REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 05023067 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1103002

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND

UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

FOR

SOUNDABOUT

Ad Valorem Accountancy Services Limited
Chartered Certified Accountants
2 Manor Farm Court
Old Wolverton Road
Old Wolverton
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK12 5NN

SOUNDABOUT

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

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SOUNDABOUT

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

TRUSTEES	M Hartley C Thomson (resigned 5.11.25) B Weston-Conway E Nunns C W Yuen (resigned 8.2.26) H Chandler B Travis J Baird I Pasricha K Rann (appointed 16.2.26) T J Hammond (appointed 16.6.26) A C Hodgkinson (appointed 9.7.26) C M H Nunn (appointed 9.7.26)
REGISTERED OFFICE	John Eccles House Robert Robinson Avenue Oxford Oxfordshire OX4 4GP
REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER	05023067 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER	1103002
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER	Ad Valorem Accountancy Services Limited Chartered Certified Accountants 2 Manor Farm Court Old Wolverton Road Old Wolverton Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire MK12 5NN
BANKERS	CAF Bank 25 Kings Hill Avenue Kings Hill West Malling Kent ME19 4JQ Charity Bank Limited Fosse House 182 High Street Tonbridge TN9 1BE

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2026. The trustees have adopted the provisions of 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).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

Achievements and Performance

This introduction was designed by our Experts by Experience Parent / Carer Group.

Our Community: A Chorus of Voices

A Year in Sound

At Soundabout, every person brings something unique: a sound, a movement, a smile, a rhythm, a song or an idea.

Over the past year, Learning Disabled people, families, carers, practitioners, volunteers and partners have made music together in homes, community spaces, online, and outdoors.

Together, their voices tell a story of friendship, communication, confidence, self-expression, and joy.

The Beat

Belonging together.

Soundabout is a place to meet, make music, and be part of something shared.

"It's enjoyable, it's inclusive. I love to play music to everyone, and everyone else gets the chance to play music as well." - Graduate Emerging Leader

"It genuinely felt like being part of a community." - Parent Carer, Sounds Together at the Story Museum Oxford

The Melody

Communicating in our own ways.

Everyone communicates differently. Through music, sound, movement, signing, and instruments, people can share who they are and what matters to them.

"His sounds and vocalisations being the main part of a song in the group makes him feel heard. This is how he communicates and it's so meaningful." - Parent Carer, Sounds Together, Birmingham

"His voice is his instrument [and] gives him a sense of independence and ownership." - Parent Carer, Sounds Wild

The Harmony

Sharing joy.

Music creates moments to enjoy with friends, families, peers, and familiar faces.

"I enjoy seeing everyone. I like being the leader on my drum."- Participant, Sounds Together Birmingham

"It was so special to see them both connecting through music, smiling, laughing, and experiencing something together." - Parent Carer, Sounds Together at the Story Museum Oxford

The Echo

Feeling valued, heard, and included.

The impact of Soundabout continues beyond each session: in the confidence people build, the relationships they form, and the ways they take part in their communities.

"The other participants and practitioners in the sessions nurture her most... it makes her feel special that she can still be part of things and be welcome, even when she isn't well enough to want to participate actively." - Parent Carer, Sounds Virtual

"Music brings out another side of him... he's got a big, big smile."- Parent Carer, Sounds Together / Sounds Wild

Together, these voices remind us that music is not only something we make. It is a way to connect, communicate, contribute, and belong.

Chair & CEO Introduction

It is our pleasure to introduce this year's Soundabout Annual Report.

While there is a statutory requirement for us to publish our accounts and provide a summary of our work, this report is much more than that. It is an opportunity to reflect on the difference we have made together over the last year and to look ahead to the opportunities sitting on the horizon. The stories, photographs, data, and insights contained within these pages celebrate the impact of our work, whilst also helping to shape our future direction and ambition.

From a financial perspective, Soundabout has enjoyed its strongest year to date. We have secured more income than at any point in our history, enabling us to expand our reach whilst continuing to deliver high-quality programmes in a sustainable manner, without sacrificing quality. We are immensely grateful to everyone that has supported us this year.

One highlight was our partnership with The Big Give in December, which generated more than £50,000 for Soundabout. As a relatively new fundraising initiative for us, its success demonstrated both the generosity of our supporters and the considerable potential that exists to grow our income in the years ahead.

Strong finances matter because they provide the foundation for our mission. This year, 3,251 people benefited from Soundabout's work in communities across the UK. Our ambition to become a truly national charity is increasingly becoming a reality, and our voice within the learning disability sector is growing stronger and clearer. More people are hearing about Soundabout, engaging with our work, and recognising the life-changing power of music and communication.

As we grow, we remain mindful that support for charities has never been more important, nor more competitive. We cannot take our success for granted. We must continue to demonstrate our impact, nurture meaningful relationships with our supporters, and ensure that everyone who invests in Soundabout understands the difference their contribution makes.

Of course, statistics tell only part of the story. The real measure of Soundabout's success is found in the experiences of the people we support and those who care for them. Throughout this report, you will find reflections from participants, families, carers, volunteers, and partners that bring our work to life far more powerfully than any chart or graph ever could.

Our work changes lives, but it would be remiss of us not to acknowledge the profound impact our participants have on us. Whether singing in a choir, taking part in a sensory session, or taking their first steps towards employment in the arts, members of the Soundabout community inspire us every day. Their determination, joy, and creativity remind us why this work matters.

Thank you for being part of the Soundabout family this year. We hope you enjoy reading about what we have achieved together, and we look forward to building on this success in the years ahead.

Yours,

Holly & Ben
Ben Weston-Conway, Chair of Trustees
Holly Radford-James, Chief Executive Officer

About Soundabout and our community
Soundabout utilises music, sound, and silence to make a difference to the lives of Learning Disabled people of all ages, and with complex support needs. Helping every individual to develop their ability to communicate and interact with the world around them in welcoming and accessible spaces both in-person and online.
Equally importantly, Soundabout provides training and support for families, carers, professionals, and partner organisations enabling them to integrate the benefits of Soundabout's immersive music making programmes into the daily lives of the Learning Disabled children and adults they support.

Soundabout Community
At Soundabout, we use the term 'Learning Disabled people with complex support needs' to describe the people we work alongside because, having consulted with Soundabout families and Disabled people, we have found this term to be most aligned with the social model of disability (the understanding that disability is something created by barriers in society). At the same time, we also respect that individuals may choose to identify differently, and that care and education sectors may use 'Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities' (PMLD).

There are:
- 1.3 million Learning Disabled people in England
- 8,577 Learning Disabled children with complex support needs in England
- An estimated 22,000 Learning Disabled adults with complex support needs in England
- 6% of Learning Disabled adults in England in paid work.

Barriers often faced by Learning Disabled people with complex support needs include:
- More than one disability, including a physical disability
- Requiring those who know them well to interpret communication
- Complex physical and mental health needs
- Inaccessible career, leisure, and art/cultural opportunities
- Isolation, loneliness, and poor visibility in society
- Financial challenges

Our Vision: A world where everyone can access and experience music.
Our Mission: Soundabout uses music, sound, and silence to create opportunities where learning Disabled people with complex support needs thrive.
Our Values:
Kind: We are kind, friendly, and supportive to everyone.
Person-Centred: We celebrate each person; creating sound and music together.
Inclusive: we work hard to create welcoming and accessible spaces.
Aspirational: We use our energy to learn and aim for the best for everyone, while being curious, fun, and creative.

To achieve our mission, we focus on 5 key outcomes for the Learning Disabled people we support: Improving Connectedness; Developing Communication; Encouraging Enjoyment; Increasing Self-Expression, Improving Health and Wellbeing. We also focus on 4 key strategic aims to help Soundabout build from strength to strength: High quality delivery from a diverse practitioner team; Developing our impact measurement; Build sustainability by diversifying income; Grow Soundabout's profile.

