

Let's build
children up,
not knock
them down

Words Matter
Annual report
1 January to 31 December 2025

www.wordsmatter.org
Registered Charity Number 1201281

words
matter 
help us end verbal abuse of children



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Foreword from the Chair

Words Matter was set up by Jessica Bondy, and it is her inspiration and leadership that has ensured increasing impact in the last year. At a time of negativity, noise, and fragmentation, Jessica has shown that change, positive change, can happen.

Momentum to address the long-neglected issue of verbal abuse and its impact on young people is building. The progress in the last year has been underpinned by landmark research, amplifying our message, supporting those on the front line, and having an outlook that spreads beyond our country.

It has been heartening to see how many have come together to support the charity and the cause: international experts across children’s mental health, psychology, psychiatry, neuroscience, education and public health; fellow Trustees (Jessica, Ed, Rebecca, and Aimée), our colleagues and volunteers; Parliamentarians in both Houses; financial supporters; and partners across the charitable, academic and policy communities.

This report brings together the work across the year and reflects a shared determination and dedication to drive practical and constructive change. In addition to Jessica’s leadership, and the extraordinary coalition supporting the mission to end childhood verbal abuse, it highlights the importance of the BMJ study and our awareness raising and education programmes. Together, they demonstrate that words do matter, when used with care and intention, they can have a positive impact which can build everyone up and in doing so make our families and communities stronger.



Neil Sherlock CBE, Chair

A message from our founder

As we close the 2025 year, I want to thank everyone who has supported Words Matter - our experts, volunteers, Trustees, donors and the wider community. Your belief in our mission makes progress possible and gives hope for meaningful change.

Over the past year, we have continued to build significant momentum and shine a light on childhood verbal abuse - a silent but devastating epidemic. A landmark study published in BMJ Open shows it can be as harmful as physical abuse to adult mental health, yet it often goes unnoticed and unrecognised. At Words Matter, we are breaking the silence: raising awareness, providing practical tools to increase understanding, advocating for change, and helping every adult who interacts with children appreciate the power of their words.

During this year, we have: hosted an expert-led discussion in Parliament; delivered training and webinars to organisations; begun partnerships with schools; launched three new free resources; and released a short film featuring 13-year-old Ethan which has been nominated for a Smiley Charity Film Award. Young people also bravely shared their experiences of verbal abuse with MPs and Peers, demonstrating the lasting impact of harmful words.

Looking ahead, we are building on this progress. We have created a new free e-learning programme for parents, carers, and all adults around children which will be widely available, offering practical guidance and tips from exceptional experts. We are also thrilled to be launching our first international outpost in Australia, extending our reach and impact globally.

Together, we are creating a world where children are supported, strengthened, and uplifted by the words they hear - helping them build confidence, self-belief, and resilience. Thank you for standing with us - your support is rewriting the story for children everywhere.

Let’s build children up, not knock them down. Words matter.



Jessica Bondy, Founder

Why Words Matter



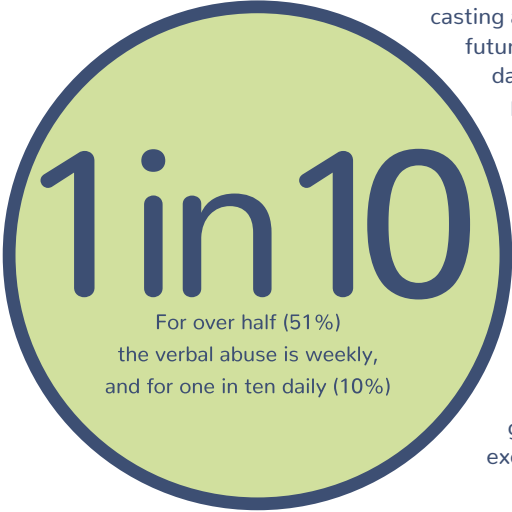
In the UK today, 2 in 5 (41%) children experience verbal abuse by adults¹. Over half of these children endure this abuse weekly, and 1 in 10 experience it every day. They are criticised, blamed, disrespected, and threatened - often in ways that are dismissed as “normal” or “just words,” yet can be deeply damaging. This harsh language most commonly comes from the adults meant to support and nurture their development - parents, carers, teachers, and activity leaders/coaches. It cuts across all socioeconomic groups and regions. No community is immune.

Childhood verbal abuse by adults (CVA) is recognised as an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) but remains a hidden crisis. Its effects can leave lasting scars on both mental and physical health, limiting a child’s potential and casting a long shadow over their future. Research shows the damage caused by CVA is profound. It erodes a child’s self-esteem, disrupts their relationships, and impairs their ability to function in school, work, and social situations. Long-term consequences can be severe and include anxiety, depression, PTSD, substance abuse, and suicide². Economically, the global cost failing to address exceeds \$300 billion annually³.

