



Members Quarterly Update

Issue No. 3 | March 2026

A note from our CEO: Louise McDade

This quarter our team has focused on getting everything in place to be able to distribute new funding to members for children with neurodiverse needs, the Holiday Activity and Food Programme and our Learning Language project. Thank you to members that applied and we look forward to working with the successful organisations in the coming months. The Learning Languages Together project will be delivered by Recreate U and is an exciting new approach to support families who have English as a second language, delivered with parents of children up to 6 months within Family Hubs. We have collated all the fantastic progress and outcomes from members delivering iThrive and our Early Years/Family Hub programmes, and these reports can be found here:

Early Years Report: October - December 2025

iThrive Report: 0-19 Years

iThrive Report: 11-19 Years (25 SEND)

Working closely with Bolton Council partners we are supporting the implementation of the Reforms to children's social care, the new Family Help model in Bolton and the development of the Live Well model in the East of Bolton. We continue to advocate for members in these discussions and in the strategic spaces we represent you at. We share our knowledge of good practice, shout about the good stuff you are doing, identify gaps and challenges, and raise awareness of the benefits of commissioning the VCSE sector. We are almost ready to open up to new membership applications again following a review of our criteria and we are excited to share our revised membership agreement very soon, watch this space.

Bolton in Focus - Spring



Taken by young people at Urban Outreach; Connor and Max at Youth Against Violence sessions

If you have a young person who would like to share their snapshots for 'Bolton in Focus', please email: Rimsha.Rasul@BoltonTogether.Org.Uk by 3rd June 2026

All the very best, Louise





Members Spotlight!

Families and Babies - Elaine Edwards MBE

Congratulations to Elaine Edwards MBE, Chair of Trustees of **Families and Babies** for receiving the prestigious MBE award! Thank you for making a difference in Children, Young People and Families lives in Bolton.

"I am incredibly honoured to receive an MBE. This recognition isn't just for me, but for the families we support every day and the amazing team and volunteers who stand alongside them. It reflects the power of community, compassion and what we can achieve when we work together to support parents and babies"



Elaine Edwards, Families and Babies

Baby Basics - Supporting our GM Network of Baby Banks

Baby Banks are an invaluable community resource for families in need and are heavily relied upon by public sector workers in health and social care to provide essential goods for children and families.


Baby Basics support families with all the practical essentials they need for life with children from pre birth to 5 yrs.

To learn more about how you can support Baby Basics, visit:

<https://baby-basics.org.uk/centre/bolton-bury> 



Baby Banks across Greater Manchester need your time, items and space:

Watch 'Cradle' - produced by Greater Manchester Combined Authority to understand how GM Baby Banks operate and learn more about how your support is needed: [Cradle](#) 





Key Updates

Early Years Programme: October to December 2025 Key Achievements

- Infant Feeding support continued to achieve fantastic outcomes, with 100% of parents reporting improved outcomes across breastfeeding, parenting and peer support, alongside 183 one-to-ones, 145 home visits and 1,615 support calls/messages delivered.
- Parent and Perinatal Infant Mental Health support delivered consistently good outcomes, with 79-100% of parents reporting increased confidence, feeling listened to, and improved relationships with their babies across NHS GM and Family Hub funded provision.
- Read the full report here: [Early Years Delivery Report - October to December 2025](#)

As we celebrate these achievements, we would like to thank our Members for their delivery and partnership across Family Hubs.

Bright Start Playgroup by Bolton Deaf Society

'We welcome deaf families, deaf children with deaf/hearing parents, CODAs and siblings, aged 0-5 years. Our playgroup has been running for nearly 2 years and has been shortlisted for two awards in that time: The Bolton Together Awards and The young people and children Awards. We are based at the Bolton Deaf Society, Bark Street, Bolton BL12AX. We are a friendly group where families come to socialise, play and learn. Families can pick up on BSL with no pressure. It is run by deaf staff and volunteers who are oral and are different levels of BSL.'

'We believe that every child should have a 'Bright Start!' we lead the way to an inclusive world for our deaf families of Bolton, Wigan and Bury.'