To understand the difference we make, we measure our impact by collecting data from our projects and talking to the people who take part. We are proud to share insights into our services and the impact they have. We need music now more than ever - let us show you how music changes lives.

Our Programmes

Soundabout Choirs: a national network bringing Learning Disabled people of all ages and their local communities toget her to share their voices in ways accessible to them.
Sounds Virtual: online music-making sessions accessible live and on demand, meaning members can join from home, hospi ces, hospitals, day centres, and school!
Sounds Sensory: projects transforming schools and community spaces into themed immersive multi-sensory e nvironments that engage all the senses.
Sounds Wild: innovative music-making sessions in inspiring outdoor spaces using a Forest School approach to access th e many benefits of connecting with nature.
Sounds Together: face-to-face community music making sessions with small groups of Learning Disabled people where they design the project!
Training: families, carers, professionals, and partner organisations to use Soundabout techniques in the daily lives of t he Learning Disabled people they support.
Emerging Leaders and Graduates: accredited course and work placements supporting Learning Disabled people to enhance leadership sk ills and confidence will preparing to become music practitioners.

Timeline & Our Year in Numbers

Key Dates between April 2025-March 2026

April - King's Community Music Reception Windsor Castle
May - London Supporter Reception led by Graduate Emerging Leaders
June - Leeds Information Event and Partner Networking
July - Parallel Windsor Festival of Inclusivity Workshops & The Hills Are Alive All Day Virtual Festival
August - Ladybug School Holiday Partnership Launch
September - Essex Training Filming Project & Oxford Story Museum EYS Project Launch
October - Royal College of Music Training to Undergraduates
November - Exeter Information Event and Partner Networking
December - Glow campaign, concerts at Garsington Studios and Royal Birmingham Conservatoire
January - Emerging Leaders Graduation
February - London Youth Choirs Graduate Emerging Leaders Commission
March - Leeds Beckett University Participant Led Evaluation Project

Overview in Numbers

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Sessions	962	1,045	1,260
Total Attendees	3,341	3,502	3,251
Learning Disabled Participants	1,576	1,425	1,243
Parents / Carers	753	1,159	1,054
Professionals	890	723	806
YouTube Views	40,775	48,138	43,120
Graduate Emerging Leader Work Placements	65	180	351
Arts Award Qualification Success Rate	100%	100%	100%

As an organisation we have focussed on increasing opportunities available to Learning Disabled children, young people and adults, resulting in an increase in the total number of sessions. We have also been focusing on smaller group work to enable very bespoke and high impact interactions which has resulted in a small decrease in the number of Learning Disabled children, young people, and adults reached.

Outcomes Review

This section reviews Soundabout's progress towards the 5 main outcomes we aim to achieve with Learning Disabled people. We have provided data from a range of sources as evidence of progress towards each outcome.

Outcome 1: Improving Connectedness

Soundabout music making opportunities are group opportunities that enable Learning Disabled people with complex support needs to build positive relationships with their peers, parents and carers, and wider communities. Soundabout activities build strong networks and friendships that forge a sense of belonging. We use our national platform to showcase our community's talents and to shine a light on their experiences.

Evidence towards improving connectedness:

- "When that music came into the home it felt like we were with people...it's very special. When she hears Will's [Soundabout Practitioner] voice it's like the instant connection there. A lot of people think virtual sessions are hard work, but they don't really understand the power of it. Maisy gets a huge benefit from it. Music is her life." Parent, Sounds Virtual
- "He adored connecting with the leaders when they came to him and it was good to see him doing so despite him not knowing them... it's good practice for him to show people he doesn't know what his likes are." Parent, Sounds Together Didcot
- "I have always known that my son, Rupert, loves music, but this was a completely different experience. The sessions weren't just about listening to songs; they were immersive, interactive and inclusive. Rupert was fully engaged from the moment it began to the very end. It helped that during each session, the sun streamed through the beautiful, colourful windows, creating an atmosphere that perfectly accompanied the sessions. The way the team used instruments, sensory elements and rhythm created such a safe and joyful space for Rupert to explore sound in his own way. What really stood out was how thoughtfully the sessions were delivered. Every child was given time, attention and encouragement. There was no pressure; just warmth, understanding and celebration of each child's responses. You could see how much expertise and genuine care goes into everything Soundabout does. Rupert's little brother joined too, and he absolutely loved it. It was so special to see them both connecting through music, smiling, laughing and experiencing something together, which meant so much as a family. We left each time feeling uplifted, connected and already looking forward to the next one. I can't recommend the sessions highly enough! It's more than a music session, it's a beautiful experience that supports communication, confidence and joy! Thank you for everyone who was involved in allowing us to experience this!" Parent, Sounds Together Story Museum
- "M was actively engaged in the session encouraged by the musicians and his peers. He was involved in turn taking and encouraging others to participate. it was obvious from his body language and facial expressions with vocal sounds that he felt included within the group and as an individual contributed well." Parent, Sounds Together Birmingham
- "E struggles to interact with others and her visual impairment makes it harder for her too. It is hard for her to make progress with communication without a lot of support and input from other people. She definitely enjoyed being with the children from NCC and the other Soundabouters and leaders... Seeing the children from the NCC being so interested in the Soundabouters and being so friendly towards them was really heartwarming." Parent, National Children's Choir of Great Britain
- During a Graduate Emerging Leader (GEL) feedback group, GELs were asked what they liked most about Soundabout. They said: 'seeing friends' 'making music with friends' 'being part of a community' 'we all belong' 'no one feels left out'. GEL Experts by Experience Group

Across group-session reports recorded by practitioners between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, **72% of reports described interaction, togetherness, sharing or turn-taking**. This highlights the role of Soundabout sessions in creating opportunities for people to connect with others, build relationships and participate as part of a group.

Across individual participant-report records, practitioners recorded **positive evidence of connectedness in 98% of reports.** In 47% of reports, connectedness was recorded at the highest available structured level of the Sounds of Intent Me Framework, "Taking it Further". Practitioner comments described people sharing attention, interacting with peers, taking turns and participating alongside parents, carers and family members.

As part of our efforts to improve connectedness within the community and externally, we have supported Learning Disabled musicians in Soundabout choirs to release 6 public music videos which have been view 4,045 times, and to perform to audiences across the country.

Outcome 2: Developing Communication
Soundabout uses music, sound, and silence as tools to explore and enhance communication with and between learning Disabled people and the communities around them. Communication might be through vocalising or non-verbal e.g. facial expressions or gestures. Our sessions allow plenty of space and time to explore communication and interactions, along with allowing space for silence and processing time. We work closely with learning Disabled people and their close supporters to learn their communication styles and follow their lead. We also support parents, carers, and professionals to learn how to interact and communicate musically so they can continue this outside of sessions.