A new landmark study with 20,000 adults published in BMJ Open⁴ revealed that childhood verbal abuse by adults can be as damaging to long-term mental health as physical abuse. The study also highlighted a deeply concerning trend: while physical abuse has halved in recent generations, verbal abuse of children by adults has almost doubled. As awareness of physical harm has grown, it appears that verbal abuse may be replacing it, despite the damage being equally significant.

Despite these alarming facts, CVA remains largely overlooked and poorly understood. Words Matter is the first organisation in the world dedicated solely to addressing childhood verbal abuse by adults. We exist to raise awareness of its scale and impact, and to equip parents, carers, educators, and other adults with the understanding, resources, and training needed to change everyday interactions. It is the absence of all of these that means that many adults unintentionally use harmful language unaware of its lasting effects.

We all get overloaded at times. Pressures such as financial insecurity, employment worries, health challenges, and discrimination can heighten stress and make verbal abuse more likely. Words Matter believes that positive reinforcement, practical tools, and supportive systems are key to unlocking the behaviour change needed to end CVA - and to create safer, more nurturing environments in which children can truly thrive.



1. Research among children was undertaken by Family, Kids & Youth (FK&Y), led by Dr Barbie Clarke between 1 June and 20 June 2023. 1,166 responses were received (children aged 11–17 years), with 53% (n=619) boys and 47% (n=543) girls, with good representation across all age groups and UK regions.
2. [Comparing relationships between single types of adverse childhood experiences and health-related outcomes](#): a combined primary data study of eight cross-sectional surveys in England and Wales, Mark A Bellis, Karen Hughes, Katie Cresswell, Kat Ford
3. [Groundbreaking study](#) reveals economic burden of childhood verbal abuse by adults estimated at \$300 billion globally
4. Bellis MA, Hughes K, Ford K, et al. [Comparative relationships between physical and verbal abuse of children, life course mental well-being and trends in exposure: a multi-study, secondary analysis of cross-sectional surveys in England and Wales](#), BMJ Open 2025; 15: e098412. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2024-098412



“Verbal abuse of children by adults is all too common but is one of the most significant modifiable causes of lifelong mental health disorders. Tackling it gives us a powerful lever to prevent mental health disorders and its enormous cost to both the UK and global economy.”

Professor Peter Fonagy
Head of the Division of Psychology & Language Sciences at UCL and Words Matter Advisory Board member.





About Words Matter

Our mission

Words Matter is on a mission to improve children’s mental and physical health and development by helping to end verbal abuse of children by adults around them. We want every child to have the best start in life.

Our work

Research to better understand the scale and impact of verbal abuse of children. Everything we do is rooted in research.

Awareness through national campaigns, events and providing access to free educational resources and training.

Collaboration with experts, clinicians, charities, policy makers and people with lived experience to create effective solutions that lead to long-term change.

Our values

- **Rigorous:** we root our activity in evidence-based research
- **Pioneering:** we innovate with new ideas and solutions
- **Inclusive:** we are here for parents, carers and all people who work with children, from every walk of life
- **Principled:** we always strive to do the right thing in everything we undertake

Our vision

Our vision is a world free of verbal abuse of children so they can thrive and reach their full potential.

Our impact goals and public benefit

Widespread acknowledgement of the scale and impact of verbal abuse of children, versus positive, encouraging language.

Information and education for parents, caregivers, those in positions of authority, and those with lived experience.

Reduction in verbal abuse of children by parents and caregivers, and other adults in a position of authority around them.

- **Kind:** we are thoughtful and helpful in our interactions with others
- **Passionate:** we care deeply about what we do and are committed to making a difference
- **Bold:** we are courageous and fearless in our efforts to drive positive change

“When you’re told over and over that you’re useless or not good enough, you start to believe it. Even years later, those words still echo in your mind.”

Paddy, 20

Our 2025 objectives and activities

Research: Strengthening understanding of childhood verbal abuse (CVA)

- Commission new studies with external partners to explore the prevalence, impact, and long-term effects of CVA.
- Establish a Research Working Group, enabling other institutions to contribute insights and collaborate.
- Analyse existing and emerging data to identify trends, gaps, and priorities for action.

Awareness: Bringing verbal abuse out of the shadows

- Create media and social media campaigns to highlight research insights and increase public awareness.
- Develop and roll out our training programmes for practitioners, educators, parents, carers and all adults around children and evaluate their effectiveness.
- Expand our suite of free educational resources.

Collaboration: Developing and scaling solutions

- Grow our network of allies and partner organisations who support our mission.
- Host events to share research and best practice.
- Participate in conferences, seminars and forums to share knowledge and expertise.

