

BOLTON DEAF SOCIETY
ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR
THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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Administrative Information

Trustees

Ms R Pickup	Chair	
Mr R Bounds	Vice Chair	
Ms J Barron	Secretary	
Ms Lu Zhang	Treasurer	
Ms B Davies***	Trustee	
Mr H El-Madani*	Trustee	
Mr S Lewis*	Trustee	(resigned 30 April 2025)

*Deaf

**Hard of hearing

***Child of a Deaf Adult

Key staff

John Hesketh Chief Executive Officer

Registered office and principal place of business

Bolton Deaf Society, Bark Street, Bolton, BL1 2AX

Independent Examiner and Accountants

David Sefton
Seftons Limited
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Oldham
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OL1 1TE

Bankers

Royal Bank of Scotland PLC
De Havilland Way
Bolton
BL6 4YU

Investment Managers

CCLA Fund Managers Limited
Senator House
85, Queen Victoria Street
London
EC4V 4ET

Solicitors

Brabners LLP
Horton House
Exchange Flags
Exchange Street East
Liverpool
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Trustees' Annual Report

Objectives and Activities

Charitable objects

The purposes of Bolton Deaf Society have remained consistent over the last 156 years – to promote, empower and protect the interests of people who are Deaf, deafened or hard-of-hearing, resident in Bolton and the surrounding local authority areas, with a view to enhancing the quality of their life experiences; building their skills for life and work, capacity for self-advocacy and community participation as active, influential, change-making pioneers of social action; enhancing their health, wellbeing and connectivity with supportive peers and professionals across the political, economic, social, technical, legal and environmental architecture within which our organisation works and they live their lives. We grow self-confidence; social and cultural, equality and diversity awareness; knowledge, understanding and motivation towards navigating the largely hearing-led world to find financial independence, professional fulfilment and social contentment in spite of continued shortfall by most public service providers and employers when it comes to ensuring equitable access as required by the Equality Act 2010, the Accessible Information Standards 2016 (set for 2025 update) and the BSL Act 2023 for example; their on-going legal breaches and disregard for adverse human impacts, costs to the public purse and compromise of their own performance, profile and prospects in a Borough where almost 16% of people live on the hearing loss spectrum.

In 2023, we updated our charitable objects to reflect the breadth of need we respond to, the increasing variety of works our organisation is called to get involved in, our growing reach and impact. These were duly embedded in our governing document and a revised constitution was 'signed-off' internally by the Board of Trustees and Senior Management, then lodged with and approved by the Charity Commission. Bolton Deaf Society's approved charitable objectives are now, therefore, as follows and stand as our organisation's guiding reference points:

"To promote social inclusion among Deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing individuals who are socially excluded from society or parts of society, as a result of being Deaf, deafened or hard-of-hearing by (but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing):

Providing education and information to support and enable D/deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals to learn, understand and use British Sign Language

Providing access to educational resources, including schooling, in British Sign Language; also communications support for those who use Sign Supported English or Lip Read

Providing Sign Language interpreters as and when may be required

Raising public awareness of the issues affecting Deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing individuals, both generally and in relation to their social exclusion

Providing workshops, forums, advocacy and general support

Providing visits to Deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing people in their homes

Providing such other services and assistance for Deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing people as will protect, empower and promote their interest with a view to enhancing their quality of life

To advance education by (but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing):

The provision of advocacy support services and skill-building for self-advocacy, life skills courses and communications support so as to enable access to education and training providers

The provision of British Sign Language and Lip-reading courses

The provision of professional development programmes in Deaf Awareness and Interpreter Awareness, Inclusive Employment and Basic British Sign Language for public sector professionals

The prevention or relief of poverty amongst Deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing individuals by (but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing):

Providing advice and guidance around and skill-building for employment and enterprise of Deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing people

The advancement of health of Deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing individuals by, but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing:

The provision or arrangement of access to inclusive physical activity and sporting opportunities

The provision of British Sign Language Interpreters so that Deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing individuals may access health care in sign language

The promotion of religious harmony for the benefit of the public by, but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing:

Providing a multifaith sacred space and multifaith religious services for Deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing people as well as promoting knowledge and mutual understanding and respect of the beliefs and practices of different religious faiths”

Significant changes in D/deaf and hard-of-hearing need and demand or partnerships for the long-term may require that these objects are revisited and further revised in years hence, but it is within the parameters set by these charitable objectives that we will go on with our development, delivery and continuing improvement work for the foreseeable future.

For now, however, our having connected with and positively impacted the lives of around 2,000 Deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing people through 2024/25 reflects that Bolton Deaf Society does more right than wrong – through:

- core service and project delivery
- Deaf-led group support, eg. Craft Circle, Darby & Joan Group, Handmade Sign Language Choir, Sign-Inn Café, Sports & Social Club
- interpreter and communications support service bookings
- professional development training
- self-help content creation and/or sharing on social media
- event production and delivery, eg. Bolton's first Deaf Arts Festival
- event attendance and input, eg. British Deaf Association Conference, North West Deaf Clubs sustainability gatherings in Manchester, UK Trading Standards Institute Conference in Blackpool, Bolton Food and Drink Festival, Bolton Guild of Help Conference, the cross-sector Collabor8 event in Bury, Citizens Advice Bureau Strategy Days
- collaborative work on project design responsive to challenges spanning the region, eg. in Lloyds' Local Collaborations scheme grant application with Manchester Deaf Centre and Walthew House on employment support service and benefit administration access issues, system change being the challenge; also through representations to Greater Manchester Combined Authority, NHS Greater Manchester and voluntary sector infrastructure organisations on Accessible Information and Advocacy Service gaps in Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside and Trafford, the public purse expenses and human costs incurred as a result

This number is made-up of:

- service-users, project beneficiaries and building users
- Deaf volunteer-led group members
- Deaf citizens attending interviews, health appointments and so on with communications support
- professional development training beneficiaries
- Deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing citizens' engagement with accessible, self-help content online
- event attendees
- contributors to cross-sector project design learning about Deaf access issues, negative impacts and public purse saving opportunities

What should be noted here, however, is that while Bolton Deaf Society's work remains within the parameters set by its charitable objectives, engaging and impactful, its geographical reach extended significantly this year, and as the year-end approached the Board of Trustees and Senior Management Team together were set on planning for:

- governing document update to reflect completion on the long-awaited merger with Bury Hearing Hub, and Bolton Deaf Society's commitment to equal responsibility and service provision in Bury as Bolton, with variations in service, project and activity offer varying according to differences in need and preference by place
- name change and re-brand
- recruitment of Deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing community representatives and professionals from Bury to sit on the Board of Trustees, ensuring that lived experience is consistently represented in strategy-setting and decision-making – and, ideally, also securing expertise and strategic leadership capacity around organisational scale-up, quality assurance, health & safety, safeguarding, marketing/communications, and new technologies' integration
- growth of volunteer engagement from Bury

- needs assessment and participatory planning for service, project and activity development in Bury
- funding strategy creation focused on Bury team building, staff recruitment and deployment, and new, impactful services' development
- step-up on service delivery in Wigan Borough having secured a 3-year contract to deliver interpreter and communications support, accessible information and advocacy services, employment and enterprise support across Wigan Council, health and social care service providers directed and managed by Greater Manchester Integrated Care (Wigan) – beginning in December 2024, but set to grow in profile and reach with weeks' and months' passing

There was much excitement and anticipation around opportunities presenting to grow reach and impact as the financial year-end drew closer.

Services

Our Accessible Information and Advocacy Service has continued to develop this year.

Across the 3 local authority areas in which Bolton Deaf Society delivered services (Bolton, Bury and Wigan), our team of qualified, skilled, knowledgeable, Deaf and bi-lingual Advocates (able to converse in BSL and spoken English), supported around 60 clients a week over 3 days: Mondays in Wigan, Tuesdays in Bolton, and Wednesdays in Bury. Demand for the service remained consistently high and referrals from Adult Services/local Councils, Job Centres, NHS colleagues, voluntary, community and faith organisations grew steadily.

Through the year, our Advocates:

- Supported 30+ individuals with Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independent Payment applications and most resulted in successful awards
- Assisted clients with employment-related issues, including workplace discrimination, unfair workloads and access to reasonable adjustments
- Helped resolve housing, insurance and repair issues, including communication barriers with landlords and contractors
- Secured travel passes for Deaf clients facing financial barriers to public transport
- Provided CV and employment skill-building support on small group and 1-to-1 bases
- Established Deaf Community Forums in Bolton and Bury, improving collaboration between Deaf residents and local services
- Co-produced captioned BSL videos for NHS colleagues supportive of their Martha's Rule campaign (This is a patient safety initiative that gives patients and their families the right to an urgent, independent review if they are concerned about a loved one's worsening condition)
- Worked with Bury hospitals to improve compliance with interpreter access policies, leading to significant awareness and procedural change

Clients fed back to us on their:

- Increased financial security and wellbeing as a result of successful benefit or job applications
- Enhanced experiences in the workplace and with health service providers
- Improved healthcare access
- Increased capacity for confidence and self-advocacy in breaking down barriers to hearing-led public services
- Appreciation of the option to meet other clients informally and on voluntary terms to build supportive friendships

On an interim basis, our Employment and Enterprise Service was integrated with Advocacy, but as the year came to an end, it was set on a new, art-based employment skills project to help re-establish its separate identity after a funding gap – supported by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Workers' Educational Association and Bolton Council.

Case Study 1: Employment Discrimination

Situation:

A 60-year-old Deaf man was repeatedly assigned heavy manual tasks that were unsuitable for his health. Communication barriers prevented him from raising concerns.

Actions:

The Advocate facilitated meetings with his employer, clarified his rights, and supported reasonable adjustments.

Outcome:

His workload was rebalanced, and he reported feeling respected and included at work.

Case Study 2: DLA/PIP Application Support

Situation:

A Deaf client struggled to complete a benefits application due to inaccessible communication formats.

Actions:

The Advocate supported the application process through BSL interpretation and form assistance.

Outcome:

The client received a successful PIP award, improving financial stability and wellbeing.

Case Study 3: Hospital Communication Failures

Situation:

A Deaf patient was told to book their own interpreter for medical appointments—contrary to policy.

Actions:

The Advocate intervened with hospital management and provided staff training.

Outcome:

The hospital introduced new booking procedures and raised awareness of Deaf access rights.

Case Study 4: Accessible Information

Situation:

Deaf residents lacked access to Trading Standards safety information.

Actions:

Worked with Trading Standards to produce BSL-accessible educational videos.

Outcome:

The Deaf community now has direct access to key public information in their first language.