Evidence towards developing communication:
- "Winnie absolutely loved the programme with Soundabout. We saw such a noticeable development in her confidence and engagement over the weeks. It was wonderful to be part of a relaxed, flexible group that truly adapted to each child's individual needs. The team were incredibly caring and supportive, and it genuinely felt like being part of a community. We also really appreciated that Winnie was introduced to a range of instruments you wouldn't typically find in an average toddler music class, including the trumpet, which she was fascinated by. We're so grateful for the experience and would highly recommend the programme to other families." Parent, Sounds Together Story Museum Oxford
- "You bring such a quality provision, one that I've struggled to find elsewhere. It's not just a generic music session. You work with my son's abilities and make that the centre of your interactions. His sounds and vocalisations being the main part of a song in the group makes him feel heard. This is how he communicates and it's so meaningful." Parent, Sounds Together Birmingham
- "George loved interacting when it was his turn and enjoyed communicating with the leaders." Parent, Sounds Together Didcot
- "M makes her own little sounds, but she's not verbal as such. The participants she has got to know stimulate interaction through their friendship and music making, and the practitioners support and encourage that, which helps M react even more." Parent, Sounds Virtual
- "There was a large variety of different communication in the sharing circle. C used her communication board, L typed out a message on his iPad to support him speaking in full sentences, E used his iPad to express himself musically, alongside movement, vocalising and signing." Practitioner, Soundabout Choir
- "What works for T is the Soundabout Socials on a Friday. He was part of the first Emerging Leaders group, and it was a small group of them who met week by week. They were so lovely. That early connection with the Emerging Leaders was so strong. Soundabout gave him those small, regular in-person get-togethers, and that connection was life-changing for him." Parent, Graduate Emerging Leaders
- "It was lovely to have that shared moment and to see how the children interacted with each other. Sunny was tuning in to everybody else who was participating - hearing other people and responding to the sounds they were bringing, rather than it always being an adult-led activity. It was interesting to see how he responded to the other participants and their sounds." Parent, Sounds Together

Across group-session reports recorded by practitioners between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, **communication outcomes were recorded in 97%.** Communication took many forms. Practitioners described vocal participation or singing in 73% of reports, choice-making or clear requests in 43% of reports, and eye contact, looking or visual tracking in 33% of reports. Reports also described communication through facial expression, movement, gesture, signin g, listening and responding to sound.

Across individual participant-report records communication is one of the strongest areas. of the individual dataset. All individual records included at least one positive Communication response in the structured framework, and **53% included the highest available structured level of the Sounds of Intent Me Framework**, "Taking it Further" at one or more Communication indicators.
Type of communication in individual reports recorded (these are not just keyword counts; they come from the structured Communication evidence selections recorded by practitioners):
- Showed awareness of others - 99%
- Interacted with others - 94%
- Used facial expressions - 87%
- Vocalisation - 85%
- Made an intentional choice or preference - 79%
- Used body language - 76%
- Eye contact or eye pointing - 73%
- Initiated interactions - 72%

Outcome 3: Encouraging Enjoyment
Being playful with music and sound is a big part of the Soundabout ethos, resulting in increased feelings of enjoyment. The atmosphere of our sessions is relaxed and fun with playful interactions being at the heart of our delivery. We aim to encourage everyone to enjoy music making at our sessions showing delight through laughing, smiling, indicating for 'more' and returning to Soundabout sessions.

Evidence towards encouraging enjoyment:
- "I really love Emerging Leaders. It's really fun. I love taking part in everything, and I love to make more friends during Soundabout. It feels like a family to me. When I see people with my condition, it makes me feel like I'm looking in the mirror at myself - I love that feeling. It's just so cool to have a little family that's not a school family, but a choir family. That's amazing. I love it." Graduate Emerging Leader
- "E felt confident to express herself during the singing of "This is me", which she knows really well...Also, seeing the other Soundabouters being given lots of opportunities to express themselves in the afternoon session and their undoubted joy in joining in was fantastic to see." Parent, National Children's Choir of Great Britain Joint Workshop
- "It was all very magical, in a beautiful setting and having space to spread out on the rug with other families was really lovely. It was very relaxed, without any pressure to "perform", and just felt like it was all about enjoyment for everyone there. This session was extremely flexible and pitched at the people at the season and what they enjoyed. The facilitators were really engaged with any ways of communicating they saw and really encouraged it, whether it was vocal or body movements. They responded to it all" Parent, Sounds Wild
- "It just makes me so happy being here with you all! I'm excited to give my feedback today too, let's come up with some great ideas!" - GEL Expert by Experience
- "There was inherent joy from J throughout many of the activities. During an exercise exploring vocal vibrations, J reached over to their parent/carer's face and attempted to copy and mimic them. There were lots of smiles from J - and from their parent/carer too." Soundabout practitioner, Sounds Sensory Online
- "T seemed to really enjoy playing with the instruments and resources in lots of different ways - rolling, banging and hiding them. He particularly enjoyed when the music was tailored to him: everyone following his lead to play loudly, with practitioners mirroring his vocalisations within a song." Soundabout practitioner, Bristol Early Years Sounds Together

Across group-session reports recorded by practitioners between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, **74% included references to smiles, laughter, joy or delight.** Practitioners specifically recorded smiles in 66% and laughter or giggles in 42% of reports. These observations show the regular moments of enjoyment, shared happiness and positive engagement that music-maki ng created within group sessions.

Across individual participant-report records, **enjoyment was explicitly recorded in 91% of reports.** Practitioners described smiles, laughter, giggles, joy or delight in 74% of reports, alongside active participation through movement, singing, playing and vocalising.

Outcome 4: Increasing Self-Expression
Everyone has a right to agency and self-expression. Soundabout techniques provide opportunities to explore that sense of self and provides a creative outlet with Learning Disabled people. By self-expression we mean being able to participate in creative sound-based activities, to enhance sense of self and others (explored via interactive activities), being able to make choices, and express likes and dislikes. Our person centred approach means that sessions are co-designed with attendees, following their lead and their choices throughout.

Evidence towards increasing self-expression:
- "The practitioners just get C and, over these last four or five years, have come to know how she responds. Even on the YouTube sessions, when Karen only has information through the type chat, she knows how C will be responding and can incorporate her in that way. With no verbal communication, C's world is very closed and limited, but Soundabout has truly opened up this world." Parent, Sounds Virtual
- "The practitioners have really got to know M and he has really got to know them. He feels really comfortable and it shows in how he is engaging. He has started echoing sounds, which is new for him, but I think it's because he is so comfortable. Not just with practitioners but he has made friends, it's so nice to see people coming regularly and M knows all of their sounds and they know his. I think that's why he has started echoing and vocalising in different ways." Parent, Experts by Experience Group

- "G was rocking to the music when songs he recognised were played. He recognised the song '3 little birds' and pressed the bird button to indicate that he wanted more which was a big achievement for him." Parent, Sounds Together Didcot
- "Lovely to see him trying to hum" Parent, Sounds Together Didcot
- "There was lots of musical self-expression: singing along expressively and with feeling, exploring different rhythm patterns and ways of playing, and creating masks that gave everyone an opportunity to express themselves in a different way." Soundabout practitioner, Sounds Wild at Grow Wilder
- "J came up with an improvisation on the song we were singing, giving it a Soundabout twist he's feeling so confident using his singing voice and improvising songs." Soundabout practitioner, West Midlands Choir
- "[My son] cannot use his arms or legs to play instruments, so having a space where his voice is his instrument gives him a sense of independence and ownership. In the Sounds Wild and Soundabout groups, M can truly be himself" Parent, Sounds Wild
- "I love Emerging Leaders. We've done the radio show, cover songs and made videos as well. I love that I get to spread awareness for Soundabout and help make people feel welcomed - especially people who may struggle with communication." Graduate Emerging Leader

Across group-session reports recorded by practitioners between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, **practitioners recorded evidence of self-expression in 99% of reports**. Self-expression took many forms, including making choices and expressing preferences, movement and dance, sharing ideas, creative improvisation and leading musical activities. In 33% of reports, practitioners described people making choices or expressing preferences; in 19% of reports, they recorded ideas, creativity or improvisation. These themes can overlap, as a single report may describe more than one form of s elf-expression.

Across individual reports **93% recorded positive Self-expression evidence.** In 32% of reports one or more Self-expression indicators were recorded as "Taking it Further". Self-expression was often described as choice-making, movement, creating sounds, shaping musical ideas and takin g the lead.

To explore progress in self-expression over time, we reviewed a longitudinal cohort of 23 participants across different Soundabout programmes, each with four or more recorded session assessments. This allowed us to compare participants' earliest recorded Sounds of Intent assessment with later assessments and identify changes in their level of self-expression. This cohort is not intended to represent every Soundabout participant; it highlights individual journeys where sufficient repeated evidence was available. Using the Sounds of Intent progress framework, 14 of 23 people **(61%) later reached a higher level in self-expression.** Of these 14 people:
10 people moved up by one level
3 people moved up by two levels
1 person moved from three levels
This included progress from early exploration of sound, movement and musical activity towards more confident choice-making, expressing preferences, sharing ideas and leading aspects of music-making.