Governance: Providing direction and accountability

- Maintain robust governance practices and systems to ensure the charity operates with transparency, accountability and integrity.

Fundraising: Building sustainable impact

- Diversify fundraising activity, including grants, partnerships, and individual giving.
- Review monetisation opportunities for training programmes while maintaining accessibility and alignment with our charitable mission.
- Communicate transparently with donors, partners, and supporters to strengthen engagement and trust.

The Trustees have referred to the Charity Commission’s general guidance on public benefit when ethical reviewing our aims and objectives and in planning our activities. These objectives fall under the purposes defined by the Charities Act 2011.

Delivering public benefit is at the core of our mission. Words Matter benefits society by striving to improve children’s mental and physical health and development through bringing an end to verbal abuse of children by adults around them.

“I was repeatedly told I was ‘ruining everything’, that I was an ‘embarrassment,’ and threatened with ‘you’re going to get a big telling off tomorrow’ – and that’s just a fraction of what I heard growing up.

Poppy, 25



Our 2025 achievements and performance

Research

Research underpins everything we do: every programme, campaign, and training is grounded in evidence and rigorous science. This year, we focused not only on commissioning our own studies, but working with leading institutions and experts to stimulate further research in this critical field.



Landmark study on impact of verbal abuse

A landmark study by Professor Mark Bellis, published in BMJ Open, used data from 20,000 adults to show that childhood verbal abuse by adults can be as damaging to long-term mental health as physical abuse, with verbal abuse alone linked to a 64% greater likelihood of poor adult mental well-being - higher than the 52% increase associated with physical abuse. The study also highlights a striking trend: while rates of physical abuse have halved since the 1950s (from 20% to 10%), verbal abuse has risen from 12% to nearly 20%. As awareness of physical harm has grown, verbal abuse appears to be taking its place - yet its effects can be just as profound.

This evidence reinforces what survivors and professionals have long known: words can wound deeply, leaving lasting scars on a child’s mental health and development. Urgent action is needed to prevent harm caused by cruel, critical, or controlling language, and to ensure children are supported and strengthened - not diminished - by the words they hear.



Research Working Group to advance knowledge

We brought together our Research Working Group of global experts to continue to advance knowledge and solutions around childhood verbal abuse and its prevention. By collaborating across psychology, education, public health, and social work, and harnessing their expertise, the group drives research that informs societal change.

Teacher-student relationships

Words Matter is also partnering with the Institute of Education (IOE) at UCL, which is researching teacher-student relationships and communication; findings will be shared next year. Teachers play a pivotal role in children’s development, not only in supporting learning but in shaping confidence, resilience, and well-being. This research will provide crucial insights into how adults in educational settings can use language to strengthen, rather than diminish, children - helping to inform practical strategies, training, and guidance that can benefit schools and the wider community.

Awareness

Raising awareness of childhood verbal abuse (CVA) and its profound impact on children’s development is a vital focus of our activity, aimed at gaining the recognition and understanding this issue urgently requires. Key initiatives included releasing a powerful short film, launching a national children’s poetry competition, creating three new educational resources for adults, delivering our training programmes and amplifying research and lived experiences across traditional and social media, and podcasts.



Words Matter film

We released an impactful short film featuring a poem by Tally Gilbert, compellingly brought to life by 13-year-old Ethan. It vividly illustrates the often-unseen harm caused by adult language, calling on all adults to reflect on the words they speak to children. The response was extraordinary – thousands of views, hundreds of shares, and messages describing it as “profoundly moving” and “a wake-up call.”

The film is a finalist in the Smiley Charity Film Awards with results due in 2026.



National children’s poetry competition

We launched The Power of Words, a national children’s poetry competition with First News. Children wrote original poems on how adults’ words can either lift them up or knock them down. Over 100 poems were submitted, judged by Hollywood actor Will Poulter, First News Editor-in-Chief Nicky Cox, poet Tally Gilbert, and our Founder, Jessica.



New educational resources

- We launched three new resources for parents, carers, and all adults who interact with children, created with Dr Fiona Pienaar:
- How to talk to children during exam time – dos and don’ts, along with specific phrases to use (and avoid) in key exam scenarios, helping adults provide the right support when it’s needed most.
 - How to talk to children about starting a new school – guidance for supporting children through school transitions, helping them feel confident and emotionally secure.
 - Talking with teenagers – practical advice and tips on communicating effectively with adolescents, recognising heightened emotional sensitivity and ongoing brain development.

To date, over 5,700 of our free resources have been downloaded.

