusted value at beginning of year	243,547	315,944
Market value of investments at end of year	213,230	318,408
Unrealised gain/(loss)	(30,317)	2,464

7. Debtors

	TOTAL 2025 £	TOTAL 2024 £
Investment income	3,414	4,144

8. Creditors - amounts falling due within one year

	TOTAL 2025 £	TOTAL 2024 £
Grants approved but unpaid at end of year	214,978	276,363

The Amber Trust - notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025 *continued*

9. Capital

The company is limited by guarantee and has no share capital. Each member has a liability limited to £1 for payment of the company's debts if the company is wound up or dissolved.

10. Related party transactions

Adam Ockelford, a director of The Amber Trust, is Professor of Music and Director of the Applied Music Research Centre at the University of Roehampton. The University has undertaken research and development projects for The Amber Trust, payments for which are negotiated and approved by other Trustees of the Trust. Professor Ockelford receives no personal benefit from these payments.

There have been no other related party transactions in the year.

11. Funds

An analysis of the company's assets at 31 March 2025 by fund is provided in the table below:

	Restricted	Unrestricted		Total
		Undesignated	Designated	
Current assets	59,466	227,202	-	286,667
Creditors amounts falling due within one year	(52,473)	(162,505)	-	(214,978)
	6,993	64,697	-	71,691

12. Independent Examination fees

	2025	2024
Fees payable to the independent examiner for: Independent examination of financial statements	1,200	1,110

The Amber Trust - notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025 *continued*

Movements on restricted and unrestricted designated funds during the year ended 31 March 2024 are analysed in the table below:

	At 1 April 2024	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Resources	Balance at March 2025
Restricted funds source				
MariaMarina Foundation	15,993	60,000	(75,993)	-
The Julia and Hans Rausing Trust	5,676	-	(5,676)	-
Arts Council England	-	30,098	(24,380)	5,718
The de Lazslo Foundation	2,471	-	(2,471)	-
The Linbury Trust	7,308	64,000	(71,307)	-
Individual Donor	1,015	1,250	(990)	1,275
CMS Social Impact Fund	-	500	(500)	-
The Hedley Foundation	-	2,396	(2,396)	-
Cosman Keller Art&Music Trust	-	3,000	(3,000)	-
Global's Make Some Noise	4,551	-	(4,551)	-
Arts Council England via RNIB	4,156	-	(4,156)	-
Garfield Weston Foundation	25,000	-	(25,000)	-
Florence Nightingale Aid in Sickness Trust	500	-	(500)	-
	66,669	161,244	(220,920)	6,993
Designated funds source				
The Thomas J Horne Memorial Trust	5,500	-	(5,500)	-
Trustees meeting 16.05.23 approved £30k designated funds for Little Amber	9,770	-	(9,770)	-
	15,270	-	(15,271)	-

The Amber Trust - notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025 *continued*

Notes to the Restricted funds:

The awards from the MariaMarina Foundation were used to fund the development of the charity's infrastructure; Music Awards and Little Amber programmes.

Funds from The Julia and Hans Rausing Trust were used to fund Music Awards.

Funds from Arts Council England were used to fund the Braille music lessons and workshops.

The funds from The de Laszlo Foundation were used to fund new music awards for children who have had no first-hand experience of music lessons.

The award from The Linbury Trust was used to fund Music Awards, the With Music in Mind programme and the TiME Sound Moves (Mugo) project.

The donation from an individual donor is being restricted to Music Awards.

The funds from CMS Social Impact Fund were used to support two students at New College Worcester.

The funds from The Hedley Foundation were used to support two students' Braille music lessons.

The funds from Cosman Keller Art & Music Trust were used to fund five students with Music Award lessons.

The remaining funds from Global's Make Some Noise were used to pay for the charity's Salesforce system improvement.

The funds from Arts Council England, via Royal National Institute of Blind people (RNIB), were used towards a teacher directory development project.

The grant from the Garfield Weston Foundation was used for the Little Amber and AmberPlus Programmes.

The award from the Florence Nightingale Aid in Sickness Trust was used to co-fund two students' musical instruments.

The award from The Thomas J Horne Memorial Trust has been designated by the trustees to fund part of the Little Amber programme.

The remaining designated funds of £30,000 were used for the Little Amber programme.

12. Controlling party

The directors are the ultimate controlling party.

Legal and Administrative Information

President	Her Majesty the Queen (formerly HRH the Duchess of Cornwall)
Patrons	Jools Holland OBE, James Lisney, Derek Paravicini, Nic Paravicini DL, Lady Eleanor Shearing, Lady Julia Walport.
Directors and Trustees	Adam Ockelford (Chair), Chun Wai Shum (Vice-Chair), Charles Atkins, Angelica Bomford, Fiona Costa, Veronica Franklin Gould, Victoria Oruwari, Kym Smith, Simon Vincent.
Ambassadors	Roderic Hill, Pablo Urbina.
Email	contact@ambertrust.org
Website	www.ambertrust.org
Registered Address	64a Princes Way, London, SW19 6JF
Charity Registration Number	1050503
Company Registration Number	03117803
Status	Company limited by guarantee
Bankers	CAF Bank Ltd, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4TA
Independent Examiner	Burgess Hodgson Limited, 27 New Dover Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 3DN
Solicitors	Bates Wells, 10 Queen Street Place, London, EC4R 1BE
Investment Advisers	Rathbone Investment Management Ltd, Fiennes House, 32 Southgate Street, Winchester, SO23 9EH



The Amber Trust

64a Princes Way, London, SW19 6JF

Registered Charity No: 1050503

Company No: 03117803



@TheAmberTrust

Printing costs kindly sponsored by
www.scmdirect.com

sc
m | **DIRECT**
for smart investors


MONEY SHE
smart women invest