Testimonials

From Clients

"The team always go the extra mile. The service is invaluable"

"Without this support, I wouldn't have managed my benefits or understood my rights"

"They helped me speak up at work — I finally feel equal"

From Partner Organisations

"Your team has made a huge difference for Deaf people in our service"

"We've improved accessibility across our departments thanks to your advice"

"The collaboration has been inspiring — your team sets the standard"

Interpreter and Communications Support Bookings Service

In 2024/25, Bolton Deaf Society further grew its database of qualified, experienced and NRCPD-registered BSL Interpreters, Deaf Relay Interpreters, Lip Speakers, Notetakers, Speech-to-Text Reporters and Deafblind Interpreters, and in addition to booking communication support professionals for GP Surgeries and Optometrists across the Borough of Bolton (for Greater Manchester Integrated Care – Bolton), we received and serviced requests from the following as well:

- Bolton at Home

- Bolton Council
- Bolton CVS
- Bolton Food & Drink Festival
- Bolton Winter Festival
- Citizens Advice Bureau – Bolton, Bury, Wigan and Leigh
- Royal Bolton Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- (where we were regularly invited to the Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Working Group)
- Specsavers
- The Business Improvement District in Bury
- The Met Theatre in Bury
- The Octagon Theatre in Bolton
- (for whom we now deliver Deaf Awareness, Interpreter Awareness and Basic BSL training on an annual refresher basis, produce captioned BSL films for social media, and arrange performance Interpreters where required)
- The Quakers Meeting House, Bolton
- Wigan Council and partners

.... and so our reach is growing; Deaf and Interpreter Awareness are increasing and maintaining this momentum is important to Bolton Deaf Society from a Deaf inclusion/social impact point of view; so also from an unrestricted revenue generation perspective given the increasing cost of insurances, utilities, office running costs, building cleaning/maintenance/repair, equipment inspection and certification, third-party HR, ICT and financial management support services. It is our intention to keep pushing our Interpreter Bookings Service outwards through 2025/26 hopeful that we will start to break down barriers to Deaf engagement with services and events.

Recognised in early dialogue with Wigan Council around scope for adding value through delivery on the Interpreter and Communications Support Service contract and parallel, separately commissioned or grant-funded interventions was lots of scope for improvement in Deaf citizen service experiences and outcomes - through:

- BDS advice and guidance on public communication materials' design to ensure visual journey/process maps and infographics feature to ease Deaf people's understanding (given that, due to shortfalls in the education system, the average reading age of Deaf adults is 9 years)
- creation of captioned, BSL content for Wigan Council and sensory service web pages, social media output and so on – on services it is considered helpful to profile
- help to make Wigan Council's public consultation exercises more Deaf-inclusive
- help to bring together and facilitate a Deaf reference group for Sensory Services (comprising Deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing people of different age, faith, gender, race, sexual orientation, with and without disabilities and in varying degrees of financial hardship and independence) – to inform continuing development and improvement
- consistently Deaf-inclusive independent living assessments, competency visits and skill-building in use of new equipment and assistive technologies issued to the best possible effect
- capacity-building for Be Well services to optimise Deaf access and begin minimising Deaf health inequalities – physical and mental
- Deaf and Interpreter Awareness training, Basic BSL and Access to Work funding courses for key staff members across Corporate, Adults, Children's and Families' Services to inform Joint Strategic Needs Assessment extension, service development and improvement planning, budget, target and impact measures' setting and associated reporting
- introduction to senior Customer Service and Public Health management colleagues at Bolton Council who have embedded Sign Live (online Interpreter access) in their One Stop Shop at the Town Hall to make frontline services Deaf-accessible, and the HR team with whom work is started to make job vacancies accessible to Deaf people whose first language (BSL) is visual and not written or spoken (through adaptation of adverts, application, interview and assessment centre procedures, induction, training, support/supervision and appraisal arrangements)

Interpreter and Communication Support Services and dialogue around the same, with clients and commissioners, can open up so many opportunities of low-cost or cost-free changes and as the year ended there was positive, collective will to make the most of these in Wigan, thoroughly evaluate and assess impacts, and then share learning and encouragement with senior public sector service leads in Bolton and Bury as well.

Sport and Physical Activity Service

Aimed at breaking barriers and growing participation in sports and physical activity, our brand new Fit 4 Deaf project was delivered across Bolton Arena and Leverhulme Park Leisure Centres, providing:

- Deaf Awareness and Basic BSL training to reception staff, fitness instructors and coaches

- Facility audits and access improvement recommendations, around – for example – adding BSL content to website and social media communication channels, visuals to waymarking signage and subtitles to TV screens, flashing fire alarms and QR Codes linking to BSL instructions on how to safely use gym equipment; improving lighting levels and building set times into their programme when music and background noise will be minimised; and providing accessible and accredited training courses so that work might begin towards growing Deaf representation in the workforce (Level 1 Football Coach and Level 2 PT courses)
- Accessible gym inductions
- Taster classes, sports and physical activity sessions
- Introductions to Bike Libraries

A BSL version of the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, created by the Social Research with Deaf People team at the University of Manchester - a nationally recognised tool, was used to assess the impact of our programme. A focus group of 6 provided some helpful qualitative insights into impact and participant thoughts on scope for further improvement in the project going forward:

- The instructions on gym equipment are still not clear – around how to increase resistance levels to aid muscle building for example
- More Deaf people need to be encouraged to attend to improve the “social experience”
- Gym membership information remains unclear
- Some staff tried really hard to communicate with their still-growing BSL, others not so
- The App at Bolton Arena and the safe exercise demonstrations on there were very helpful
- ID Cards identifying Deaf Aware, BSL-competent staff would be helpful

The pilot was a good success, but growing Leisure Centres’ inclusivity, Deaf community confidence and more fulsome buy-in, bigger health impacts and so on will require increased investment, project staffing and perseverance over the long-term.

Projects

In response to need, demand and/or opportunity, Bolton Deaf Society also delivered or set on delivering several projects this year:

Heritage Project

With a grant of almost £60,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Bolton Deaf Society set in early 2025 on a two-year project to save, showcase, celebrate and grow whole community engagement with our organisation’s heritage. Specifically, the project set out to discover and document the organisation’s history since its inception in 1868 (formal establishment following in 1869). A part-time Heritage Project Coordinator was appointed and participatory work with Deaf citizens started on:

- creating an exhibition and project website
- training volunteers in taking oral histories in BSL form
- capturing footage of people involved in Bolton’s Deaf community talking about their memories for Bolton Museum’s archives
- producing community engagement events (eg. a theatre performance based on the exhibition research, 6 ‘intergenerational reenactment’ events, and a project celebration event with 5-minute film)
- preserving and archiving the historical material held by Bolton Deaf Society

In the months to March 2025, collaborative work planning focused on research, discovery, and building community links and confidence in the project. The Co-ordinator and project participants were keen to explore events delivered in the history of the society; also to capture the stories of people having long associations with Bolton Deaf Society directly from them; and to catalogue and archive materials held on site at Bark Street. Training opportunities in heritage interpretation and oral history capture through BSL was to be offered to volunteers, and an event organised to share home videos. Further community engagement was planned through historical exhibition creation, intergenerational reenactment events, and a project celebration with 5-minute film.

All involved look forward to continuing work with the Deaf communities in Bolton, recording and interpreting history before it is lost to time. The history of Bolton Deaf Society goes back generations, and whether past beneficiaries’ descendants are still here or individuals have simply been coming their whole lives, we want to make sure they are proud of their rich heritage and others can discover it too.

Bright Start Pre-School Group

As well as continuing to enjoy a range of seasonal, thematic, informal learning opportunities to build social and cultural awareness, and age-appropriate life skills indoors at Bark Street, our still young, still pilot-phase Bright Start Group for Deaf children with Deaf or hearing parents, hearing children with Deaf parents, and their siblings (attracting up to 25 each week) started to venture outdoors this year, taking a trip to Forrest Frontiers, a Forest School in which they started to learn about the natural world, natural heritage, flora and fauna living in such close proximity, the importance of environmental care and responsible living. Deaf awareness and Basic BSL training for their staff prior to the first visit started to build readiness for inclusion, and there's much hope that the relationship can build and mature in on-going enrichment of children's learning, school and life readiness. Our being ever conscious of Deaf community children missing-out on chance to visit other settings and learn from activity within them, due to access barriers and safety concerns, the Group leads started talking this year with colleagues from Start Well Family Centres nearby about the prospect of using their outdoor space too and this is a conversation on-going respectful of the opportunity to pursue capital funds in partnership for Deaf-inclusive facilities' development.

For Bright Start, this was a year of enrichment. Children attending, their parents and carers, staff from Bolton Deaf Society and Happy Smiles CIC in Wigan set on producing a professionally illustrated and published storybook, *Dream*, relaying childhood/family experiences of growing-up with Deafness in a largely ignorant and too often exclusive world. These books were to be sold to generate revenue for Bolton Deaf Society and used as educational tools in the course of outreach to and curriculum enrichment work in primary and secondary schools across Bolton, Bury and Wigan local authority areas. This work was to further learning, empowering all engaged and providing them with a voice.

On the subject of learning and empowerment, 5 people (a mix of group staff and volunteers) completed courses in Paediatric First Aid.

Bright Start has much to be proud of looking back on 2024/25, providing early years education in BSL, offering access to creative play and establishing friendship and peer support groups among Deaf and hearing children, parents and carers. It was nominated for a Bolton Together Achievement Award, receiving special commendation certificates and awards at Bolton Town Hall, and is awaiting the outcome of a Children & Young People Now nomination as well. Funds to extend this popular group and reposition it as a core Bolton Deaf Society service, with a satellite group in Bury perhaps, were to be sought.

Futures Youth Group

Our Futures Youth Group for 11-16s started but paused due to being unable to find a weekday evening that worked for most Deaf young people. Though 27 attended our open day early in the calendar year, a large proportion were Islamic and involved through term-time in after-school Madrasa activity at Mosques, tired and ready for home afterwards. Consultation will be taken-up soon on re-start with a school holiday-only provision offering access to purposeful, healthy recreational activity indoors and out in close collaboration with the DICE Charity that Thomasson Memorial School established, and the parent-led Hear 4 You Group, currently on-hold.

Strategic and Operational Improvement Projects

In addition to Deaf community benefit projects, Bolton Deaf Society set several other strategic projects in train in 2024/25, for organisational betterment:

- the creation of a Finance Sub-Committee of the Board of Trustees to help prepare and scrutinise organisational, service and project budgets; review budget vs actual reports; reflect on management accounts; co-create remedial action plans where needed and feedback headline reports to all Trustees
- the creation of an Operations Manager role to provide additional line management capacity for our growing staff team; lead on evidence-based, participatory service development in Bury; and bring additional capacity to progress pursuit of Trusted Charity Mark and Bolton Mark accreditation – exposing our organisational ways and means to independent scrutiny, and embedding improved processes around Governance, Planning, Leadership and management, User-centred service, Managing people, Learning and development, Managing money, Managing resources, External communications, Working with others, Assessing outcomes and impact. The positioning accreditation will enable with partners and supporters is also to the fore of our minds
- investment in a Customer Relationship Management System to help make the management of communications with Deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing communities across Bolton, Bury and Wigan, funders, partners, prospective supporters, and stakeholders more effective and efficient
- website update and improved social media plan execution to reflect our organisation's extended reach and impact

- the opening of a Bury office with access to a range of service delivery spaces – ground and first floor teaching, learning, social and multi-activity spaces; craft studios, a bar, pop-up café and two theatre spaces – in the heart of Bury with a bus stop, and drop-off spaces for cars outside, the tram and bus interchange 5 minutes' walk away and 9 public car parks with 29 disabled parking spaces less than ten minutes' walk or wheel from The Met base
- networking of our ICT system across Bolton and Bury sites
- the establishment of hot desk and drop-in spaces at the Citizens Advice Bureau in Hindley, Wigan and Leigh town centres
- training for all staff and as many volunteers as possible in Data Protection, Equal Opportunities, Health & Safety, First Aid, Mental Health First Aid, Fire Marshal duties, and Safeguarding

With continuing building development at Bolton in mind, we also set on dialogue with building users on:

- Development of the Games Room at Bark Street, with a view to incorporating new storage space, adjustable lighting, soft furnishings and so on
- Upgrade of Emergency Lighting
- Replacement of the TV Aerial
- New water heaters' installation

Deaf Volunteer-led Support Groups

In 2024/25, Bolton Deaf Society have continued to support the work of the Deaf-led, independently constituted groups meeting in our Bark Street building, and, since the early part of this calendar year, at The Met in Bury. With our continuing group development work, moreover, we have again made good progress.