Training to increase understanding

Our training programme, first piloted in 2024, continued to be rolled out with our allies, charity partners, safeguarding organisations, youth services and educational establishment, including: The Association of Safeguarding Partners, The Fostering Network, and The Bolton Lads and Girls Club. Feedback highlighted increased knowledge, confidence, and practical skills in recognising and preventing childhood verbal abuse. Evaluation results have revealed that over 100% said ‘The training made me reflect on my own communication style with the children in my life’, 100% said ‘I actively think about the way I talk to children and how it might affect them’ and overall training satisfaction was 4.86 out of 5.

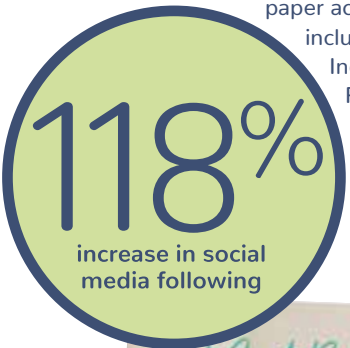
This year we also embarked on an exciting new project to develop a free e-learning programme for parents, carers, teachers and any adults around children for launch in January 2026.

Our 2025 achievements and performance

Promoting Words Matter’s mission

Our Founder, Jessica Bondy, participated in a number of events, speaking opportunities and webinars in 2025 to discuss our work and research including with The Association of Safeguarding Practitioners (TASP), Anti-Bullying Alliance, Centre for Young People’s Mental Health and with the Girls’ Day School Trust.

All our awareness efforts continued to gain momentum. Our social media following has increased by 118%, and over 175 pieces of national and international coverage were generated with an estimated reach of 815 million people. The Bellis paper achieved headlines in major outlets including The Guardian, Telegraph, Independent, Mail, Mirror, Huffington Post, and LBC. Over 1,100 have attended our training sessions, events, speaking opportunities and webinars.



Recognition

Our work has been recognised in 2025, with Jessica named winner of the Amazing Women Awards and ‘Children’s Cheerleader’ by Woman & Home magazine in partnership with NHS Charities Together. She was also a finalist for the Outstanding Commitment to Safeguarding Award by the Safeguarding and Child Protection Association (SACPA).



Collaboration

Collective action is required to prevent childhood verbal abuse - and building meaningful partnerships is central to our mission. We have continued expanding our network of allies throughout the year, increasing from 28 to 44 organisations. These include Action for Children, the Anti-Bullying Alliance, For Baby’s Sake, Norland, Thrive at Five, and Whizzkids. Each new ally strengthens our ability to shift hearts, minds and systems.

Working with schools

Schools play a pivotal role in children’s development, shaping not only learning but confidence, resilience, and emotional wellbeing. Working closely with schools helps ensure that the language children hear supports their growth rather than leaving lasting scars.

In 2025, key collaborations included:

- Wellington College** - Recognised as a pioneer in education, we kicked off our first whole-school partnership, delivering a programme across prep and senior schools involving teachers, students, and parents. Special Words Matter bracelets help reinforce the initiative within the school community, embedding our communication strategies to support children’s flourishing.
- Girls’ Day School Trust (GDST)** – Working with this family of 23 independent schools and two academies, we delivered training to the GDST SEND team, equipping staff with the knowledge and tools to recognise and prevent childhood verbal abuse, ensuring that every child is supported in a nurturing and safe environment.



Public affairs

In 2025, we continued our work with parliamentarians and decision makers to highlight the urgent need to prevent childhood verbal abuse.

In April, we hosted an expert-led discussion on the impact and prevention of childhood verbal abuse at the House of Commons. Over 70 MPs, peers, policy advisors, educators, clinicians, safeguarding leads, and researchers attended. Speakers, including Professors Peter Fonagy, Eamon McCrory, Karen Hughes, and Andrea Danese, shared their decades of clinical and frontline experience, emphasising the vital role of supportive communication in children’s wellbeing and resilience, and urging policymakers to embed prevention into national strategies. The event received strong media coverage, including The Guardian, HuffPost, and The Independent, alongside an opinion piece by our Founder in Politics UK.



In October, a drop-in session for MPs and Peers was held at Portcullis House giving young people the opportunity to share first-hand experiences of verbal abuse, illustrating the lifelong impact of harmful words. Our message is clear: childhood verbal abuse is a public health issue and must be given the priority it deserves.