Outcome 5: Promoting Health and Wellbeing
Music, Sound and Silence can support a sense of well-being by engaging in positive, enjoyable activities. We refer to health and wellbeing of our community as any observed/recorded positive impact on physical and mental health. This could refer to direct impacts e.g. on mental health, or in-direct e.g. by emotionally supporting participants while having medical interventions. Our sessions bring groups together for meaningful activities, reducing isolation and bringing wellbeing through a sense of purpose. Our Sounds Wild provision provides opportunities to connect with nature and reap the benefits of being outdoors.

Evidence towards promoting health and wellbeing:
- "You have made the room safe for Ava when she has felt anything but safe. You have been there for cannulas, ECGs and EEGs; before and after surgery; and you have sung to her as she has gone to sleep under the care of an anaesthetist. On many occasions, you did not even know you were there - but Ava did, and I did. You made everything feel less terrifying. We weren't alone...I swear to God, your sessions should be available on the NHS. They're the best medicine anyone has ever prescribed - and the only side effect is pure joy." Parent, Sounds Virtual

- "Michael absolutely loves music and nature and Sounds Wild has given him a wonderful opportunity to connect deeply with both. When we are out on walks, he enjoys listening to the birds and the many sounds they make - the running water, streams, waterfalls, lakes, trees swaying in the breeze, the wind, and the rain. Michael has always been very tuned in to the world around him, and he communicates with laughter and joy when he hears these sounds while out and about. Sounds Wild has helped him deepen this connection even further, giving him the chance to listen closely, enjoy the environment, and begin mimicking the sounds he hears. He embraces the natural soundscape and expresses it in his own unique ways. Although Michael is visually impaired and registered blind, his hearing is incredibly strong, and the joy he shows when copying sounds is truly wonderful. What has been especially beautiful to see is how the Soundabout musicians respond to him. They listen to his vocalisations, mirror them, and gently encourage him. This repetition and acknowledgment help him grow in confidence, using his own voice to explore and create his own form of music. Being alongside others, participating in his own way, gives him a real sense of belonging and independence. It is incredibly rewarding for us as a family to see him taking part without needing hands-on help from us or carers. Giving him the opportunity to express himself freely, joyfully, and creatively. Sounds Wild has built on this love of nature, giving him a meaningful way to connect with the world around him. Michael is developing a skill in expressing himself musically through sound using his voice. We are genuinely grateful for the opportunities Sounds Wild provides. It has given Michael and others with complex needs a safe, joyful, and empowering space to listen, communicate, create, and shine in their own way." Parent, Sounds Wild

- "E remained very calm in all the sessions - she is usually very restless and excitable. Remaining calm enabled her to engage better. She seemed to particularly like the wind down session at the end of the afternoon." Parent, National Children's Choir of Great Britain Joint Workshop

- "I love taking part in everything. I feel like that it's making a difference with my mental health and it's making me feel really good and making me feel like I have more friends." Eva, Soundabout Emerging Leader

- "When we first came into the room, S was a big bundle of energy - really keen, with big sounds and big movements. As the session went on, the tone, pitch and volume changed and things slowed down. You could see his movements getting smaller and slower, and by the goodbye song he was really relaxing into the music. His breathing was calming down. He finished in a much calmer frame of mind than when he came in - you could see how the music helped him relax into himself a little bit more." Parent/carer, Sounds Together

- "Charlie seemed to really relax as we listened to bird sounds and felt a breeze. She closed her eyes and slowly shook her head as the sun beamed on her face." Soundabout practitioner, Sounds Sensory Online

Across group-session reports recorded by practitioners between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, **55% of reports described confidence, calmness or relaxation**. This shows that practitioners regularly observed positive wellbeing outcomes, including increased confidence and moments of calm, comfort or emotional regulation.

Across individual participant-report records, **99.6% recorded positive Health and Wellbeing evidence.** In 41%, at least one Health and Wellbeing indicator was recorded at the "Taking it Further" level. The comments particularly point to confidence, pride, calmness, comfort and sustained engagement.

To explore progress in health and wellbeing over time, we reviewed a longitudinal cohort of 23 participants across different Soundabout programmes, each with four or more recorded session assessments. This allowed us to compare participants' earliest recorded Sounds of Intent assessment with later assessments and identify changes in their health and wellbeing. This cohort is not intended to represent every Soundabout participant; it highlights individual journeys where sufficient repeated evidence was available.

Using the Sounds of Intent progress framework, 14 of 23 people **(61%) later reached a higher level in health and wellbeing.** Of these 14 people:
9 people moved up by one level
4 people moved up by two levels
1 person moved up by three levels
This included progress from early engagement with music-making towards greater confidence, comfort, calmness, emotional regulation and sustained participation.

Impact on Parents / Carers
This year we have also started to try to capture the secondary impact that Soundabout has for the parents and carers of Soundabout participants. We have trialled looking at three outcomes in this area to acknowledge the wider impact of our work outside of our core outcomes. Below are examples of quotes to support each outcome.

Communication
Simple, playful sound-based techniques are easy to use in day-to-day life to support communication between parents/carers and participants. We hope this encourages meaningful interactions between participants and their parents and carers, with them trying simple sound-based techniques at home.

- "I have learnt a lot too and we continue this at home when we leave. I even discovered what instruments he likes from this group and bought the exact same one for home so we can communicate using those and the things I have seen here." Parent, Sounds Together Birmingham
- "She knows [the Soundabout routine] so well. Because we do it together, I think she associates me and our quality time instantly with Soundabout, the minute I sang the hello song, she lights up and knows what is coming next. I think that repetition is really important. We sing most of the day, every day now." Parent, Experts by Experience
- "We love going together. We sing and sign, dance and play instruments - and it gives us something we can enjoy and share together." Parent, Soundabout Choirs

Confidence
We are all musical beings, but many people do not feel confident in being playful with sound/music. Soundabout seeks to support people to use simple and replicable tools and techniques in day-to-day interactions. We hope that parents / carers will grow in confidence and will encourage others / share ideas across their family, wider networks, and support services.

- "Further to the above, I just wanted to say thank you to the teams for the book with the YouTube videos. Me and Winnie watched these when she was very ill and they were great." Parent, Sounds Together Story Museum (Early Years)
- "We've really enjoyed it because it gives us ideas to bring back to Maisy so she can be included in that as well... it's just really fun." Parent/carer, Sounds Virtual / Soundabout Moveabout
- "Soundabout is usually something I do with 'I'. Her Dad also does it with her if I'm working - seeing her moving, answering and being so happy showed how much she gets from the sessions... We use some of the songs for our family routine or to let her know when it's time for Soundabout." Parent/carer, Soundabout Choir & Virtual

Connecting
Parents and carers of Learning Disabled people with complex support needs can be isolated and excluded from mainstream activities/networks. By connecting with others, we mean that parents and carers are acknowledged as individuals alongside the person they support, that we show respect and appreciation for their knowledge and circumstances. We hope that through our work, parents and carers feel part of a community and finding support and building networks with people they have met through Soundabout.