Darby & Joan Group (Bolton)

This weekly social gathering for older, isolated Deaf people – involving tea, chat, Bingo and visits to places of social and cultural interest – continued to meet, with attendances reaching as high as 40 per week in the Summer. Through the year they welcomed visiting speakers from Healthwatch Bolton who led an engaging session on Dementia Awareness, helping Deaf citizens understand symptoms, support available to those diagnosed and their carers; also from the British Deaf Association who led an impactful presentation on Deaf rights and disability equality, empowering attendees to better understand and assert their legal rights; and SignVideo who demonstrated the use of the Video Relay Service, showing Deaf individuals how to apply for access to and use these tools for personal communication, not just workplace use.

Deaf Asian Women's Group (Bolton)

Bringing together Deaf, often marginalised and lonely Deaf Asian women, this group have embraced opportunities of learning about and practising their Islamic faith; walking and discovering new places of natural, cultural and social interest, growing their understanding of and affinity with place, and developing their sense of identity; exercising in female-only sessions at the gym; cycling using local bike libraries, and learning how to cook fresh, nutritious meals with affordable, seasonal produce using low energy, low carbon, low cost cooking methods.

This is a small group still, though it achieves big impacts and growing the knowledge and confidence necessary for self-advocacy is in their forward-looking plan.

Sports & Social Club (Bolton)

Playing Darts, Dominoes and Crown Green Bowls against other North West Deaf Sports Clubs, this Group has continued to flourish – keeping Deaf minds and bodies active, engaging upwards of 20 a week.

Sign-Inn Café/Craft Group (Bolton) and Deaf Ladies' Craft Circle (Bury)

Our craft group in Bolton has continued to meet, hosted and attended craft weekends in both locations, occupying creative minds through visual arts, knitting and sewing, papercrafts and more, building fine motor control and problem-solving skills, and improving mental health.

Handmade British Sign Language Choir (Bolton)

Handmade met fortnightly through the year, attracting 40 each time and establishing a waiting list. They frequently perform together at public events and continue building bridges between the Deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing communities from which their participants are drawn.

Deaf Social Club (Bury)

The big move for this group in 2025 was their becoming independently constituted, forming their own committee, setting-up their own bank account and beginning to set and evaluate their own programmes, fulfilling an ambition of theirs with support from Bolton Deaf Society and Bury VCFA.

Lip Reading Groups (Bury)

The morning and afternoon Lip Reading Groups in Bury have been pleased to receive Tutor fee subsidies from BDS this year, and as the year ended were planning to meet socially together outside of their classes. Many students are older and live alone, and boosting their social awareness and confidence, enjoying visits to new places and engaging in healthy recreational activities they choose will further uplift them.

In line with our commitment to continuously growing the knowledge, skills and self-help capacity of group leads, safeguarding their wellbeing and that of those they work with, we arranged and delivered a number of courses through 2024/25:

- 1 lead completed a Level 1 Safeguarding course, and 5 attended a Safeguarding Adults at Risk course delivered by Bolton CVS in partnership with Bolton Council
- 6 completed First Aid Awareness training
- 4 completed courses in Basic Life Support and safe use of our Defibrillator
- 6 completed Fire Marshall Awareness training

And so encouragement continues to be offered to more Deaf volunteers to take-up fully accessible courses spanning Data Protection, Food Hygiene, Health & Safety and more in their empowerment.

In their wrap-around support:

- 1 staff member completed an IOSH Level 3 Managing Safely in the Workplace course
- 3 completed Fire Marshall training
- 6 staff members completed Level 3 Safeguarding courses

Assisted by members of these groups and service-users otherwise, Bolton Deaf Society worked hard this year to grow its reach and Deaf community engagement. Through Christmas 2024 Open Days, for example, we profiled our range of services, projects and seasonal, thematic activities – putting on displays and talking visitors through the detail of each; consulted on gaps, needs, issues and preferences in respect of our programme; serving seasonal refreshments, having our BSL Choir, Handmade, perform Christmas carols, and hosting stalls put on by our Bolton craft group and local Deaf entrepreneurs with wares to sell. Altogether we welcomed more than 60 people that had never been in contact with our organisation before.

In positive representation of the Deaf community's needs – as articulated by members of these groups, moreover, we:

- Collaborated on a national basis with the Chartered Trading Standards Institute and Citizens Advice Bureau England to create consumer safety videos ensuring Deaf people have access to vital, self-help safety information, duly being nominated for an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Award with ceremony at London's House of Lords
- Worked with Transport for Greater Manchester and undertook an audit on Bolton Interchange (encompassing a Cycle Hub, the town's main Bus and Train Stations). It informed the production of a report highlighting how cycle hub user and passenger information might be made more accessible; how way-finding signage might be made inclusive of Deaf BSL-users whose first language is visual and not written, and whose reading capacity is low; how training in Deaf Awareness and Basic BSL might benefit frontline staff development, customer service quality and satisfaction – growing Deaf community confidence in and inclination to engage with active travel and use public transport services. Around the same time, dialogue was taken-up with SignLive (now Convo) on the prospect of their helping grow visual customer access at the Bolton Interchange just as they do at Bolton Council's One Stop Shop when Deaf people enquire about Council services, register births, deaths and marriages, lodge reports of community safety issues and similar. TfGM consistently reported budget constraints as reasons why they couldn't take up on the recommended improvement actions or work towards compliance with the Equality Act and BSL Act quickly, heavy workloads and limitations on time as the reason why they couldn't engage with collaborative pursuit of external funds for investment. Bolton Deaf Society reflected back on poor experiences of their Access Panel, also known as their Disability Design Reference Group and its negligible impact on their access arrangements for Deaf people – needless to say efforts at bridge-building and progress continue, our being encouraged by the inroads that Bury Society for Blind and Partially Sighted People have made at TfGM's Bury Interchange where their Cycle Hubs and Tram Station come together

- Linked with Bolton Wanderers Football Club to begin building provision for full Deaf inclusion there, and made some positive inroads, getting players names spelled-out in BSL on their big screens as they enter the pitch and creating emergency exit information videos for BSL-users unable to respond to tannoy messaging. In ticket office, steward, and first aid colleague training around Deaf Awareness and Basic BSL, website and social media output information of course, there remains much to do – and, similarly, with Bolton Wanderers in the Community to grow the accessibility of their sport and physical activity programmes and help further our on-going organisational efforts to break down barriers to participation and address Deaf health inequalities costly in both human and public terms
- Followed on from the success of our own Introduction to British Sign Language courses and the Level 1 and 2 qualifications delivered by Bolton College on our Bark Street premises, and started Drop-in BSL Practice Sessions for hearing people linking with Deaf citizens in their work, hearing Grandparents with Deaf grandchildren and many others from different walks of life. The sessions have been very well-received and, for a period of time, even attracted an Actress playing a Deaf part and wanting to brush-up on her skills

At every opportunity, Bolton Deaf Society strive to reach more and support change supportive of equal access provisions, hopeful of improving life experiences and outcomes across the Deaf community, and supporting our organisation in work towards these ends again this year have been three externally facilitated groups all hosted at Bark Street:

Bolton Adult Autism Support

There is a disproportionately higher incidence of Autism in the Deaf community compared to the hearing community¹ and local charity BASS now do targeted work in our building. Arts and crafts frequently feature in their life and social skills sessions. They also hold information sessions for those in attendance covering the likes of Personal Budgets, support services available in Bolton (eg. through GPs and the Trafford Extended Services – encompassing Clinical Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy, Social Work and Community Nursing; a Coping Skills Group etc), and development of the Autism Strategy in Bolton.

Enabling Technologies Drop-in

On pre-set dates through the year, this involves Audiologists bringing a range of assistive equipment for people living with hearing loss to view and test before buying independently – eg. vibrating alarms to wake Deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing people from their sleep; telephone, tv and radio amplifiers; bluetooth hearing aids able to assist with phone calls. The technical team also help with hearing aid battery replacement, adjustment and so on.

Tinnitus Support Group

Convened and facilitated by the Audiology Department at the Royal Bolton Hospital, this group meets monthly and around 40 attend each time. In part, it is about peer support, sharing experiences and coping mechanisms between people living with Tinnitus. In part, it is about medical professionals and research leads sharing progress in their collaborative research projects as well – giving insight into prospective treatments under development.

Partnerships

Bolton Deaf Society has continued to connect, collaborate and add value this year:

- attending and beginning to build strong relations across the VCSE Leadership Groups in Bolton and Bury – which bring together Age UK, end-of-life care services, disability/learning difficulty/neurodiversity support organisations, social housing and homeless support service providers, support services for domestic violence victims, arts, leisure and cultural services, organisations supportive of children, young people and families. In Bolton the group comprises 64+ senior leaders and in Bury 30+ senior leaders, and both are go to places for the Councils, Health and Housing authorities when it comes to setting new strategies. Growing Deaf awareness is key
- partnering with Endeavour, a specialist Domestic Abuse Support Service provider, we've secured funding to engage/train/deploy a specialist Deaf employee who will practise as a part-time Domestic Abuse Support Worker and begin addressing the three times higher incidence of emotional/psychological/financial/physical/sexual/digital/online/institutional abuse evident in our Deaf community. They will be based at Endeavour and managed by them and BDS. This follows on from Deaf Domestic Abuse awareness-raising sessions with Interpreters and Communication Support Workers, and Deaf citizens as well – able to refer, self-refer and/or assist with case work².

¹ 1 in 59 Deaf people live with Autism as compared to 1 in 100 hearing people.

² Though the ideal is clearly that Deaf victims will work with trained and qualified Deaf workers, cultural understanding, trust and confidence being much easier to establish, and communication barriers being broken down in most cases, use of different international sign languages and dialects will always mean that specialist communications support is needed on occasion.

It builds on Deaf Awareness and Basic BSL training with Endeavour staff. Subject to pilot outcomes, there is a plan to pursue funds to increase the worker's hours and employ another Deaf worker

- communicating with the CEO at Bolton's Mental Health Independent Support Team and progressing conversations with his predecessor, and in Spring 2025 plans were being set to make talking/holistic/cognitive/behavioural therapies accessible for Deaf citizens with a view to extending to Bury and Wigan once inclusive services have found traction and proven value. Similar discussions were had with Simeon Centre Counselling Services mindful there are no Deaf-inclusive counselling services accessible in Bolton where more Deaf people reside than any other local authority area in GM. 40%-50% of Deaf people are adversely impacted by trauma and mental ill-health, compared with around 25% of hearing adults, and this reflects in education/employment/holistic health/family outcomes
- linking with Deaf people in Preston, Closha Associates, the Office for Product Safety and Management in Central Government, the Chartered Institute of Trading Standards, and Citizens Advice Bureau England to grow a range of visual, self-help resources for Deaf BSL-users keen to learn more about their consumer rights and how to stay safe in equipment and product use
- beginning to scope opportunities of socially impactful, unrestricted revenue-generating work with service providers known to us through our networks:
 - The Brick homeless charity in Wigan around buildings' audit, website upgrade, staff training and equitable Deaf service provision, learning and experience-sharing with other homeless support service providers across Greater Manchester
 - Happy Smiles CIC around Deaf Awareness input on Disability Awareness training courses in Wigan and countryside
 - Iconic Steps (based in London but working nationwide) to grow D/deaf and disability awareness, and open pathways to inclusive employment in the creative industries – building on the training collaboration with Reform Radio
 - CYF (in Nottingham) around Deaf-inclusive film-making

The power of partnership has not yet been fully utilised by Bolton Deaf Society on its organisational development journey, but opportunities started to open-up this year, and bringing them to fruition in 2025/26 will be a priority.