Governance

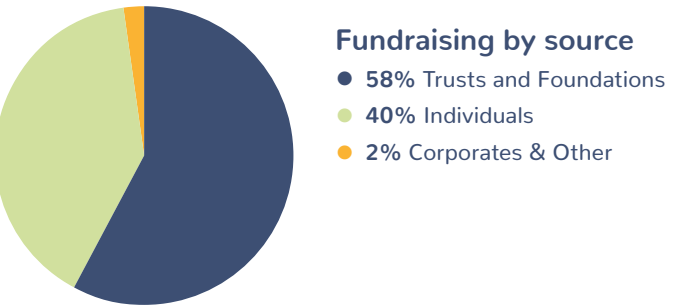
Strong governance is at the core of Words Matter’s ability to deliver its mission responsibly and effectively. Throughout the year, the Board of Trustees continued to provide active oversight of the charity’s strategy, performance, and risk management, ensuring that decisions were made in the best interests of children and the wider public benefit.

Our Fundraising and Risk subcommittees met regularly to support the Board in maintaining robust systems, reviewing risks, and ensuring policies and procedures remain up to date and fit for purpose. This included ongoing review of safeguarding, financial controls, and organisational risk as the charity continues to grow its profile and activity.

The Board also considered its future governance needs, including the skills, experience, and diversity required to support the next phase of Words Matter’s development and will be focusing on expanding the Board with new appointments next financial year.

Fundraising

We raised an income of £183,238 during the year, with 58% from Trusts and Foundations, 40% from Individuals and 2% from Corporates & Other. This compares to income £123,402 in the prior year.



Our work would not be possible without the huge contributions and encouragement from all our donors including Trusts and Foundations, Corporates and Individuals. We are hugely grateful to all our donors including:

- KPMG Foundation
- The Prudence Trust
- Peter Sowerby Trust
- Sir Halley Stewart Trust
- The Reed Educational Trust Limited
- The Beacon Lodge Charitable Trust
- The Chartered Accountants’ Company
- The Builder’s Merchants’ Company
- The Conundrum Charitable Trust
- The Fowler Smith & Jones Trust
- The Belstead Ganzoni Charitable Settlement



What's ahead in 2026

Research

We will continue to strengthen our research through commissioning new studies with external partners, and expanding research led by other institutions through our Research Working Group. We will also share the findings of the research being undertaken with the IOE with schools and students.

Awareness

We will continue to capitalise on emerging research to highlight the need for preventive action on childhood verbal abuse and extend the delivery of our training programmes to achieve even greater reach.

Collaboration

We will continue to expand our network of allies, host events, and work collaboratively to develop and scale effective interventions.

We will also establish the Words Matter Youth Advisory Board to ensure young people's voices help shape everything we do. The Board will play a vital role in guiding our work and ensuring our mission is grounded in lived experience.

Fundraising

Fundraising remains essential to delivering our programmes and fulfilling our charitable purpose. We will continue to diversify our fundraising activity and grow opportunities for monetisation, particularly in relation to our training.

Governance

We plan to expand our Board of Trustees to support the charity's next phase of growth, with a focus on increasing diversity and broadening the range of skills, expertise, and experience around the table. We will also build our volunteer base to strengthen delivery and organisational capacity.

"...Hearing positive words, like 'you can do this or, I believe in you,' changes everything. It helps you feel more confident and believe in yourself. My message to all adults is please think about what you say to children."

Ethan, 13

Charity structure

Trustees

Jessica Bondy, Founder	(Appointed 9 December 2022)
Neil Sherlock, Chairperson	(Appointed 9 December 2022)
Ed Kamm, Treasurer	(Appointed 24 April 2023)
Rebecca Hickman	(Appointed 24 May 2023)
Aimée Luther	(Appointed 1 August 2024)

Advisory Board

Professor Pat Dolan
Professor Xiangming Fang, PhD
Professor Peter Fonagy, OBE, FMedSci, FAcSS, FBA, PhD
Dr Alice Graham, PhD
Dr Ross W Greene, PhD
Professor Sophie Havighurst, PhD
Dr Gabor Maté
Jessica Narowlansky, BA (Hons), Mont Dip, PG SpLD
Professor Stephen Scott, CBE, FRC, Psych, FMedSci, President of ACAMH
Dr Joshua Sparrow, MD, DFAACAP
Dr Ashley Stewart-Tufescu, PhD, RSW
Dr Martin Teicher, PhD, MD
Professor Li Wei

Independent Advisors

Lord Dennis Stevenson
Dr Fiona Pienaar
Nana Owusu
Jen Hyatt
Delyth Lynch

Charity registered number 1201281

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Fifth Floor, London, W1W 5PF

Bankers Lloyds Bank PLC,
Westminster House Branch, Swansea OSC,
Epona House, Pheonix Way, SA7 9HG

Solicitors Sherrards
1-3 Pemberton Row, London, EC4A 3BG

Independent examiner Brewers Chartered Accountants
3 Birtley Courtyard, Birtley Road, Bramley, GU5 0LA

Charity management

The Board of Trustees governs the business of the Charity and is responsible for overseeing the management of Words Matter. It is currently made up of five members, with business, legal, finance, communications, marketing and non-profit expertise. The Board of Trustees meets at least four times a year and make decisions in accordance with the provisions of the Charities Act 2011. It delegates the day-to-day management of the organisation to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) which includes the Founder and Treasurer. The SLT is supported by the charity’s employees, volunteers, Advisory Board and Research Working Group.