- "Winnie absolutely loved the programme with Soundabout. We saw such a noticeable development in her confidence and engagement over the weeks. It was wonderful to be part of a relaxed, flexible group that truly adapted to each child's individual needs. The team were incredibly caring and supportive, and it genuinely felt like being part of a community." Parent, Sounds Together Story Museum (Early Years)
- "Thank you so much for organising the Experts by Experience group. It was so interesting to hear everyone else's story. We all have different experiences but also go through so many similar things. It was lovely to share that and feel like we are being heard in our feedback too." Parent, Experts by Experience
- "You can do so many things online, and the joy of that - we could have been on holiday, we could have been somewhere else and not missed out." Parent, Soundabout Choirs & Virtual

Across group-session reports recorded by practitioners between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, **39% explicitly described a parent, carer or family member within the connectedness narrative**. Practitioners recorded families and carers making music together, sharing attention, supporting participation and creating moments of interaction and enjoyment alongside the people they support.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Across individual participant-report records, practitioners explicitly mentioned a parent, carer, mum or dad in 31% of reports. Of these, **68% also referred to interaction, connection, shared attention or turn-taking.** This highlights the important role that parents and carers can play in shared music-making, supporting
communication, participation and meaningful moments of connection alongside the people they support.

Review of Strategic Aims

This section reviews progress towards Soundabout's 4 Strategic Aims for 'Soundabout Build' our strategy and business plan for 2023-27. Each strategic aim has related objectives to help achieve the aim and we've shared highlights below to demonstrate progress towards these aims and objectives.

Strategic Aim 1: To become the 'go to' charity within our specialism in England and Wales, by creating consistently high-quality musical opportunities with our participants facilitated by a diverse team of expert music practitioners.

Soundabout Grow

Soundabout's commitment to ensuring the highest quality of delivery was supported by 'Soundabout Grow' our Youth Music funded workforce development programme. 2025-26 was the final year of the three-year programme which aimed to diversify and develop the skills of Soundabout's music practitioner workforce. We looked internally and externally to ensure that our work was really the best practice it could be based on the latest research, advances in technology, developments in community music, and expertise from different fields.

Across the programme, 902 in-person and 712 online group music making sessions were delivered alongside Disabled children and young people. These music sessions doubled up as opportunities for practitioners to try out new skills, techniques, ideas while being supported by peers and mentors.

Formal training and mentoring opportunities reached 138 people across the three years and included:
- 79 funded peer observation visits, creating a culture of reflective practice, ongoing learning, and continued development;
- 20 open agenda peer support sessions offered space for peer discussion and reflection around any specific topics or concerns related to their practice;
- 16 practitioner consultation sessions took place to continue developing the workforce development programme;
- Paid annual reflection for 25 practitioners each year with additional optional reflection exercises and mentoring from Workforce Development Lead;
- 16 formal training events were delivered by internal and external experts, covering topics such as: Emotional wellbeing and people who use non-verbal communication, Disability awareness - social model and upcoming models and allyship, Exploring musical play, improvisation, and meaningful interactions in sound, Intensive Interaction, Communication and language, Music Technology and Assistive Technology, Sensory Needs and Considerations, Cultural Awareness.

Feedback from the practitioner annual survey highlighted the impact of the workforce development programme on the practitioner team:
- [What's worked well?] "The support and training opportunities available for practitioners to discuss and share ideas and discover how we can implement new ideas into our practice."
- [What does it mean to be a Soundabout Practitioner?] "Being a Soundabout practitioner is something very special. We are valued and supported, surrounded by other practitioners who all have the same intention - to create high quality, inclusive music sessions for Learning Disabled people with complex needs."
- "It means a lot to be a Soundabout practitioner. Soundabout's approach and values align with mine - putting participants at the heart of the work whilst working to the highest standards possible. Using music to support people's wellbeing and develop their musical and non-musical skills, making music more accessible and having fun whilst doing so feels like the best job in the world!"
- "I love being a Soundabout Practitioner and part of the Soundabout family. In all the jobs I have had in teaching and performing, I have never felt so welcomed, supported and valued... I love seeing the difference that music and being part of the group means to the participants and their families. It really is such a special thing to be part of."

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Sound Practice

Soundabout Grow enabled us the time and resource to develop a new training programme called 'Sound Practice'. Building on Soundabout's 30 years of experience and recent learning, Sound Practice provides a comprehensive, flexible, and practical pathway for anyone looking to develop or strengthen their expertise in facilitating accessible, interactive, and creative music making opportunities alongside Learning Disabled people with complex support needs. The course launches in September 2026 and will be accredited through The CPD Certification Service.

Graduate Emerging Leaders

Soundabout Grow also supported Graduate Emerging Leader placements, where **Learning-Disabled young people undertook 351 voluntary and paid placement sessions** across a broad range of opportunities based on their personal choices and goals. It has been an absolute joy to see the increase in confidence, communication and leadership skills from the graduates. Many of them have led a group for the first time, been independent during sessions and taught others about effective leadership. They have developed their own leadership styles, becoming role models for their peers and the practitioners that they now work alongside.

Over the past year the work experience programme has developed to include a diverse range of work placement options. These include recording backing tracks for the choirs, making signing videos, leading music workshops and designing art for the website. Graduates have had placements visiting external organisations leading accessibility checks (Grosvenor Studios, Birmingham Conservatoire & Clent Hills National Trust) and leading workshops for London Youth Choirs, with National Children's Choir joint workshops and at Parallel Windsor. The GELs also took part in a joint workshop about inclusive interviewing and research with Dr Tenley Martin (Leeds Beckett University). This has expanded the reach of inclusive leadership and demonstrated to other organisations the value of a diverse workforce.

Some of the Graduates have now been doing work experience since 2023 and have naturally taken on a supportive role to the newer graduates. After one of our newest graduates led a warmup in a choir session, another clapped and reassured her that "[the] more you do it, more confident you get". It is special to see the increase in confidence and growth of individuals to not just develop their own skills but also support others.
This year we have been able to run regular work experience placements as well as one-off placements. One of the most popular placements is leading the "Soundabout social". Taking place fortnightly, these re online sessions for all graduate emerging leaders. Each week a different graduate will plan and lead the session supported by a keyworker. They plan music games to play, questions to ask and offer chances for their peers to share their news and favourite sons. This experience was developed from family feedback about the importance of socialising after the emerging leaders project finished. At the end of each session everyone gives the leader feedback including remarks such as 'you smashed it', 'I loved your leading' and 'thank you [signed]'.

Graduate Emerging Leader feedback included:
"I love doing work experience with Soundabout- it's given me opportunities to explore new things like helping with backing tracks. It's been really fun to lead the Soundabout socials and help with signing videos. My highlight was going to London to share my experiences with the charity. I used to be shy, but now I know I can do it- it really helps." "My leadership skills have sky rocketed!"

Emerging Leaders

Soundabout's Emerging Leaders programme continued to develop Learning Disabled young people who are interested in careers in the sector, while also diversifying the workforce. The young leaders have been informing organisational development and bring a wealth of creative thinking to Soundabout. Cohort 4 completed their course with all Emerging Leaders successfully achieving Bronze Arts Awards through Trinity College London, gaining formal accreditation and UCAS points. Cohort 5 was also launched this year and the group are thriving! The Emerging Leaders programme continues to develop based on feedback of the young leaders, and is proving to be an innovative, important, and forward-thinking model for the sector. The Emerging Leaders and Graduate Emerging Leaders programmes won the 'Outstanding Project Award' at the 2025 Youth Music Awards.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Safeguarding - Changes in Approach and Accessibility

As well as working hard to continually develop our musical practice, we have also been reviewing and improving practice across all areas of the organisation. One highlight of the year has been work to improve the accessibility of safeguarding practices at Soundabout, so that Learning Disabled children, young people, and adults can understand and actively contribute to safeguarding, ultimately improving the quality of our offer.

As part of this work, newly recruited staff members and volunteers now receive one-to-one safeguarding training that is tailored both to their individual accessibility needs and to the nature of their role. This allows training to be delivered clearly, supportive, and appropriate for the work each person will be undertaking. For example, a volunteer working solely within our virtual provision will receive more detailed training from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on online safeguarding. This includes recognising potential concerns in online sessions, understanding appropriate boundaries and communication, and knowing how to respond if something does not feel right. Training is supported by real-life scenarios based on concerns that have arisen in previous online sessions, helping volunteers to understand what to look out for and how to report concerns appropriately.