Training for Professionals

Our Advocates worked hard in setting Deaf Awareness Training through the year as well - providing hearing professionals with the skills and knowledge needed on how to communicate with Deaf people. Our training is always led by Deaf trainers who are able to provide first-hand accounts of their experiences as a Deaf person.

Examples of services that we have provided training for are as follows:

GP Federation – providing GP Surgeries with reminders on, advice, guidance and tools to assist compliance with legal requirements on them as regards provision of equal Deaf access to services; quantitative and qualitative information evident of the human consequences and public purse costs of failure to provide accessible services covering health inequalities, benefit dependence, lost tax revenues, social and cultural divisions

MBDA – growing Deaf awareness and basic BSL communications capacity so that two Deaf Apprentices can be fully embedded in the workforce

Royal Bolton Hospital – Deaf awareness and Interpreter awareness training across frontline staff teams hopeful increased consistency in Deaf patient experiences can be achieved; increased Deaf confidence and trust can be won

Bury Hospitals – Fairfield General and Cygnet Hospitals: Deaf awareness training

The Met Theatre, Bury – Deaf awareness and Basic BSL training for staff

Teaching for Public Benefit

As time allowed, Bolton Deaf Society went on through 2024/25 developing courses for public benefit:

Basic British Sign Language

One of our Deaf Advocates continued to lead on her 10-week Introduction to BSL course and delivered three rotations of the same course through the year to around 12 learners each time – covering:

- everyday greetings
- fingerspelling
- numbers

- colours
- time
- money
- days
- months
- seasons
- food
- drink
- relationships
- animals
- clothing
- descriptions
- directions
- general Deaf awareness and conversations

As last year, she received some brilliant feedback on her teaching. Introduced for the first time in 2025 was an evening study option to grow the accessibility of our course and this was delivered well.

In 2025/26, our hope is that partnership development with Bolton College will enable delivery of Deaf-inclusive adult education courses too – further broadening social and cultural awareness, and growing skills for life in the Deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing community in Bolton. Courses in which expressions of interest have already been received from Deaf and hearing learners include Community Interpreting, Volunteering and British Culture; Digital Skills; English and Maths; Health, Wellbeing and Confidence; and Sports and Fitness.

Lip-Reading

Previous introductory courses have been well-supported by Deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing learners. Since Spring 2022, Bolton Deaf Society has hosted two courses and both were well-received. This year, we tried to kick-start delivery at an outreach base in Horwich recognising that parking, drug dealing, sex work, anti-social behaviour and crime, and increasingly unreliable public transport services put many off trying to access provision at Bark Street. All of these things have been fed back in evaluation and wider consultation exercises previously. However, neither posters, flyers, social media posts, outreach to Horwich events, encouragement of peer referrals or similar could generate sufficient expressions of interest in the West of the Borough to make a course viable. By contrast, the outreach hub we have established on the East of the Borough in Great Lever is finding really positive traction, though Lip Reading course publicity yielded no interest there either.

With the Tutor, the course content, accreditation and progression options were tightened-up, and we hope that new advertising in Bolton in 2025/26 could see courses re-start.

In Bury, two popular Lip-reading groups continued to run.

Managing Deafness in a Hearing World

Aimed at deafened and hard-of-hearing people coming to emotional and practical terms with their hearing loss, this one-day course introduces Deaf culture and shares experiences of charting a path somewhere between hearing and Deaf communities. It grows awareness of basic BSL, lip reading, communications support professionals and services, welfare benefit entitlements, legal rights to request reasonable adjustment in employment and public service settings, caring for any residual hearing, ensuring that one is fully understood in communications with others, and similarly that they make themselves fully understood to ensure against ill-informed decision-making and harm.

However, as a standalone provision, and in spite of updates, Bolton Deaf Society was unable to secure sign-ups in 2024/25.

To add to the knowledge and skills of hearing professionals working with Deaf people, Bolton Deaf Society continued in the development and delivery of in-work training courses through 2024/25:

Deaf Awareness

Our Deaf Awareness course covers:

- Deaf community numbers
- Deaf culture

- Different means of Deaf communication
- the human consequences and public purse costs of Deaf exclusion
- the business case for Deaf inclusion – and legal vulnerabilities against the backdrop of the Equality Act 2010, the Accessible Information Standards 2016, and the BSL Act 2022
- adjustments that hearing people can make in their working and personal lives when it comes to Deaf inclusion
- a brief introduction to British Sign Language

Our qualified Deaf trainers delivered this course to a number of employers this year – including but not exclusive to:

- Bolton Council who are making small but helpful steps in ensuring their recruitment and selection processes are as Deaf-inclusive as possible
- Bolton GP Federation – keen to enrich their professional development courses and learning exchange workshops
- Bolton CVS and Bury VCFA – to help inform their Deaf-led group support
- MBDA offices in South East England – building on training in Bolton and keen to make their whole operation Deaf-inclusive, Deaf employee experiences as positive as they can be, and progression opportunities as tangible as possible

Approaches have been received from East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust on the possibility of this course being rolled-out to them as well, and our organisation providing sub-contractor assistance around interpreter and communications support bookings. Word is spreading on the value that we're adding through our training and there is a sense of building momentum, even a real sense of professional excitement building as to what could be achieved in system/process change and social impact terms if Bolton Deaf Society can continue to deliver this course. As we expand our team and relieve pressures on our Projects Lead, our monitoring, measurement, evaluation and reporting capacity will grow as well – with learner interviews, focus groups, training investment and value audit, and visual minuting methodologies all in our minds' eye to establish a deeper understanding of what differences our courses make to professionals and Deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing service-users, as well as what could be changed for the better.

Interpreter Awareness

This short online course covers:

- how to book a qualified, experienced, NRCPD-registered BSL/English Interpreter
- the role of the BSL/English Interpreter
- BSL and English Syntax
- the domains BSL Interpreters work in
- how to work effectively with Interpreters
- Interpreter booking and payment
- case studies featuring failure to book Interpreters, legal breaches and personal consequences
- additional barriers the Deaf community face
- the business/ethical/moral case for Deaf inclusion

Aimed at organisations unaware of how their reliance on family members/friends interpreting can adversely impact understanding, decision-making, outcomes, costs and more, this course was offered again this year and Randstad expressed keen interest in commissioning a whole programme of training for staff on their books and prior to their placement in higher education roles. This never materialised in 2024/25, but could do in 2025/26. This prospect is worth keeping warm.

Numbers of requests for interpreters and communication support professionals have generally grown in light of the courses, and Bolton Deaf Society are – from social impact and commercial opportunity points of view – incentivised to continue promoting and recruiting to this course and that we will do.

Inclusive Employment and Access to Work

Covering a number of subject matters, this course is intended to grow readiness for Deaf inclusion in recruitment, the workforce and service/product delivery. It:

- provides insight into the incidence of hearing loss, and more specifically the human consequences, public purse and tax-payer costs associated with Deaf exclusion from the workplace (acute financial hardship and mental ill-health in the Deaf community, the loss of £25 billion a year to the UK economy through lost tax revenues, mental health treatment costs and benefit payments etc)

- offers guidance on growing the accessibility of recruitment, selection, support/supervision/appraisal processes, in-house training and career progression arrangements
- informs employers on Government funding available to them to help make reasonable adjustments to their online and frontline communications, purchase assistive technologies, fund Interpreters and so on in order that Deaf employees can function fully and on an equitable basis to hearing peers, adding the most value they possibly can
- gives food for thought on the benefits of engaging Deaf employees and growing capacity to connect with an audience, prospective service-users and customers across Greater Manchester numbering 185,000 in total and 11 million across the UK

In our experience, Deaf employees are well-placed to advise on Deaf-inclusive system change and external communications; very good at reading body language; respectful, but determined, tenacious and super resilient; superb problem-solvers; very loyal and hard-working employees receptive to personal and professional development opportunities and always inclined to make the very most of them. There is much value Deaf employees can add to any business operation.

The Growth Company (education, training, employment, business development, net zero and consultancy leads working across GM but headquartered in Manchester) had expressed keen interest in receipt of this course through 2024/25 but staffing changes on their side, competing pressures and priorities got in the way. We will look forward to our Business Development Lead continuing to generate interest in 2025/26 through the Chamber, local Employment Partnerships and so on.

If, through delivery of this course, Bolton Deaf Society can continue to open employer minds and hearts to the importance of Deaf inclusion in their workforces then we will be doing the Deaf community, businesses and the public purse/everyday taxpayer a good service.

Public benefit

The Trustees of Bolton Deaf Society consistently have regard to Charity Commission guidance on public benefit in determining services and activities.

Achievements and Performance

Governance

The Bolton Deaf Society Board of Trustees have continued to meet this year, and we reflect on and share a few 2024/25 positives here:

- our starting the year where more than 77% of our Trustees were Deaf, hard-of-hearing and/or disabled³, and a third were of ethnic minority/global majority origin – together bringing much life experience (of exclusion, marginalisation, prejudice and overcoming obstacles) to their roles as well as their professional expertise
- our having had some frank, but helpful conversations about the importance of Trustee attendance at Board and Finance Committee meetings; visibility to staff and accountability towards one another as well as service-users and the Charity Commission; also around performance and strategy-focused meetings, possibly thematic meetings on different aspects of good governance being built into their programme each year, so too training and supervision
- our receiving such positive feedback on our still-developing and improving governance arrangements from both outgoing Bury Hearing Hub Trustees and the School of Social Entrepreneurs

In honest, 360-degree reflection they also recognised in March that they hadn't come as far as they'd wanted with senior staff in:

- opening our governance, leadership and management operations to independent scrutiny, stretch and challenge test through pursuit of Trusted Charity and Bolton Mark accreditation – with a view to improving policy, procedure and practice related to governance and the charity code, planning, leadership, management, user-centred service, people management, learning and development, managing money and resources, external communications, work with others, outcomes and impact reporting: all recognised as important priorities for the organisation with its future operations and social impact in mind
- pursuit of Matrix IAG accreditation for the Advocacy team

³ Disabilities and health conditions include ADHD, Autism, Chronic and frequent migraines, anxiety and depression, Dyspraxia, Gastroesophageal reflux disease, and irritable bowel syndrome.