For additional information please contact - Kathryn@boltondeafociety.co.uk



Early Years Training

Bolton is offering free '5 Golden Rules for speech and language development' training sessions at Harvey Family Hub. *(Please click the date you would like to attend and book your place. You only need to attend one of the sessions).*

[Wednesday 17th June 2026, 9:30am - 12:00 noon](#)

[Wednesday 17th June 2026, 1:30pm - 4:00pm](#)

[Wednesday 17th June 2026, 6:30pm - 8:30pm](#)



Key Updates

iThrive - Next Chapter: School Transition Project

iThrive's School Transition Project offers emotional health and wellbeing support to 10-11 year olds transitioning to secondary school. We are accepting referrals (until June 2026) from both parents and professionals for children who are transitioning to secondary school in 2026 and may benefit from some support. This programme is delivered by our members, Urban Outreach and Breaking Barriers North West.

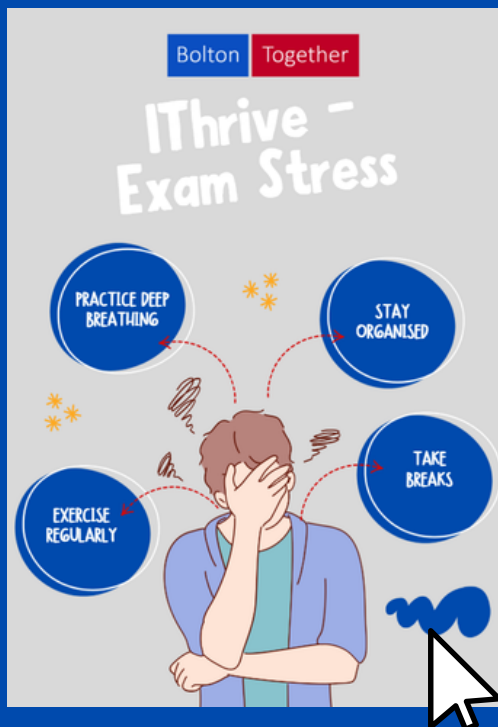


SCAN HERE



Referrals can be made through our 2-19 referral form:

<https://bolton-together.org.uk/ithrive-2-19-years-referral-form/>



iThrive Resource: Exam Stress - Share this with young people you support

Our iThrive team have created an excellent resource which includes; what to expect at A-level and GCSE level, exam stress strategies, practical revision skills as well as an exam revision planner. Check out the 13 page resource [here](#)

iThrive: Parent Peer Support

Alongside our support for children and young people, iThrive offers a Parent Peer support service, for parents of children who are facing mental health challenges.

Learn more about Parent Peer support here: <https://bolton-together.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/iThrive-Parent-Peer-Support-Poster.pdf>

iThrive Navigators for Neurodiversity

In addition to our emotional health and wellbeing support, Bolton Together iThrive Navigators support families exploring neurodiversity. Our iThrive Navigators are trained professionals who support families exploring neurodiversity, including autism and ADHD. They are here to guide, inform, and connect families with the right services. You can learn more about their work and support resources here: <https://bolton-together.org.uk/ithrive-support/ithrive-for-neurodiversity/>



Funding awarded to our Members

This Quarter, we have awarded funding to our Members for:

Learning Languages Programme: this will be delivered by Recreate-U, offering ESOL classes to parents in Family Hubs to support families who have English as a second language.



Bolton Family Hubs

Neurodiversity Programme: Bolton Wanderers in the Community is offering a flexible, tailored programme of one-to-one mentoring, parent support, and family-based activities to help neurodivergent children aged 5–10 and their families build emotional wellbeing, resilience, and practical coping strategies.



in the community
One Club, One Community, One Town



Greater Manchester

We have been able to award further funding to Breastfeeding Together to provide more antenatal support and infant feeding drop in groups, and Dads' Matters to expand their offer, ensuring they're able to support even more parents across Bolton.



Funding Opportunity Pitch for the Planet Grants for Bolton

Pitch for the planet are inviting 12 Bolton VCSE representatives to pitch their proposals for developing environmental actions at a live event. 8 groups will leave with up to £750 each to get started. To be in with a chance to win £750 complete this [short proposal form](#).

Applications open until midnight on the 2nd April. Successful proposals will be invited to pitch at an event on Wed 29th April.

Learn more about the Eco Tool Kit resources here <https://turnupthevalue.co.uk/eco-toolkit/>

Training Opportunity: Eco Toolkit



Starting environmental action as an organisation can feel overwhelming amongst competing priorities. We're here to make that easier. You can access free support tailored to the needs of your group or organisation by [registering your interest here](#).