Prospective Trustees are interviewed by at least three Trustees including the Founder and the Chair. Once appointed, new Trustees are provided with: the Words Matter CIO constitution; Words Matter policies; information on the legal expectations and duties of a Trustee; and relevant training. The Board reviews the skill set of each of its members on a regular basis and will seek to fill gaps with individuals with the appropriate level of skills and experience.

The Advisory Board guides the organisation’s strategy and research initiatives. It meets formerly twice yearly and is regularly updated on the charity’s progress. Individual members of the Advisory Board are contacted on a regular basis in relation to their specific areas of expertise.

The Research Working Group’s overarching purpose is to advance research that improves the recognition, prevention, and intervention of childhood verbal abuse by adults. It meets three times annually with additional meetings scheduled as needed.

Charity governance code

Words Matter operates according to the Seven Principles of Charity Governance. The Board of Trustees focuses on the Charity’s governance arrangements to ensure it aligns with the code.

1) Organisational purpose: The Board is clear about the Charity’s aims and ensures that these are being delivered effectively and sustainably.

2) Leadership: The Board is constantly reviewed to ensure effectiveness of leadership in line with Words Matter’s mission and values.

3) Integrity: The Board acts with integrity, in accordance with its values, and aims to create a culture which helps to achieve the organisation’s charitable purposes. The Board is aware of the importance of the public’s confidence and trust in charities, and Trustees undertake their duties accordingly.

4) Decision making, risk and control: Our risk management processes ensure decision making is informed, rigorous and timely, and that effective delegation, control and risk-assessments are set up and monitored.

5) Board effectiveness: The Board uses an appropriate balance of skills, experience, backgrounds and knowledge to make informed decisions.

6) Equality, diversity and inclusion: The Board recognises the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion to support the charity’s effectiveness.

7) Openness and accountability: Words Matter is committed to openness and transparency in all their activities.

Safeguarding

Words Matter takes seriously its responsibility towards safeguarding all children and young people.

Words Matter does not directly engage with children, young people or vulnerable people, but instead collaborates with charities, educational bodies, research institutions and other such organisations working with these groups.

As such, Words Matter’s Safeguarding Policy relates to its partnerships and the criteria needed in order to work with the charity. The aim of the policy is to ensure that:

- Excellent safeguarding practice is promoted at Words Matter and across all partner organisations.
- All partners have appropriate systems in place to ensure that individuals are able to raise concerns that are dealt with swiftly.
- All children and young people engaging with partners of Words Matter are treated with dignity and respect.
- All partners, Trustees, staff, and volunteers working with Words Matter are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.

- Everyone interacting with children and young people in relation to Words Matter activities meet high standards of behaviour and professionalism.
- All partners working with Words Matter are required to provide an up-to-date safeguarding policy to Words Matter. All policies are reviewed by at least two Trustees.

Fundraising compliance

The Board of Trustees recognises our legal requirements as a charity to maximise our income in line with our mission, whilst ensuring that our activities and behaviour comply with the law. Words Matter recognises that the generosity of our donors allows us to carry out our charitable activities to enable us to deliver on our purpose. Whilst we aim to maximise our income, we recognise that on very rare occasions we may consider refusing a donation or working with a partner. In such an instance we will act with integrity, we will respect matters of legitimate confidentiality, and will aim to respect the dignity of the prospective donor or partner.

We believe in adhering to the highest standards of fundraising practice. Our fundraising activities are led by our Fundraising committee, which is responsible for ensuring that all fundraising follows the standards in the fundraising code. We monitor the fundraising regulatory environment to ensure that we are aware of any changes in the fundraising code. We did not receive any complaints about our fundraising this year.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Words Matter is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace, and building an organisational culture that is welcoming, open and a safe space for all individuals. This is also integral to our values. We take active steps to ensure the Charity’s workforce, including its advisors and volunteers, reflect the communities within which the Charity works.

Financial review

Our income for the year was £183,238, consisting of £128,738 in unrestricted donations and £54,500 in restricted donations. The Charity’s principal sources of funds for the year were from donations from trusts and foundations and individuals.

Our total expenses for the year were £160,713, consisting of £117,128 for charitable activities and £43,585 for administrative expenses.