- establishing a Building and Service-Users' Forum to critically review new Bolton Deaf Society policies and plans, help guide decision-making, direction-setting and cautious, sustainable growth within the parameters set by our organisation's charitable objects but with a clear view to enhancing the place of Deaf voice in our continuing development still further

Other points: strategic and operational

At the end of 2024/25, Bolton Deaf Society was pleased to have grown staff and volunteer numbers as the organisation pushes forward with its needs-led development work across Bolton, Bury and Wigan. A pay increase was considered for 2025/26 but decided against after 3 consecutive years of salary increase given the size of shortfall/funding target with which the new financial year was due to begin, and in reflection on staff feedback that they would like the employee experience and staff benefits more widely at Bolton Deaf Society to be reviewed and improved, and see some of their ideas factored into change and retention planning.

We were proud to have retained the support of Bolton's Fund, Eric Wright Charitable Trust and the National Lottery Community Fund as well as winning the support of new core funders including Garfield Weston and Lloyds Foundation – both keen to invest in our impactful work and need-led plans for organisational and service development.

We were also very thankful to Bolton Council for their opening so many doors and possibilities for the future around, for example, our possible collaboration on producing and regularly updating a captioned BSL version of their cross-sector service Directory – My Life in Bolton.

Our Board of Trustees ended the year with much positivity and considerable anticipation, thankful for the organisational and service development progress that funders and the Deaf community in all its diversity continue to enable; grateful for the hard work of staff and volunteers; and looking forward to seeing new services in Bury and Wigan start finding definition and positive traction through desk-top data review and participatory planning with Deaf community members, public, private and third sector colleagues, present and prospective commissioners, funders and stakeholders otherwise. Taking Bury and Wigan people with the Society on its organisational and service development journey will be important.

Performance reporting

Looking ahead, our organisation hopes and intends still to review and create over-arching and service/project-specific targets afresh; also to embrace and make more of cost benefit analysis and social accounting. Strengthening our capacity for visual and compelling storytelling will be crucial for the organisation's prospects, and with the much needed appointment of an Operations Manager this year, it is hoped that some of the CEO's time will be freed-up to focus on over-arching strategy creation and colleague familiarisation with new KPIs, social impact assessment methods, and external, independent audit bodies such as the Social Audit Network. The organisation is behind with this procedural development work, but progress in 2025/26 allied with Trusted Charity and Bolton Mark accreditations will strengthen operations top to bottom, side to side no end – building on our largely positive position and ensuring this is sustained.

Funding

Grants have been retained and/or secured in 2024/25 from numerous sources for several different purposes:

Towards organisational development and running costs

- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Bradshaw Gass Trust

Towards core salaries and remuneration associated with new posts, and associated organisational/service development

- Lloyds Bank Foundation
- National Lottery Community Fund: Reaching Communities Programme
- Mayor's Office

Towards children and young people's services

- Birkdale Trust for Hearing Impaired
- The Postcode Neighbourhood Trust
- The Inman Charity
- Toy Trust

Towards accessible information and advocacy services for adults

- Eric Wright Charitable Trust
- Sir James and Lady Scott Charitable Trust
- GP Federation

Towards domestic abuse support services

- Bolton's Fund: Partnership Scheme

Towards employment and enterprise services for adults

- UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Workers' Educational Association

Towards health and wellbeing services for adults – including sports and physical activity, and the Deaf Asian Women's Group

- Ford of Britain Trust
- GMCVO/Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust
- Sport England
- Douglas Arter Foundation
- Barclays Community Football Fund

Towards our heritage project

- National Lottery Heritage Fund

All grants are listed in the Accounts.

The support of all these funders is hugely appreciated, and as in previous years emails and letters of thanks, update reports and/or invitations to visit, see and understand the difference they have enabled were issued.

Special thanks are also due this year to individual and organisational donors, listed here:

- Donations In Memory of John Leather
- Crystal Life Planning
- Estate of Reverend David Russell
- T Davies
- St George's School
- R Threlfall Charity

Returns/interest payments on investments this year varied by 92% on last year, and though the monetary return of £7,014 was quite modest still, this increase in return was a positive reflection on investments being managed well, largely by CCLA.

Looking ahead, we anticipate challenges in sustaining organisational/service development and wider-ranging operations at the level required by the Deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing communities across Bolton, Bury, Wigan and surrounding areas, also by the public service providers in the areas we serve as they continue to grapple with service, training and workforce budget cuts. The irony, of course, is that failed provision of accessible, equitable Deaf community support leads to issues' escalation and greater public purse costs than would have been incurred had the resourcing of earlier intervention been possible, and in this difficult context Bolton Deaf Society are fully committed to enable public/third sector service providers to do more and be more for the Deaf community that live with and too frequently have their lives limited by facility/service inadequacies. These income generation and system change challenges will be tackled in parallel through focused financial diversification and continued growth and training of the staff team as budget allows. Pushing to win more contracts, greater corporate and additional individual donor support are big priorities for 2025/26 as we redouble our efforts to get closer to sustainable operations with the added capacity of a Business Development Lead now in situ.

As in 2024/25, there are a number of wide-ranging challenges facing Bolton Deaf Society in 2025/26 – all related in some way to funding:

- Trustee induction, mobilisation, Board work planning and management
- Developing and delivering a new Communications Plan, internal and external, and underpinned by the CRM System we need to embed, new Team Meeting schedules and a new Service-Users' Forum long in the making
- Growing earned income to help cover increased operating costs and reduce reliance on grant funding - through:
 - NHS contract retention as the boundaries change and Deaf interpreting shifts from a local authority to a GM-wide footprint – commissioner education around Deaf community needs, legal liabilities, public purse costs and human consequences, prime provider relationship-building, case-making for sub-contracts and partnership-working with Manchester Deaf Centre and Walthew House being important
 - curriculum enrichment in schools and colleges around Deaf awareness and BSL skills in anticipation of the new GCSE in British Sign Language coming on stream
 - training in Deaf-inclusive employment (recruitment, selection, induction, training, support and supervision, appraisal and career progression) for socially aware and responsible, legally compliant employers who recognise the specialist skills and qualities that Deaf employees bring and are committed to growing their number and harnessing this added value: enhanced visual awareness, strong problem-solving capacity and creativity, adaptability, critical thinking, work ethic due in part to the history of scarce opportunities, reliability and loyalty, capacity to converse with Deaf customers/service-users and enhance service provision, and more
 - training in Deaf-inclusive public sector service provision across frontline and online settings, growing understanding of reasonable adaptations necessary to optimise Deaf citizen experiences and outcomes
 - optimisation of bespoke consultancy opportunities
 - continued pursuit of and sign-off on agreements with Transport for Greater Manchester to make passenger information and support services Deaf-inclusive – aligning with and adding value to the work of Bury Society for Blind and Partially Sighted People to grow equal access for people with sight loss
 - room hire
 - interpreter and communication support services beyond the bounds of current contracts in Bolton and Wigan
 - fundraising event production and delivery
- Establishing a new trading entity, getting a Memorandum of Understanding in place that provides for profit payment back to the charity each year, and, possibly, a wrap-around governance structure
- New service and organisational strategy development knitting together service, project and other workstream-related plans, and aligning with Trusted Charity and Bolton Mark pursuit plans rooted in self-assessment and peer-assessment findings, providing for consolidation, quality assurance and continued needs-led growth in Bolton, Bury and Wigan, and – potentially – GM local authority areas beyond as collaborations with Manchester Deaf Centre and Walthew House (the dual sensory loss charity in Stockport) grow more frequent and impactful
- Team-building inclusive of Deaf and hearing part-time staff across three locations, some long-serving, some new and additional – regular meetings, annual away days, Microsoft Teams-based and BSL video communication, whiteboards and handover files all playing parts in the maintenance of strong communication, shared understanding, contribution to work plans' continued evolution and assurance of clarity on golden threads linking roles, service and project-specific plans and overarching strategy
- Staff recognition, reward and retention – holding onto highly skilful, culturally tuned-in, BSL and bi-lingual colleagues (also able to converse using spoken English, Sign Supported English, through Deaf Relay and Lip Speaking communication professionals) proves increasingly difficult as the cost-of-living crisis continues to impact families, circumstances change and our budget constraints squeeze

Work on risk management and mitigation measures is underway.

Capital works

The Deaf Centre on Bark Street remains Bolton Deaf Society's largest asset in financial and practical terms, and its revaluation in year was helpful in assessing our overall financial position. Without it, service delivery would be so much more difficult. Following on from substantive refurbishment works over the last two years, we have this year committed to replacing the last of our wooden first-floor windows, and noted that the platform lift from the front door is increasingly unreliable and potentially going to be in need of replacement soon. Funds for capital expenditure are often hard to come by, but as our organisation starts to earn more and raise more so we hope that we will be able to cover all that's necessary.

Financial review

Overview

Through 2024/25, Bolton Deaf Society continued on its positive organisational development trajectory:

- extending wider-reaching and more impactful Deaf-inclusive sports and physical activity options to the Deaf community in all its diversity
- empowering Deaf-led groups in their more effective, efficient and transparent governance and book-keeping/accounts' production, enhanced operations/policy and procedural regulation, profile-building, interest and income generation – with a particular focus on the Darby & Joan and Sports & Social Clubs to start
- increasing income marginally, catching-up with restricted expenditure and reducing losses
- starting to build a repository of quantitative evidence of impact through service and contract delivery, supporting case studies and testimonials – in preparing the way for new and additional tenders, hopeful of winning other local, Deaf community experience and prospect-enhancing contracts in Bolton and surrounding areas
- starting to get smarter in additional evaluation and reporting methods' deployment that do not rely on participant/respondent reading and writing capacity
- utilising extra book-keeping, credit control, management control, budget planning and cash flow projections management capacity
- utilising a new, third-party HR company to provide support

The biggest financial successes of the year were, however, in:

- securing a 3-year Interpreter and Communications Support Service contract with Wigan Council, worth a potential £75,000 per year with a margin of £20-50k per annum if core performance targets and match-funding goals are achieved
- completing the merger with Bury Hearing Hub, securing funds of £200k+ to invest in organisational infrastructure supportive of growth, the development of needs-led services responsive to Deaf community needs, issues, aspirations and preferences in our neighbouring local authority area of Bury

Details of the grants secured in 2024/25 are given in notes 2 and 3 to the accounts and expenditure against funds and balances carried forward are shown in note 16. Income earned through contracted service provision in Bolton and Wigan, and miscellaneous enterprising activities otherwise, is shown in notes 3 and 4 to the accounts.

Principal funding sources

In 2024/25, Bolton Deaf Society was funded principally through charitable grants again (excluding sale of Bury Hearing Hub property):

Charitable and other grants	63.3%
Earned income	32.8%
Donations and legacies	1.8%
Investment and other income	2.1%

Through the year, however, Bolton Deaf Society was very pleased to continue booking Interpreters, Lip Speakers, Communication Support Workers and similar for the 49 GP Surgeries and Optometrists across the Borough of Bolton. Servicing this interim contract with Greater Manchester Integrated Care has started to diversify our organisation's income streams. We were also very pleased to secure the contract we did with Wigan Council, and with growing numbers of consultancy and training prospects in the pipeline we are encouraged by the organisation's income generation prospects for 2025/26 through most of which we hope to have new Trustees and a new Operations Manager working to full capacity, bringing extra heads, hands and hearts to managing positive momentum in organisational development terms.

On this financial diversification journey, we expect there being a need to appraise our organisational structure and the pros and cons of different trading arm entity options. As earned income grows, our organisation must guard against crossing primary purpose charity trading thresholds and exposing itself to additional tax liabilities.