We are looking forward to continuing our work with these members to offer support to parents and carers!

FUND FACT

Bolton Together will be funding 1,032 spaces for Members to deliver the Spring Easter 26' HAF programme



Image by KRIMMZ HAF session



Community

Bolton Money Skills

Bolton Council's Money Skills Service offer a range of FREE and impartial services to Bolton residents who may be struggling in these difficult times. Learn more here:

boltonsmoneyskills.org.uk



Empowering Parents and Educators to Keep Children Safe in the Digital World

Fortalice is delivering training for professionals to raise awareness of how to keep children safe online. Sessions are free and delivered via Zoom. They will be interactive and informative, leaving you with tools, strategies and resources to use post training.

2026 Training Session:

Monday 20th April 2pm to 4.30pm

Thursday 14th May 10am to 12.30pm

Tuesday 16th June 10am to 12.30pm

Friday 25th September 10am to 12.30pm

To book on training or for more information please email allson.wallaceberry@fortalice.co.uk or phone 01204 365677/07790776343.

Face-to-face sessions can be arranged for your organisation upon request.



Strictly Learn to Dance

Bolton VCSE leaders, Lauren McKechnie from Age UK and our member Bolton Wanderers in the Community's very own Ben Lawton are taking part in Strictly Learn to Dance in support of Bolton Hospice.

Bolton Hospice provides vital care and support for individuals and families living with long-term illness, end-of-life and palliative care. Like so many charities, they rely heavily on fundraising and community generosity. This event is about the borough coming together to show its support.

Event Date: 27th March 2026 - 6pm at Toughsheet Community Stadium

Tickets can be booked [here](#)
Donations can be made [here](#)



GM Live Well Podcast Series

Discover how communities are leading change and reshaping public services across Greater Manchester in this inspiring podcast series.

<https://creators.spotify.com/pod/profile/gm-live-well/>

State of the Sector 2026

The State of the VCSE Sector is a major research project mapping the size, scope, diversity and impact of the sector across Greater Manchester. The project will produce a report for each GM borough with an interactive dashboard and a Greater Manchester-wide report. It is important that members of Bolton Together complete this survey to share the strengths and challenges of working in the sector. Every organisation completing the survey will also receive a free Individualised Insight Report. To find out more,

visit <https://10gm.org.uk/10gms-work/stateofthesector/>



Creating Meaningful Impact

You Said, We did

You asked for more funding opportunities, we had three funds out for EOI in the last quarter.

Thank you to everyone that completed our **2025 Membership and Engagement** survey. Your feedback helps us to strengthen our partnerships and create meaningful impact.

We will continue to show how we are implementing your feedback and showcase the steps we are taking to support you through our 'You Said, We did' segment.

You asked for more in person events, we held our first peer learning workshop!

Peer Learning Workshop



In February we held our first Bolton Together peer learning workshop, where VCSE members came together to share good practice around engagement with families and referrals. Bolton CVS attended to talk about the Bolton Mark. We'll hold our next workshop in June and hope to see you there!

Welcoming our Youth Trustee: Wahab Shabaz

At Bolton Together, we believe in implementing young people's perspectives and experiences at all levels of our delivery, including at Board level. As an organisation supporting young people, it is important to us that we have young people represented at a Board level.



Learn more about Wahab and our team here: <https://bolton-together.org.uk/who-are-we/>

Spotlighting YOU @BoltonTogether

We are now on Instagram! Our Instagram page is all about sharing key messages, celebrating our work, spotlighting our members, and sharing resources. We celebrate wins and highlight the impact we are all making across Bolton. If you have something you'd like us to share, or spotlight please email Rimsha at Rimsha.Rasul@BoltonTogether.Org.Uk and follow us to see more of the Bolton Together community and our collective achievements.

This month, we featured The Hub at Westhoughton, Bolton Toy Library and Little Bats Learning in our World Book Day series to showcase go-to books at Stay and Play sessions.



Letter to the Editor

For queries regarding the March issue, or if you have a young person who would like to share their snapshots for 'Bolton in Focus - Summer', the June 2026 Issue, please email Rimsha Rasul at: Rimsha.Rasul@BoltonTogether.Org.Uk