This more personalised approach means that staff and volunteers can build confidence in safeguarding within the context of their own responsibilities, rather than relying only on generalised training. It also helps ensure that everyone understands how safeguarding concerns may present differently for the children, young people and adults we support, including through behaviour, vocalisations, changes in engagement or other non-verbal forms of communication.

Building on our safeguarding song, we are also developing an easy-read version of our safeguarding policy. This will make key safeguarding information more accessible to participants, families, staff and volunteers who may benefit from information presented in a clearer and more visual format. The easy-read policy will also form the basis for developing accessible safeguarding training resources. These resources will support people to understand what safeguarding means, what to do if they are worried about themselves or someone else, who they can speak to, and how concerns will be listened to and acted upon. This work will help ensure that everyone can access the information they need to feel safe, heard and supported.

Strategic Aim 2: To further understand and demonstrate the value of our work by developing the way we measure impact.

Participant Voice

As described in the outcome review above, we are continually working hard to develop how we measure the impact of our work. A key focus for us is how to capture and measure the impact of our work through the first hand voices of the participants we support. Learning Disabled people with complex support needs often communicate using gestures, vocalisations, facial expressions, and movements, which means that traditional impact measuring is not accessible. Where surveys, polls, interviews, and feedback forms pose barriers to feedback gathering, we have been experimenting with video and audio capture to ensure. Parents and carers are often needed to support with interpreting / translating communication and so we are working to find ways to include this alongside participant voices. We're also working with a researcher at Leeds Beckett University to explore how Emerging and Graduate Emerging Leaders can support feedback gathering, with a project on participant-led evaluation.

Participant and family voice is central to Soundabout's work. We are undertaking a deeper review of accessibility and consultation, with the aim of understanding what best practice looks like and ensuring that our community's voices remain at the heart of how we develop as an organisation. Originally, Soundabout had a Participant Advisory Group (SPAG), made up of participants and parent carers who shared feedback through quarterly meetings. Although meetings and materials were delivered accessibly, it became increasingly difficult to ensure that the different ways participants and parent carers communicated their views could be captured, understood and shared equitably. To address this, we decided to separate the groups and develop more effective ways of gathering, recording and sharing accessible feedback. The feedback group was renamed Experts by Experience (EbE), a change approved by the existing SPAG members. This better reflects wider sector language and recognises the importance of lived experience in shaping feedback and organisational development.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The new groups currently have 6 members in the parent-carer Experts by Experience group, and 6 members in the Graduate Emerging Leader group. We are also developing how we capture direct participant feedback as another strand of Experts by Experience. Community Support Lead will attend sessions that align with Board meeting dates to gather musical feedback, vocalisations and other forms of communication from participants. This will help ensure that the views of people who may not use traditional verbal or written communication are represented meaningfully. This work runs alongside our usual feedback-gathering routes, including feedback forms, email, telephone, zoom meets and social media.

Workforce Development Impact
The Soundabout Grow 3-year workforce development programme also provided us with the opportunity to explore how we measure impact with the people with train. We trialled the following methods:
- Observations of Emerging Leader / Graduate Emerging Leaders and freelance practitioners
- Music practitioners' self-assessments
- 1:1 practitioner reflection time with Workforce Development lead
- Reviews of engagement statistics
- Project manager's assessment
- Staff team reflection meetings reviewing outcome and workforce development programme
- Consultation sessions with freelance practitioners

We were able to capture over-arching statistics from training attendees such as:
"I feel my practice will improve as a result of today's training"
59% Strongly Agree
37% Agree
3% Neither Agree nor Disagree
1% Disagree

"I feel able to practise more inclusively as a result of today's training"
59% Strongly Agree
27% Agree
12% Neither Agree nor Disagree
2% Disagree

We also pulled out key phrases from responses: across all training session feedback surveys, the most used words to describe personal development were:
1. Skills
2. Confidence
3. Awareness
4. Reflection
5. Ideas

Our commitment to measuring impact, is also seen Soundabout's Workforce Development lead commented: "I have observed every practitioner in the current delivery team at some point between Oct 2023-Mar 2026, some 2/3 times. I offer detailed feedback notes after every session observation - plus the chance to talk through these, if the practitioner would like to do this. I offer feedback using Soundabout core elements and Quality Assurance Framework as a key reference points for this - to help home in on any specific areas of Soundabout practice which need development.... I have observed/received feedback around positive change in response to feedback from observations. Specific examples of how practice has improved include: simplifying session content, slower overall pacing and more repetition, more participant-led/more incorporation of participant ideas, more playfulness, more active co-delivery style, deeper reflection on activity choice and how to use known materials in sessions."

Case Studies
We believe that the families and individuals who take part in Soundabout activities can offer the most powerful messages about the impact of our work. To this end we have been producing video case studies and public news stories to share stories and demonstrate impact on a wider scale. Examples can be found on the Soundabout YouTube channel or website.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

These are all brief examples of some of the ways we are developing our impact measurement, while we've made excellent progress, there are many more opportunities and areas of development for us to explore.

Strategic Aim 3. Build Soundabout's resilience and sustainability by diversifying income streams, enabling the organisation to evolve within the landscape we operate in.

We have secured more income than at any point in our history, crossing the half a million threshold. This increase in income comes from a various of sources / approaches. Building on the previous year's trust and foundation successes, again we focussed on attempting to secure unrestricted income for multiple years wherever possible to support resilience and sustainability. We were successful with a two-year National Lottery Awards For All application as well as a two-year Youth Music application.

Early in the year we recruited a part-time Marketing and Communications Officer (2 days per week). This role has supported the diversification of our income by promoting and publicising key campaigns, promoting avenues for earned income, and spreading awareness of the charity to potential new donors. The impact of this role was visible from this year's 'Sparkle with Soundabout' winter fundraising campaign. In 2024 we aimed for and achieved a £10,000 target. With the additional communications support plus learning from previous years, in 2025 we were able to achieve just over our £50,000 target. Both years included a Big Give match funding campaign. Match funding campaigns have proved particularly successful in the last year; we also took part in the Small Charity Week Big Give in June 2025 and raised £21,000. This is something we are keen to build on further.

Individual Giving has been an ongoing area of development, with a key emphasis on relationship building and developing long term connections. We trialled holding an evening reception in London for current and potential supporters, partners, and friends to the charity. Through this event we were able to secure 50% match funding for the Small Charity Week Big Give campaign. We also held additional choir concerts and in-person events which provided the opportunity to invite and connect with supporters. This is an area of opportunity and growth for the charity, and we are now in the process of developing a supporter circle scheme.

Generating income from selling our services, products, or ticket sales has increased this year. Soundabout Grow has enabled us to develop a new training course and train up our practitioner team ready to deliver it. Modules from the course, or the whole course content itself, can also be commissioned by organisations, which we hope will further increase income generation potential. Commissioned music delivery requests from schools, day centres, other charities, and residential homes have also increased. Our 'Pay-What-You-Can' scheme for our core sessions also continues to generate income for the charity.

We are incredibly grateful to all our supporters and have listed below, with thanks, the Trusts and Foundations who gave over £5,000:
Global Charities
BeauxArtz
Golden Bottle Trust
Light Bulb Trust
Morgan Blake Charitable Trust
National Lottery Community Fund
St James's Place Charitable Foundation
The Big Give Trust
The Liz and Terry Bramall Foundation
The National Foundation for Youth Music
The Radcliffe Trust
Wiltshire Music Connect CIC Legacy Fund

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Strategic Aim 4: Grow Soundabout's professional, personal, and cultural profile.