Investment policy

The Trustees remain cautious around Bolton Deaf Society's investments and lower yield for greater security remains a compromise with which the Board are content at the end of 2024/25.

Reserves policy

It is the policy of Trustees to hold not more than 6 months' running costs in free reserves (unrestricted funds not invested in fixed assets or otherwise designated). Free reserves as at 31st March 2025 were £274,555 against an agreed cost budget of £574,841 for 2025/26, which equates to c.5.7 months' operational costs. It is not lost on anyone at Bolton Deaf Society, however, that as our organisation grows so governance, office running, building maintenance/repair, insurance, interpreter, rent, bookkeeping, accounting and other costs will increase so some increased revenues will need to be ringfenced and reserves topped-up in demonstration of prudent management practice.

Going concern

The Trustees believe that Bolton Deaf Society remains on a positive trajectory, and at the financial year end have no concerns to report on the organisation's viability going forward.

Future plans

Priorities for the organisation looking ahead as the year ended were numerous:

- Refresh of the What Deaf People Want needs assessment survey involving the Social Research with Deaf People (SORD) team from the University of Manchester in accessible, multi-format survey, interview and focus group work covering Bolton, Bury and Wigan, remembering that Wigan Council and Wigan & Leigh Citizens Advice Bureau have expressed interest in collaboration too with their own organisational and service development in mind
- In-depth consultation and participatory service planning with Deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing people in Bury
- The creation of uplifted budget plans and supportive strategy around funding and financial diversification – with a view to optimising grants, contracts, bespoke consultancy, general earned income (through room hire for example), and individual/organisational/corporate donations
- Growth of the Bury staff and volunteer team, and service base
- Creation of a new overarching strategy for Bolton Deaf Society to join-up Bolton-centred service and project plans, reflect the merger with Bury Hearing Hub, commitment to service delivery in Wigan (core interpreter and communications support plus value-adding advocacy, employment and enterprise support, Council and partner staff training in Deaf awareness and inclusion), and the need of embedding more robust performance management, impact assessment, continuous improvement planning, funder, partner and stakeholder reporting
- Refresh of the charity's governing document to permit the appointment of more than 8 trustees – ensuring geographical spread, reflect extended geographical remit, and a new name
- Recruitment of new, additional Trustees bringing lived experience from across the Deaf community spectrum, professional skills/knowledge/expertise in strategic leadership capacity around organisational scale-up, quality assurance, health & safety, safeguarding, marketing/communications/PR, and new technologies' integration
- Establishment of Building and Service Users' Fora across Bolton and Bury
- Work towards the appointment of a new Operations Manager to bring additional line management, pastoral support, team-building and management capacity to the organisation – helping stretch, challenge, grow and care for team members; increase the effectiveness and efficiency of internal and external communications; and make the employee experience at Bolton Deaf Society the best it can be
- Implementation of the Website Development and Social Media Strategy prepared with Roebuck Digital
- Development and implementation of the new Customer Relationship Management System we have started to plan with Lloyds Bank Foundation to aid funder, commissioner, supporter, service-user, partner and stakeholder communications management
- Progression of and catch-up with infrastructure-building, system and process involvement through timely completion in-year of Trusted Charity and Bolton Mark accreditation
- Pursuit of Matrix Information, Advice and Guidance accreditation for the Advocacy Service
- Appraisal of new trading arm entity options, choice and planning for registration and mobilisation to guard against the organisation crossing primary purpose trading thresholds. A Community Interest Company and Company Limited by Shares with the Charity its sole shareholder are among the options considered to date
- Commitment to more regular participation in, contribution to and takeaway from the VCSE Leadership Groups in Bolton, Bury and Wigan to enable greater influence over, ensure closer alignment with and realise more benefit for the organisation and Deaf community from bigger picture strategy around place-based regeneration, new social housing, health and wellbeing strategy, and so on
- Open-up more numerous opportunities for Deaf community representation in cross-sector strategic fora

Structure, governance and management

Governing document

Bolton Deaf Society is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), registered charity number 1191838, and is governed by its foundation constitution dated October 15th 2020, as amended on 15/12/2021 and a Board of Trustees. The assets, liabilities and operations of the previous unincorporated charity (registered number 215340) were transferred to this CIO on 15th October 2020.

Appointment of trustees

Following a comprehensive recruitment process, Trustees are appointed by the Board of Trustees at their meeting and serve for a period of three years before being subject to re-election. Through quarter 4 of 2024/25, Bolton Deaf Society was actively trying to recruit new, additional Trustees with expertise in strategic leadership capacity around organisational scale-up, quality assurance, health & safety, safeguarding, marketing/communications/PR, and new technologies' integration, but attracting interested and suitably well-equipped people with lived experience is a challenge with which the organisation must push forward to strengthen its self-regulation and quality assurance capacity.

Trustee induction and training

Trustees receive a full induction and training appropriate to their portfolio of responsibilities, as well as regular refresher training on good governance and peer support. Business and training calendars remain Board commitments, so too regular revisits on Charity Governance Code Self-Assessment Exercises.

Organisation

The Bolton Deaf Society Board of Trustees must presently have no more than eight and no fewer than three trustees, but in governing document update to reflect the merger and embrace a new name, provision will be made to increase the maximum number of trustees to create additional space for value-adding life experience, skills, knowledge, networks and wisdom. The charity's governing document does not specify how often the Board should meet, but in practice meetings are held monthly, with the day-to-day management of the charity delegated to the CEO, Business Development Lead, Projects Lead, Office Manager and Accessible Information and Advocacy Service Lead (the SMT). Once the new Operations Manager is in place – early in 2025/26 all being well – they will join the SMT as well and grow its membership to 6.

Co-operation with other organisations

Keen to maximise reach, effectiveness and efficiency, Bolton Deaf Society goes on linking with public, private and third sector organisations active across Bolton, Bury and Wigan, we established a number of value-adding working relationships:

Accessible Information and Advocacy

Particularly pleasing this year is that in addition to working with Deaf people to relieve stress by making representations and breaking system access/progress barriers, our Advocates have been able to help a number of local service providers improve first-time, day-round, year-round accessibility for Deaf, BSL-users:

- Bolton GP Federation on their on-going journey to Deaf inclusion
- Bolton NHS Foundation Trust on staff training in Deaf awareness and inclusion, and growth of patient awareness on their rights
- The University of Bolton who are keen to work with our charity on growing the accessibility of their external communications, teaching and learner support arrangements for Deaf learners mindful that no other institution in Greater Manchester or the wider North West currently makes this commitment to enabling and empowering profoundly Deaf BSL-users to fulfil their educational potential

Sport and Physical Activity

In 2024/25, we extended our Deaf and Interpreter Awareness and Basic BSL training to Farnworth and Horwich Leisure Centres, hopeful they might follow Bolton Arena and Leverhulme Park in beginning to make reasonable adjustments in favour of optimising Deaf access and participation in sport and physical activity.

More widely, we were fortunate enough to work this year with:

- Bolton College who have provided BSL Level 1 and 2 courses on site at Bark Street

- Bolton Council – to whom Bolton Deaf Society provides support in making public consultation exercises accessible to Deaf people whose first language, BSL, is visual and not written or spoken; the One Stop Shop who have integrated Sign Live (now Convo) into their service delivery to make frontline information, advice and guidance around neighbourhood management, community safety, public amenities, births, marriages, deaths and much besides accessible; and the Community Safety Team who have trained Bolton Deaf Society staff around hate crime and duly accredited Bolton Deaf Society as a Hate Crime Reporting Centre
- Bolton Council of Mosques who refer into our Deaf Asian Women's Group
- Closha Associates and Trading Standards around optimising conference accessibility and raising awareness of the importance of making consumer safety guidelines and scam/self-protection toolkits Deaf/BSL-user inclusive
- Bolton Food & Drink, Film and Pride Festivals to arrange Interpreters and Performance Interpreters – increasing programmes' accessibility
- Crystal Life Planning to make their advice on estates, trusts, wills, funeral planning and more accessible to Deaf people – their also gifting Bolton Deaf Society a generous contribution each month
- Digicomm 360 who have looked after our computers, internet connectivity, telephones, mobile phones and technical support services associated with all
- Eleven Accounts Services who have kept our books
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, Salford and Trafford Councils, Manchester Deaf Centre and Walthew House (Stockport) between which dialogue started on the postcode lottery with which Deaf citizens must contend across GM in trying to access Accessible Information and Advocacy Services – those in Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside and Trafford are currently without nearby access adding to the exacerbated cost-of-living pressures they already face with need of extra travel to find accessible amenities, assistive equipment, employers committed to legal compliance and Deaf inclusion etc
- Deaf Rave, Purple Elk Drumming, and Reform Radio on growing Deaf skills for employment
- Morris Accountancy Services who have provided payroll support
- The Office for Product Safety and Standards in Central Government with whom we have made self-help product safety videos
- Pheniks Division who have provided First Aid and Safeguarding training
- Whiteley Accountancy Services who have helped produce our Management and Annual Accounts, with interim reports in visual format
- ... and many besides

Trustees and senior staff would like to thank all for their continued support in 2024/25. You have enriched our operational management, service provision considerably, and from working with you our organisation has learned a great deal.

Strategic and operational management

The day-to-day running of Bolton Deaf Society is devolved to the Chief Executive Officer, John Hesketh, and in setting-out and progressing development plans this year, he has again been keen to align activity with need. From a strategic point of view, he has:

- completed an exit interview with a Trustee leaving on the grounds of ill-health
- helped onboard a new Caretaker and Cleaner to help with building access and security out of office hours, cleaning, routine maintenance, repair, recording and service arrangements on fixed equipment and portable appliances
- grown the charity's HR management capacity overseeing the refresh of contracts, terms & conditions; policies and procedures; and difficult case management arrangements
- completed the School for Social Entrepreneurs course in Trading and Sustainability with the organisation's future financial wellbeing in mind
- opened up a range of collaboration opportunities with The Met in Bury around growing community arts workshop access for Deaf people, signed performance provision, BSL content production for their screens, Deaf employee engagement and Deaf creatives' welcome in the Two Crows studio/social enterprise area; so too with the Bury Business Improvement District around retailer training in Deaf customer access provisions
- secured a 3-year contract with Wigan Council to cover Interpreter and Communication Support Services across the local authority, health and social service providers active across the Borough
- overseen completion of a merger with/takeover of Bury Hearing Hub
- started to prepare the way for pursuit of Trusted Charity Mark and Bolton Mark accreditation (after significant delay caused by competing priorities and pressures)
- identified several socially impactful business development opportunities

... all to help underpin and support growth in activity on and off site with direct benefit for the Deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing communities we serve and growth of hearing professionals' capacity for Deaf community inclusion in mind. New people and arrangements are bedding-in but getting all working to full potential and benefit will take a short while.

In operational terms, 2024/25 sadly saw Bolton Deaf Society lose an Employment & Enterprise Adviser (due to requirements of budget trimming), but on a positive note this staffing loss necessitated more creative thinking around the portfolio of responsibilities Advocates manage. Volunteer numbers grew from 9 to 12 in year, new colleagues assisting with visitor reception, office administration, outreach, consultation and promotion, the Bright Start Group and fledgling Creative Connections programme – and supported by the new Volunteer Co-ordinator role we have created.