- Our charitable activities expenses: Research £12,300; Awareness raising £67,524; Collaboration £8,146; Staffing £26,609; and Other £2,549.
- Our administrative expenses: Staffing £17,052; Fundraising £16,454; Support costs £5,812; and Other £4,267.

Resulting surplus for the year was £22,525.

Funds balances at year end:

- Unrestricted funds £45,652
- Restricted funds £35,923
- Total £81,575

Unrestricted funds are available to use for the purposes of the Charity as the Trustees see fit.

Restricted funds are those that are subject to restrictions specified by the donor and can only be used for the specified purpose.

Reserves policy

Reserves are needed to bridge the gap between the spending and receiving of resources, and to cover for any unplanned expenditures. The Trustees consider that the ideal level of reserves is a minimum of three months of expected unrestricted spend. The year-end unrestricted reserves target was £28,946. The Board of Trustees is confident that at this level it would be able to continue the current activities of the Charity in the event of a significant drop in funding in the short-term. The present level of unrestricted funds available at the end of the 2025 fiscal year was £45,652.

Risk management

Trustees have overall responsibility for risk management and have a Risk Committee which oversees risk management processes, maintains a risk register and reports to the Board. Risks are considered at both a strategic and operational level, with the register summarising the nature, likelihood, potential impact, and mitigations. The Board reviews the risk register at least twice a year and receives a summary from the Chair of the Risk Committee at each board meeting.

The key risks identified for the Charity include:

- **Fundraising shortfall:** A shortfall in fundraising income could constrain delivery of our charitable objectives. This is managed through a proactive and disciplined approach to income management. Fundraising activity is overseen by the Founder and Treasurer, with regular performance reviews against forecast to enable corrective action. Forecasts are updated routinely, and forward spending commitments are generally limited to a three-month horizon to preserve financial flexibility. A prudent reserves policy is maintained to provide resilience against short-term volatility. The Charity operates both a minimum cash-based budget and an aspirational budget to support strategic growth where funding allows.
- **Data/Security breach:** A cyber or data security breach could result in regulatory exposure, reputational damage, and operational disruption. The Charity mitigates this through strong data governance and cyber security controls. Regular training helps identify phishing and suspicious activity, reinforced by clear expectations on secure data handling. Confidential information is not stored on personal devices, and multi-factor authentication is used where available. Good practice is followed in securing cloud-based systems, with clear incident

response procedures. Any notifiable breaches are reported within the ICO’s mandated timeframe.

- **Reputation:** Damage to the Charity’s reputation could undermine stakeholder confidence, restrict fundraising and partnerships, and impair delivery of our charitable objectives. This risk is managed by recognising that strong governance and clear oversight are central to protecting the Charity’s reputation. All external communications are subject to sign-off controls and alignment with the Charity’s values and strategy. Board-approved policies and procedures underpin organisational conduct and decision-making, including safeguarding, conflicts of interest, code of conduct, diversity and inclusion and anti-bribery. Trustees also maintain a register of interests to support transparency.
- **Lack of resources:** Insufficient capacity could constrain delivery and place pressure on governance and operational oversight. This is managed by actively monitoring organisational capacity and aligning delivery with available resources. Roles and priorities are clearly defined and activities phased where necessary. Where appropriate, volunteers, professional advisers, and strategic partnerships supplement core capability.

Going concern

The Trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Charity’s ability to continue as a going concern. The Charity has minimal on-going commitments and can manage its expenses to be in line with donations received. The Trustees are of the opinion that the Charity is a going concern, and the accounts have been prepared on this basis.

Independent examiner report to the Trustees

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of Words Matter (the Charity) for the year ended 31 December 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity’s accounts carried out under Section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under Section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner’s statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by Section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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



A M Skilton
Brewers Chartered Accountants
Unit 3
Birtley Courtyard
Bramley
Surrey
GU5 0LA

Date: 13 April 2026

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 9 April 2026 and were signed on its behalf by Edmund J. Kamm and Jessica Bondy



Statement of financial activities

For the Year Ended 31 December 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2025 Total funds £	2024 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies		126,780	54,500	181,280	123,144
Investment income	2	<u>1,958</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,958</u>	<u>258</u>
Total		<u>128,738</u>	<u>54,500</u>	<u>183,238</u>	<u>123,402</u>
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable activities		85,051	32,077	117,128	56,038
Other		<u>27,085</u>	<u>16,500</u>	<u>43,585</u>	<u>24,824</u>
Total		<u>112,136</u>	<u>48,577</u>	<u>160,713</u>	<u>80,862</u>
NET SURPLUS		16,602	5,923	22,525	42,540
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		<u>29,050</u>	<u>30,000</u>	<u>59,050</u>	<u>16,510</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u>45,652</u>	<u>35,923</u>	<u>81,575</u>	<u>59,050</u>