Soundabout continues to grow profile among organisations within the music sector, the arts sector more widely, as well as the health and social care sector. Most of our efforts have been building connections in the local areas surrounding our in-person delivery, creating tangible signposting opportunities and raising awareness of our work among potential recipients and supporters. We delivered in-person information events in London, Exeter, and Leeds to build connections in areas newer to the charity. Across the year we also worked with 72 organisations, including National Children's Choir of Great Britain, Royal College of Music, Leeds Beckett University, Bath Spa University, Garsington Studios, Barnardo's, Together for Short Lives, Story Museum, London Symphony Chorus, National Trust.

Soundabout's Youth Music Award (as mentioned above) was a brilliant opportunity for growing the profile of the organisation. The build up to the awards and the event itself was heavily publicised by the Youth Music team and Soundabout was able to benefit from this high-profile coverage. Similarly, Soundabout's presence at the King's Community Music Reception at Windsor Castle in April 2025 was a high-profile celebratory moment demonstrating the value placed on our work.

With limited marketing resource we decided to focus on the use of social media, email marketing, and digital campaigns. Media coverage was therefore limited, however our winter appeal reached local radio stations, we were featured in multiple associate choir press releases related to concerts, we contributed to Youth Music Awards press releases, and a large feature in the Cross Over Music Magazine.

As part of our commissioned work, Soundabout was a consultancy partner for Youth Music's 'Excluded by Design' research, looking into Disability in the music sector. This work led to Youth Music inviting us to co-present at the Family Arts Conference in Newcastle, reaching a broader arts audience. The team spoke at various other events throughout the year, including multiple parent carer forums.

Finally, to grow our profile we committed to finding and creating platforms for our participants to perform or share their music, achievements, and stories in meaningful ways. Events and performances included Garsington Studios, BBC Oxford Carols, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, plus a joint workshop with the National Children's Choir of Great Britain at their spring residential course. The Soundabout Choirs recorded and released 6 music videos, including composing a brand-new original song called 'Glow'. Collectively the 6 music videos have been viewed 4,045 times on YouTube.

Public Benefit

Charitable objects as per the Memorandum and Articles of Association:
To provide relief to people with severe learning difficulties and physical difficulties by the provision of interactive music making sessions.

Vision: A world where everyone can access and experience music.

Mission: Soundabout uses music, sound, and silence to create opportunities where learning Disabled people with complex support needs thrive.

Values:
- Kind: We are kind, friendly, and supportive to everyone.
- Person-Centred: We celebrate each person; creating sound and music together.
- Inclusive: we work hard to create welcoming and accessible spaces.
- Aspirational: We use our energy to learn and aim for the best for everyone, while being curious, fun, and creative.

We are working to our strategic business plan 'Soundabout Build' which runs until 2027 and focuses on consolidation and stabilisation of offer, team, and finances, and preparing for the future. We want to build on expertise, knowledge, and learning, while creating new opportunities, innovation, and trailblazing in best practice in the field. We want to ensure that our offer is excellent in all ways, that we can keep Soundabout running robustly and sustainably, that we set ourselves up to grow in the future, and that we lead the sector by sharing our learning. This includes a range of activities listed below under the 'Our programmes' section.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

In shaping our objectives for the year and planning our activities, we can confirm that the Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and are confident that the work of the charity falls in line with the guidance.

Financial Review

Soundabout continued to raise sufficient funds to deliver our core projects and services against a backdrop of high competition for funding and increases in the cost of living.

The charity has increased its income from the previous financial year by £42k driven by an increase in individual donations and legacy funding. We have also enjoyed an increase in commissioned work delivering music sessions and training. We have seen a drop in funds raised through Trusts and Foundations as grant funding becomes increasingly competitive.

Income highlights for the year include our successful winter fundraising campaign which brought in over £50k in donations and pledges while participating in the Big Give Christmas Challenge. We also secured £100,000 over two years from Youth Music's Catalyser Fund, plus a further £20k from Awards for All grant for project work.

Expenditure grew by £43K reflecting the increase in project activity and service delivery resulting from the rise in income.

Looking to the future the charity will continue to diversify income streams concentrating in the next year in developing and rolling out donor programme with the help of a pro-bono consultant. We are developing relationships and making new connections with schools and music hubs to expand our commissioned work for music delivery and training. The charity is currently developing an ambitious strategy which will be launched in the 2027 aligning with Soundabout's 30th anniversary.

Reserves Policy

Under the charity's reserve policy, the Trustees have resolved that the upper limit for unrestricted funds should be set at approximately 3 months staff salaries and core costs (£74,630). Current unrestricted reserves are £68,272. The charity aims to increase its unrestricted reserves to their upper limit over the next 2 years.

STRATEGIC REPORT

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

Trustees are recruited openly, with the role advertised publicly inviting applications from a diverse range of applicants. Applicants are shortlisted and interviewed by a panel of Trustees and Soundabout's CEO. The panel then take their recommendation to the full board of Trustees at a general meeting or annual general meeting who vote to appoint the new Trustees. The Articles of Association provide that one-third of the board shall retire from office at each annual general meeting. The Articles allow retiring directors to be eligible for re-election. At the meeting at which a director retires the Articles allow the board to appoint a new director in place of the retiring director.

A chair is elected by the Trustees who will then determine how long the chair will hold office.

The trustees in the form of the Board of Management are responsible for the overall strategic development and control of the charity's activities. Sub-committees may also exist to deal with various issues. Day to day operational management of the charity is delegated by the trustees to Soundabout staff.

During this financial year the Chief Executive Officer remained as Holly Radford-James and the Finance Manager remained as Fiona Kellett.

Risk management

The Trustees have conducted a review of the risks to the charity and maintain a risk register with mitigation in place to reduce those risks. The risk register is reviewed and updated regularly.

Report of the trustees, incorporating a strategic report, approved by order of the board of trustees, as the company directors, on 28.07.2026 and signed on the board's behalf by:

M J Hartley

.....
M Hartley - Trustee

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF SOUNDABOUT

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Soundabout ('the Company')
I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 March 2026.

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

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

Independent examiner's statement
Since your charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a listed body. I can confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, which is one of the listed bodies.

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by Section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of Section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities (applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)).

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.

D R Kerins FCCA

Ad Valorem Accountancy Services Limited
Chartered Certified Accountants
2 Manor Farm Court
Old Wolverton Road
Old Wolverton
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK12 5NN

Date: 4/3/2026

SOUNDABOUT

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(INCORPORATING AN INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted fund £	2026 Total funds £	2025 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies	3	60,972	-	60,972	18,658
Charitable activities	6				
Restricted Funds		-	337,379	337,379	350,078
Unrestricted funds		39,747	-	39,747	73,809
Other trading activities	4	25,580	64,148	89,728	41,698
Investment income	5	4,069	-	4,069	5,534
Total		130,368	401,527	531,895	489,777
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds	7	3,910	12,529	16,439	7,458
Charitable activities	8				
Restricted Funds		-	351,162	351,162	312,915
Unrestricted funds		120,926	-	120,926	125,269
Total		124,836	363,691	488,527	445,642
NET INCOME		5,532	37,836	43,368	44,135
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		62,740	123,512	186,252	142,117
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		68,272	161,348	229,620	186,252

The notes form part of these financial statements

SOUNDABOUT

BALANCE SHEET
31 MARCH 2026

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted fund £	2026 Total funds £	2025 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	13	1,270	-	1,270	2,073
CURRENT ASSETS					
Stocks	14	1,629	-	1,629	1,235
Debtors	15	29,418	-	29,418	21,326
Cash at bank		44,777	161,348	206,125	172,324
		75,824	161,348	237,172	194,885
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	16	(8,822)	-	(8,822)	(10,706)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		67,002	161,348	228,350	184,179
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		68,272	161,348	229,620	186,252
NET ASSETS		68,272	161,348	229,620	186,252
FUNDS	17				
Unrestricted funds				68,272	62,740
Restricted funds				161,348	123,512
TOTAL FUNDS				229,620	186,252

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 March 2026.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2026 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for

(a) ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records that comply with Sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and

(b) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on .....28.07.2026..... and were signed on its behalf by:

M J Hartley

.....
M Hartley - Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

1. STATUTORY INFORMATION

Soundabout is a private limited company, limited by guarantee, registered in England & Wales. The company's registered number and registered office can be found on the company information page. The presentation of the financial statements is in pound sterling (£).