As the financial year drew to a close, plans were being made for Trustee training in safeguarding as part of the Board's on-going refresh, learning and development programme, also for Board away days to aid future governance and strategy-related work planning.

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the Financial Statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Charity law requires the Trustees to prepare Financial Statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure of the charity for that period. In preparing these Financial Statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them appropriately
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP (FRS 102) (second edition – October 2019)
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the Financial Statements
- prepare the Financial Statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the Financial Statements comply with the Charities Act 2022. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approval

Approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by

R Bounds

Mr Richard Bounds, Vice-Chair of the Board
Bolton Deaf Society
6th January 2026

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
TO THE TRUSTEES OF BOLTON DEAF SOCIETY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

I report on the unaudited financial statements of Bolton Deaf Society for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Statement of Financial Position and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act).

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the charity are not required to be audited for this year 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 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.

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

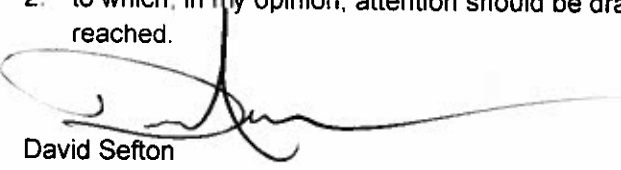
Independent examiner's statement

I am qualified to undertake the examination, being a member of the Institute of Financial Accountants (IFA). In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act 2011; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (FRS102)

have not been met; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.


David Sefton

for and on behalf of
Seftons Limited
Independent examiner

135 - 143 Union Street
Oldham
Lancashire
OL1 1TE

Date: 6/1/26

BOLTON DEAF SOCIETY

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (including the Income and Expenditure account)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total Combined
		Funds	Funds	2025	2024
		£	£	£	£
INCOME					
Donations	2	31,401	-	31,401	59,985
Charitable activities	3	163,972	81,757	245,729	163,258
Other trading activities	4	10,623	-	10,623	25,071
Investment income	5	6,314	-	6,314	6,853
Profit on disposal of fixed assets	6 / 24	243,764	-	243,764	-
TOTAL INCOME		<u>456,074</u>	<u>81,757</u>	<u>537,831</u>	<u>255,167</u>
EXPENDITURE					
Cost of raising funds	7	99,290	-	99,290	61,100
Charitable activities	8	237,380	50,909	288,289	230,828
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>336,670</u>	<u>50,909</u>	<u>387,579</u>	<u>291,928</u>
Net gains/(losses) on investments	13	700	-	700	(3,201)
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) BEFORE TRANSFERS		<u>120,104</u>	<u>30,848</u>	<u>150,952</u>	<u>(39,961)</u>
Transfers between funds		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		<u>120,104</u>	<u>30,848</u>	<u>150,952</u>	<u>(39,961)</u>
TOTAL FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD		<u>278,492</u>	<u>44,467</u>	<u>322,959</u>	<u>362,920</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u><u>398,596</u></u>	<u><u>75,315</u></u>	<u><u>473,911</u></u>	<u><u>322,959</u></u>

BOLTON DEAF SOCIETY**BALANCE SHEET****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025**

	Notes	2025 £	2025 £	Combined 2024 £	Combined 2024 £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible Assets	12		124,041		125,804
Investments	13		73,172		72,472
			197,213		198,276
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	14	37,710		19,567	
Cash at Bank and in Hand		263,572		133,153	
		301,282		152,720	
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due in one year	15	24,584		28,037	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			276,698		124,683
NET ASSETS			473,911		322,959
FUNDS					
Unrestricted	16		398,596		278,492
Restricted	16		75,315		44,467
TOTAL FUNDS			473,911		322,959

The notes on pages 29 to 38 form part of these financial statements.

For the year ending 31/03/25 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

- The Trustees have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476,

- The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Approved by the Trustees and authorised for issue on 6th January 2026.

And signed on their behalf by:

R Bounds

Mr Richard Bounds, Vice-Chair of the Board

BOLTON DEAF SOCIETY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

1. Accounting Policies

Basis of preparation

The Financial Statements have been prepared: under the historic cost convention, as modified by the revaluation of investments (as set out below) through the statement of financial activities; in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts and with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) effective January 1 2019 (second edition – October 2019); and the Charities Act 2022 and UK Generally Accepted Practice.

The accounts (Financial Statements) have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS102.

The financial statements are prepared in £ sterling, the functional currency of the charity.

Going Concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charitable company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

Estimates and judgements

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.

Income recognition

All income is recognised once the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably. The following applies to particular types of income:

Grants, whether of a capital or revenue nature, are recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions have been met and it is probable that the income will be received.

Donations from individuals and other bodies (not being of the nature of a grant) are recognised when receivable.

Earned income is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable for services and goods supplied, net of discounts and VAT.

Deferred income

Income is only deferred and included in creditors when:

- ✓ The income relates to a future accounting period
- ✓ A sales invoice has been raised ahead of the work being carried out and there is no contractual entitlement to the income until the work has been done
- ✓ Not all the terms and conditions of the grant have been met, including the incurring of expenditure and the grant conditions are such that unspent grant must be refunded

1. Accounting Policies (continued)

Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

Costs of raising funds - including those associated with fundraising activities and managing investments

Charitable activities - costs of undertaking the work of the charity.

The charity is not registered for VAT and cannot recover any input tax charged. Costs are stated inclusive of VAT were charged.

Allocation of support costs

Support costs are those functions which assist the work of the charity either by supporting the delivery of charitable activities or by supporting the generation of funds. They include back-office functions, staff costs, management support, insurance and professional fees.

Pension contributions

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for its employees, agreeing the contribution rates with each individual. The contributions are paid to a third party (NEST Pensions) who invest the contributions in a money purchase plan. Contributions are charged to the SoFA as they become payable.

Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Individual fixed assets costing more than £1,000 are capitalised at cost and are depreciated over their estimated useful lives on a straight-line basis as set-out below.

The leasehold land and buildings are held on leases dating from 19th century which are exceptional in that they are for 5,000 and 4,900 years. The Trustees have taken the view that given the length of the leases the cost effectively represents the value of the land on which the buildings sit. As land does not itself depreciate, and given the unexpired terms of the lease, it is currently equivalent to holding a freehold title, and therefore no depreciation should be charged.

Depreciation rates for other assets are as follows:

Fixtures and fittings	25% reducing balance
Computer equipment	25% reducing balance

Investments, gains and losses

Fixed assets investments are a form of basic financial instrument and are initially recorded at their transaction value and subsequently measured at their fair value as at the balance sheet date using the closing quoted market price. The SoFA includes the net gains and losses arising on revaluation and on disposals throughout the period.

Gains and losses are taken to the Statement of Financial Activities as they arise. Realised gains and losses are calculated as the difference between sale proceeds (net of transaction costs) and the opening carrying value or cost, if acquired during the period.

Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due and prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid.

1. Accounting Policies (continued)

Cash at bank and in hand

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

Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement account.

Financial instruments

The charity has only basic financial instruments which are initially recorded at cost, and with the exception of investments (as set-out above) subsequently measured at their settlement value.

Statement of cashflows

Advantage is taken of the exemptions in SoRP not to present a statement of cashflows.

2. DONATIONS & LEGACIES

	2025			2024 (Combined)		
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Other revenue grants						
Bradshaw Gass Trust	1,200	-	1,200	1,200	-	1,200
Garfield Weston 24/25	-	-	-	10,000	-	10,000
Lloyds Bank 24/25	25,000	-	25,000	25,000	-	25,000
	<u>26,200</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>26,200</u>	<u>36,200</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>36,200</u>
Grants – refurbishment & furniture						
Ford Britain Trust	-	-	-	-	3,000	3,000
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,000</u>	<u>3,000</u>
Donations & legacies						
Donations – General	5,201	-	5,201	14,785	-	14,785
Legacies	-	-	-	6,000	-	6,000
	<u>5,201</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,201</u>	<u>20,785</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>20,785</u>
TOTAL	<u>31,401</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>31,401</u>	<u>56,985</u>	<u>3,000</u>	<u>59,985</u>

BOLTON DEAF SOCIETY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2025			2024 (Combined)		
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
National Lottery Heritage Fund	-	28,392	28,392	-	-	-
National Lottery Community Fund	63,422	-	63,422	-	-	-
Big Lottery Community Fund	-	-	-	-	25,000	25,000
	<u>63,422</u>	<u>28,392</u>	<u>91,814</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>25,000</u>	<u>25,000</u>
Accessible Information Service:						
Bolton's Fund	-	-	-	-	11,220	11,220
Eric Wright Charitable Trust	6,000	-	6,000	-	-	-
GP Federation	2,000	-	2,000	-	-	-
Sir James & Lady Scott Trust	-	3,000	3,000	-	-	-
Sobell Foundation 24/25	-	-	-	-	10,000	10,000
The Mayor's Office	6,520	-	6,520	-	-	-
UKSPF/WEA	-	38,712	38,712	-	-	-
	<u>14,520</u>	<u>41,712</u>	<u>56,232</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>21,220</u>	<u>21,220</u>
Health and Wellbeing (including Sports and Social Activities):						
Barclays Community Football Fund	1,000	-	1,000	-	-	-
Bolton Fund	-	-	-	-	8,541	8,541
The David Family Foundation	-	-	-	-	1,000	1,000
Douglas Arter Foundation	-	500	500	-	-	-
GMCVO	-	10,460	10,460	-	1,322	1,322
Marsh Charitable Trust	-	-	-	-	500	500
Salford CVS	-	-	-	-	2,000	2,000
UK Deaf Sport	-	-	-	-	3,000	3,000
The Zochonis Charitable Trust	-	-	-	-	5,000	5,000
	<u>1,000</u>	<u>10,960</u>	<u>11,960</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>21,363</u>	<u>21,363</u>
Other grants:						
Birkdale Trust	-	-	-	-	3,000	3,000
Bolton CVS: Employment	-	-	-	-	1,000	1,000
Bolton CVS: Scams Awareness	-	-	-	-	6,300	6,300
The Postcode Neighbourhood Trust	-	-	-	-	16,749	16,749
The Inman Charity	-	-	-	-	5,000	5,000
Toy Trust	-	-	-	-	2,952	2,952
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>35,001</u>	<u>35,001</u>
Other income:						
Interpreting	84,284	-	84,284	34,921	-	34,921
Café	-	-	-	1	-	1
DWP	-	693	693	-	15,554	15,554
Lip Reading Classes	300	-	300	1,377	-	1,377
Safeguarding Classes	-	-	-	1,360	-	1,360
Bury MBC	446	-	446	5,461	-	5,461
Six Town Housing	-	-	-	-	2,000	2,000
	<u>85,030</u>	<u>693</u>	<u>85,723</u>	<u>43,120</u>	<u>17,554</u>	<u>60,674</u>
TOTAL	<u>163,972</u>	<u>81,757</u>	<u>245,729</u>	<u>43,120</u>	<u>120,138</u>	<u>163,258</u>