Balance sheet

At 31 December 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2025 Total funds £	2024 Total funds £
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	6	15,313	-	15,313	4,750
Cash at bank		<u>49,601</u>	<u>35,923</u>	<u>85,524</u>	<u>62,386</u>
		64,914	35,923	100,837	67,136
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	7	(19,262)	-	(19,262)	(8,086)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>45,652</u>	<u>35,923</u>	<u>81,575</u>	<u>59,050</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		45,652	35,923	81,575	59,050
NET ASSETS		<u>45,652</u>	<u>35,923</u>	<u>81,575</u>	<u>59,050</u>
FUNDS					
Unrestricted funds	8			45,652	29,050
Restricted funds				<u>35,923</u>	<u>30,000</u>
TOTAL FUNDS				<u>81,575</u>	<u>59,050</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 9 April 2026 and were signed on its behalf by:



Trustee - Edmund J. Kamm

Notes to financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2025

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)(effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Charities Act 2011. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

Funds accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charity's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

2. INVESTMENT INCOME

	2025	2024
	£	£
Deposit account interest	<u>1,958</u>	<u>258</u>

Notes to financial statements cont'd

For the year ended 31 December 2025

3. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 December 2025 nor for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Trustees' expenses

One trustee was paid travel expenses £355.38 and reimbursement for a software license £155.88 in the year.

4. STAFF COSTS

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2025	2024
Staff	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

5. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	82,344	40,800	123,144
Investment income	<u>258</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>258</u>
Total	<u>82,602</u>	<u>40,800</u>	<u>123,402</u>
EXPENDITURE ON			
Charitable activities	37,784	18,254	56,038
Other	<u>24,794</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>24,824</u>
Total	<u>62,578</u>	<u>18,284</u>	<u>80,862</u>
NET SURPLUS	20,024	22,516	42,540
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	<u>9,026</u>	<u>7,484</u>	<u>16,510</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	<u>29,050</u>	<u>30,000</u>	<u>59,050</u>

Notes to financial statements cont'd

For the year ended 31 December 2025

6. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade debtors	<u>15,313</u>	<u>4,750</u>

7. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade creditors	7,694	1,878
Taxation and social security	2,865	859
Other creditors	<u>8,703</u>	<u>5,349</u>
	<u>19,262</u>	<u>8,086</u>

8. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.1.25 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.12.25 £
Unrestricted funds			
General funds	29,050	16,602	45,652
Restricted funds			
Restricted funds	30,000	5,923	35,923
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>59,050</u>	<u>22,525</u>	<u>81,575</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General funds	128,738	(112,136)	16,602
Restricted funds			
Restricted funds	54,500	(48,577)	5,923
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>183,238</u>	<u>(160,713)</u>	<u>22,525</u>

Notes to financial statements cont'd

For the year ended 31 December 2025

8. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.1.24 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.12.24 £
Unrestricted funds			
General funds	9,026	20,024	29,050
Restricted funds			
Restricted funds	7,484	22,516	30,000
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>16,510</u>	<u>42,540</u>	<u>59,050</u>

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General funds	82,602	(62,578)	20,024
Restricted funds			
Restricted funds	40,800	(18,284)	22,516
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>123,402</u>	<u>(80,862)</u>	<u>42,540</u>

9. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There were no related party transactions for the year ended 31 December 2025.

Detailed statement of financial activities

For the year ended 31 December 2025

INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS

Donations and legacies		
Donations	181,280	123,144
Investment income		
Deposit account interest	<u>1,958</u>	<u>258</u>
Total incoming resources	183,238	123,402

EXPENDITURE

Charitable activities		
Wages	25,834	23,674
Pensions	775	741
Research	12,300	-
Awareness	67,524	24,963
Collaboration and distribution	8,146	6,660
Other	<u>2,549</u>	<u>-</u>
	117,128	56,038
Other		
Wages	16,555	-
Pensions	497	-
Fundraising	16,454	11,473
Membership of relevant bodies	1,508	805
General expenses	520	5,776
Insurance	402	267
IT software and consumables	1,837	1,544
Telephone & Internet	<u>-</u>	<u>84</u>
	37,773	19,949
Support costs		
Finance		
Bank charges	192	77
Governance costs		
Accountancy and legal fees	<u>5,620</u>	<u>4,798</u>
Total resources expended	<u>160,713</u>	<u>80,862</u>
Net surplus	<u><u>22,525</u></u>	<u><u>42,540</u></u>

Declaration

This report was approved by the Charity’s current Trustees on 09 April 2026

Jessica Bondy
Neil Sherlock CBE
Edmund Kamm
Rebecca Hickman
Aimee Luther



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not knock
them down

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