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

ACCOUNTING CONVENTION

The financial statements of the charitable company, 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 Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

FINANCIAL REPORTING STANDARD 102 - REDUCED DISCLOSURE EXEMPTIONS

The charitable company has taken advantage of the following disclosure exemption in preparing these financial statements, as permitted by FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland':

- the requirements of Section 7 Statement of Cash Flows.

INCOMING RESOURCES / TURNOVER

Income has been recognised on the following basis:
- Donations and grants are generally recognised when received.
- Invoiced income is accrued monthly.
- Interest income is recognised on receipt.

EXPENDITURE

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis.

Allocation of expenditure

Salary and related staff costs are directly allocated to a charitable activity or other resources expended heading on the basis of time spent. The charity distinguishes between overhead costs in support of its charitable work, for example course administration, marketing and training equipment, and general administration costs. Both categories of overheads are allocated to fundraising, charitable activity and governance costs based on the amount of direct expenditure incurred.

AMORTISATION OF INTANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

Amortisation is calculated to write off the cost of intangible fixed assets on a straight line basis over their estimated useful lives at the following rate :

Website and software : Straight line 3 years

TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Plant and machinery	- 33% on cost
Fixtures and fittings	- 33% on cost

STOCKS

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value, after making due allowance for obsolete and slow moving items.

continued...

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

TAXATION

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

FUND ACCOUNTING

Funds held by the charity are:

Unrestricted funds - these are funds which can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the trustees. Income is recognised as unrestricted income when the charity becomes entitled to the income as a result of activities already performed and any pre-conditions have been met. Where this is not the case the income is deferred and not included in incoming resources until the activities have been performed.

Designated funds - these comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the Trustees Report; any movements are in the notes to the financial statements.

Restricted funds - these are funds that 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. The Trustees monitor and discuss the restricted funds at meetings to ensure the restricted expenditure is allocated accordingly.

3. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	2026	2025
	£	£
Donations	60,972	18,658

4. OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	2026	2025
	£	£
Other trading/fundraising activities	89,728	41,698

5. INVESTMENT INCOME

	2026	2025
	£	£
Investments	4,069	5,534

continued...

6. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Activity	2026 £	2025 £
Charitable activities	Restricted Funds	337,379	350,078
Charitable activities	Unrestricted funds	39,747	73,809
		377,126	423,887

7. RAISING FUNDS

RAISING DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	2026 £	2025 £
Raising funds	16,439	7,458

8. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct Costs £
Restricted Funds	351,162
Unrestricted funds	120,926
	472,088

9. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

Net income/(expenditure is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2026 £	2025
Depreciation - owned assets	1,601	2,777

10. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2026 nor for the year ended 31 March 2025.

TRUSTEES' EXPENSES

In 2026 £204 (2025 - £94) was paid to 3 Trustees for expenses incurred during the year.

continued...

11. STAFF COSTS

No member of staff earned more than £60,000 a year.

The average number of employees during the year was 11 (2025 - 11).

12. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted fund £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	18,658	-	18,658
Charitable activities			
Restricted Funds	-	350,078	350,078
Unrestricted funds	73,809	-	73,809
Other trading activities	41,698	-	41,698
Investment income	5,534	-	5,534
Total	139,699	350,078	489,777
EXPENDITURE ON			
Raising funds	7,458	-	7,458
Charitable activities			
Restricted Funds	-	312,915	312,915
Unrestricted funds	125,269	-	125,269
Total	132,727	312,915	445,642
NET INCOME	6,972	37,163	44,135
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	55,768	86,349	142,117
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	62,740	123,512	186,252

continued...

13. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Plant and machinery £	Fixtures and fittings £	Totals £
COST			
At 1 April 2025	34,622	17,874	52,496
Additions	-	798	798
At 31 March 2026	34,622	18,672	53,294
DEPRECIATION			
At 1 April 2025	34,276	16,147	50,423
Charge for year	188	1,413	1,601
At 31 March 2026	34,464	17,560	52,024
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31 March 2026	158	1,112	1,270
At 31 March 2025	346	1,727	2,073

14. STOCKS

	2026 £	2025 £
Stock	1,629	1,235

15. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2026 £	2025 £
Trade debtors	25,231	18,884
Prepayments and accrued income	4,187	2,442
	29,418	21,326

16. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2026 £	2025 £
Social security and other taxes	4,424	3,384
Other creditors	931	777
Accrued expenses	3,467	6,545
	8,822	10,706

continued...

17. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1/4/25 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31/3/26 £
Unrestricted funds			
Unrestricted funds	62,740	5,532	68,272
Restricted funds			
Restricted funds	123,512	37,836	161,348
TOTAL FUNDS	186,252	43,368	229,620

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

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
Unrestricted funds	130,368	(124,836)	5,532
Restricted funds			
Restricted funds	401,527	(363,691)	37,836
TOTAL FUNDS	531,895	(488,527)	43,368

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1/4/24 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31/3/25 £
Unrestricted funds			
Unrestricted funds	55,768	6,972	62,740
Restricted funds			
Restricted funds	86,349	37,163	123,512
TOTAL FUNDS	142,117	44,135	186,252

continued...

17. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

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

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
Unrestricted funds	139,699	(132,727)	6,972
Restricted funds			
Restricted funds	350,078	(312,915)	37,163
TOTAL FUNDS	489,777	(445,642)	44,135

18. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There have been no related party transactions in the year.

19. SUMMARY OF FUND MOVEMENTS

	Funds 31.03.25	Resources	Outgoing Resources	Transfers	Funds at 31.03.26
Restricted Income Funds					
Youth Music	5,363	115,000	76.130		44,233
Community Programme	15,652	55,716	48,033		23,335
Soundabout Choirs	32,689	81,128	83,679		30,138
Emergency Fund	123	500	105		518
Emerging Leaders	17,770	10,000	16,641		11,129
Sounds Wild	14,219	3,906	15,323		2,802
Equipment fund	-	1,500	-		1,500
Family Support	35,866	-	35,866		-
Sounds Together / Lightbulb	-	80,000	39,996		40,004
Community Commissioned Work	783	36,737	36,851		669
Associate Choirs	857	12,096	8,808		4,145
Training	134	5,000	2,259		2,875
Schools Music Making	56	(56)	-		-
Total restricted funds	123,512	401,527	363,691		161,348
Unrestricted income funds					
Unrestricted income funds	62,740	130,368	124,836		68,272
Total charity funds	186,252	531,895	488,527		229,620

SOUNDABOUT

DETAILED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

	2026 £	2025 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS		
Donations and legacies		
Donations	60,972	18,658
Other trading activities		
Fundraising events	18,269	17,291
Other trading activities	71,459	24,407
	89,728	41,698
Investment income		
Investments	4,069	5,534
Charitable activities		
Charitable activities	377,126	423,887
Total incoming resources	531,895	489,777
EXPENDITURE		
Raising donations and legacies		
Raising funds	16,439	7,458
Charitable activities		
Wages	207,015	190,135
Social security	13,617	12,125
Pensions	4,817	4,614
Rates and water	5,701	4,895
Insurance	2,156	2,275
Practitioner fees	181,907	167,351
Telephone	2,453	1,858
Postage and stationery	3,345	3,456
Advertising	2,206	2,670
Sundries	47,269	46,028
Plant and machinery	188	1,554
Fixtures and fittings	1,414	1,223
	472,088	438,184
Total resources expended	488,527	445,642
Net income	43,368	44,135