BOLTON DEAF SOCIETY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

	2025			2024 (Combined)		
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
4. INCOME FROM OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES						
Courses Provided by BDS	6,353	-	6,353	9,495	-	9,495
Room hire	2,964	-	2,964	12,909	-	12,909
Other income	1,306	-	1,306	2,667	-	2,667
TOTAL	10,623	-	10,623	25,071	-	25,071
5. INVESTMENT INCOME						
Income from listed investments	5,046	-	5,046	5,464	-	5,464
Bank interest	1,268	-	1,268	1,389	-	1,389
TOTAL	6,314	-	6,314	6,853	-	6,853
6. PROFIT/(LOSS) ON DISPOSAL						
Profit on disposal of property	244,000	-	244,000	-	-	-
Loss on disposal of equipment	(236)	-	(236)	-	-	-
	243,764	-	243,764	-	-	-
7. COST OF RAISING FUNDS						
Direct staff costs	30,086	-	30,086	15,620	-	15,620
Freelance	717	-	717	2,178	-	2,178
Other fundraising costs	-	-	-	5,535	-	5,535
Professional fees	-	-	-	200	-	200
Support costs	68,487	-	68,487	37,567	-	37,567
	99,290	-	99,290	61,100	-	61,100
8. CHARITABLE EXPENDITURE						
Salary costs	34,499	20,252	54,751	50,998	-	50,998
Freelance costs	18,956	4,385	23,341	13,555	-	13,555
Interpreters	82,458	6,904	89,362	42,934	-	42,934
Other direct costs	15,633	9,671	25,304	26,392	27,818	54,210
Premises	19,706	28	19,734	26,871	-	26,871
Volunteer expenses	522	57	579	490	-	490
Depreciation	1,347	-	1,347	(206)	-	(206)
Professional Fees	2,289	2,490	4,779	-	-	-
Support and governance costs	61,970	7,122	69,092	41,975	-	41,975
Allocated to restricted funds	-	-	-	(157,709)	157,709	-
	237,380	50,909	288,289	45,301	185,527	230,828
9. SUPPORT & GOVERNANCE COSTS						
Support costs						
Staff costs	68,487	-	68,487	37,567	-	37,567
Insurance	5,679	-	5,679	-	5,218	5,218
Office costs & other costs	15,522	5,197	20,719	-	20,749	20,749
	89,688	5,197	94,885	37,567	25,967	63,534
Governance costs						
Professional fees	40,769	1,925	42,694	2,835	13,173	16,008
	40,769	1,925	42,694	2,835	13,173	16,008
Total support costs	130,457	7,122	137,579	40,402	39,140	79,542

BOLTON DEAF SOCIETY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

Costs that can be wholly attributed to either support or governance are allocated directly to those functions, and other costs are allocated either on the basis of the estimation of time spent (freelance staff) or consumption of resources (office costs).

Support and governance costs are then allocated between costs of raising funds and charitable activities on the basis of the estimation of the use of resources, using a standard percentage method.

10. NET INCOMING RESOURCES AFTER TRANSFERS

	2025	2024 (Combined)
	£	£
This is stated after charging/(crediting):		
Accountant/Independent examiner's fees (inc VAT)		
Report	1,440	2,040
Accountancy (including charges for prior year)	13,966	8,634
Depreciation charged on fixed assets	636	(425)
Directors' remuneration & trustees' expenses	-	78

11. STAFF COSTS

	2025	2024 (Combined)
	£	£
a Staff costs		
Salaries and wages	145,776	137,256
Social security costs	4,896	492
Pension costs	2,653	2,060
	153,325	139,808

No employee earned more than £60,000 in either year

b Key management personnel

The key management personnel comprise the trustees and Chief executive. The trustees do not receive any remuneration for their services.

The average number of employees during the year was:

	2025	2024 (Combined)
	Average Number	Average Number
Charitable	11	9
	11	9

BOLTON DEAF SOCIETY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

12. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Long leasehold land & buildings	Fixture & fittings	Computer equipment	Total
Cost	£	£	£	£
As at 1 April 2024 (Combined)	120,000	9,347	7,087	136,434
Additions/(Disposals)	-	(1,127)	-	(1,127)
As at 31 March 2025	<u>120,000</u>	<u>8,220</u>	<u>7,087</u>	<u>135,307</u>
Depreciation				
As at 1 April 2024 (Combined)	-	6,171	4,459	10,630
Charge for the year	-	(21)	657	636
As at 31 March 2025	<u>-</u>	<u>6,150</u>	<u>5,116</u>	<u>11,266</u>
Net Book Value				
As at 31 March 2025	<u>120,000</u>	<u>2,070</u>	<u>1,971</u>	<u>124,041</u>
As at 31 March 2024 (Combined)	<u>120,000</u>	<u>3,176</u>	<u>2,628</u>	<u>125,804</u>

13. INVESTMENTS

	2025	2024 (Combined)
	£	£
Market value brought forward	72,472	89,210
Additions at cost	-	-
Net gains/(losses)	700	(3,201)
As at 31 March 2025	<u>73,172</u>	<u>72,472</u>
Investments are represented by:		
COIF Charity Funds	73,172	72,472
	<u>73,172</u>	<u>72,472</u>

14. DEBTORS

Debtors receivable	27,314	15,165
Provision for doubtful debts	(3,810)	-
Prepayments & other debtors	14,206	4,402
	<u>37,710</u>	<u>19,567</u>

15. CREDITORS falling due within one year

Accounts payable	10,837	12,422
Social security and other taxes	3,766	2,156
Accruals	9,981	13,455
Other creditors	-	4
	<u>24,584</u>	<u>28,037</u>

BOLTON DEAF SOCIETY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

16. STATEMENT OF FUNDS	Balance (Combined) 01/04/24	Income	Expenditure	Gains & Losses	Transfers	Balance 31/03/25
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted Funds:						
General fund	278,492	212,310	(336,670)	244,464	-	398,596
	<u>278,492</u>	<u>212,310</u>	<u>(336,670)</u>	<u>244,464</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>398,596</u>
Restricted Funds:						
National Lottery Heritage Fund	-	28,392	-	-	-	28,392
Accessible Information Service	10,000	41,712	(27,219)	-	-	24,493
Health and Wellbeing	500	10,960	(4,443)	-	-	7,017
Other grants	33,967	693	(19,247)	-	-	15,413
	<u>44,467</u>	<u>81,757</u>	<u>(50,909)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>75,315</u>
Total Funds	<u>322,959</u>	<u>294,067</u>	<u>(387,579)</u>	<u>244,464</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>473,911</u>

Restricted funds carried forward

Accessible Information Service	Future costs of service
Health And Wellbeing	Health, Sports, Social and Deaf Inclusion Projects
Other grants	Bolton Fund £3,538 for Scams Awareness
	Axis Foundation £2,750 for Scams Awareness
	Funds from Bury Hearing Hub £778
	Toy Trust £1,495 for Youth Services
	Birkdale Trust £872 for Youth Services
	The Post Code Neighbourhood Trust for Youth Services £5,979

<i>For the prior year (Combined)</i>	Balance 01/04/23	Income	Expenditure	Gains & Losses	Transfers	Balance 31/03/24
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted Funds:						
General fund	256,358	132,029	(106,400)	(3,201)	(294)	278,492
	<u>256,358</u>	<u>132,029</u>	<u>(106,400)</u>	<u>(3,201)</u>	<u>(294)</u>	<u>278,492</u>
Restricted Funds:						
Refurbishment & furniture:						
Other funding	500	3,000	(3,500)	-	-	-
Big Lottery Community Fund	38,829	25,000	(63,829)	-	-	-
Accessible Information Service	16,667	21,220	(27,887)	-	-	10,000
Health and Wellbeing	24,730	21,363	(45,593)	-	-	500
Other grants	25,836	52,555	(44,718)	-	294	33,967
	<u>106,562</u>	<u>123,138</u>	<u>(185,527)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>294</u>	<u>44,467</u>
Total Funds	<u>362,920</u>	<u>255,168</u>	<u>(291,927)</u>	<u>(3,201)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>322,959</u>

BOLTON DEAF SOCIETY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

17. ANALYSIS OF COMPANY NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total £
Fund balances at 31 March 2025 are represented by:			
Tangible fixed assets	124,041	-	124,041
Investments	73,172	-	73,172
Net current assets	201,383	75,315	276,698
	<u>398,596</u>	<u>75,315</u>	<u>473,911</u>
Fund balances (combined) at 31 March 2024 are represented by:			
Tangible fixed assets	125,804	-	125,804
Investments	72,472	-	72,472
Net current assets	80,216	44,467	124,683
	<u>278,492</u>	<u>44,467</u>	<u>322,959</u>

19. TAXATION

The Company is a registered charity and is entitled to claim annual exemption from UK corporation tax.

20. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

During the year the charity received £45 from R Pickup for the provision of a course (2024 £Nil). No expenses were paid to trustees in 2025 (2024 £78).

21. CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

There were no capital commitments authorised and contracted for at the end of the year (2024 £Nil).

22. VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer numbers grew from 9 to 12 in year, new colleagues assisting with visitor reception, office administration, outreach, consultation and promotion, the Bright Start Group and fledgling Creative Connections programme. This amounted to approximately 130 hours of volunteer time

BOLTON DEAF SOCIETY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

23. MERGER ACCOUNTING

The merger of Bury Hearing Hub and Bolton Deaf Society was completed on 10th February 2025. With the merged charity retaining the Bolton Deaf Society name. The aim of the merger was to utilise economies of scale and the experience of Bolton Deaf Society whilst selling an inaccessible and expensive to run property, so as to better run services in the community.

No significant changes to accounting policies were required or restatement of unrestricted funds due to the merger.

Analysis of principal SoFA components for the current reporting period

	Bury Hearing Hub (pre-merger)	Bolton Deaf Society (pre-merger)	Bolton Deaf Society (post-merger)	Combined total
	£	£	£	£
Total income	3,004	219,523	71,540	294,067
Total expenditure	13,470	286,841	86,569	386,880
Net income/(expenditure)	(10,466)	(67,318)	(15,029)	(92,813)
Other gains/(losses)	243,764	-	-	243,764
Net movement in funds	233,298	(67,318)	(15,029)	150,951

Analysis of principal SoFA components for the previous reporting period

	Bury Hearing Hub	Bolton Deaf Society	Combined total
	£	£	£
Total income	47,548	207,619	255,167
Total expenditure	53,494	238,433	291,927
Net income/(expenditure)	(5,946)	(30,814)	(36,760)
Other gains/(losses)	-	(3,201)	(3,201)
Net movement in funds	(5,946)	(34,015)	(39,961)
Total funds brought forward	20,835	342,085	362,920
Total funds carried forward	14,889	308,070	322,959

Analysis of net assets at the date of merger

	Bury Hearing Hub	Bolton Deaf Society	Combined total
	£	£	£
Net Assets	248,187	240,752	488,939
Represented by			
Unrestricted funds	247,409	196,672	444,081
Restricted funds	778	44,080	44,858
Total funds	248,187	240,752	488,939

24. MATERIAL SALE OF PROPERTY

During the accounting period, as a condition of the merger between Bury Hearing Hub (BHH) and Bolton Deaf Society the property owned by BHH (8 Tenterden Street, Bury BL9 0EG) was sold for a one off consideration of £248,500 on 6th January 2025. As the property was gifted to BHH the cost was recorded as nil and therefore the carrying amount on disposal was nil. There were £4,500 of legal fees relating to the sale of the property and so the profit on disposal was £244,000, as disclosed in note 6.

This is deemed to be a material amount as it amounts to approximately 50% of funds carried forward.