Better childhoods
Brighter futures

Annual impact report and accounts 2025–26

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S BUREAU

What does the National Children's Bureau do?

For over 60 years NCB has been driving change and pushing boundaries to improve the systems that babies, children, young people and their families rely on to thrive. We are united for better childhoods and brighter futures.

Our vision is for every child and young person to thrive, for life.

Our mission is to to improve the systems that babies, children, young people and families rely on.

All NCB member organisations are united in pushing boundaries to achieve this common goal.

We look...

- beyond symptoms, to the root causes of systemic issues
- beyond traditional thinking, blending lived and learnt experience to change practice and policy
- beyond ourselves, to convene alliances for change across society
- beyond childhood itself, considering how an entire lifespan is affected by the issues we work on.

Find out how these principles are brought to life in our work over the coming pages. Welcome to our Annual Impact Report for 2025/26.

ncb.org.uk

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The Nuffield Foundation

The Souter Charitable Trust

True Colours Trust

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)

University of Birmingham

Wellcome Trust

Wicked the Musical

Youth Endowment Fund

Contents

Foreword

This has been a period of deep uncertainty for children, young people, adults and families: rising need, stretched services, increased racist rhetoric and violence, and widening inequalities mean that organisations need to be able to combine authority, courage, agility and long-term commitment.

NCB has, like many other charities, found the year challenging financially, but we have responded swiftly by identifying savings and setting out how an organisational change programme could place us on a more sustainable footing.

In this context, the continuation of organisations like NCB, who serve the public by bringing together evidence, lived experience and practical action to improve lives, is needed more than ever.

Our strength lies in our ability to adapt, and the combination of three vital characteristics: sustained expertise, the breadth of our approach, and the depth of our understanding.

Breadth: working across sectors and systems

We operate at every level, from local practice to national policy, allowing us to connect insight, influence reform and support delivery where it matters most. This year that included helping to shape national debates on child poverty, children's social care, early years improvements, and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) reforms, while also supporting local systems to improve practice on the ground. From national thought leadership on Transitional Safeguarding and tackling child exploitation, to local transitions work in Islington. From workforce development through the RISE partnership's support of the SEND sector, and from Anti-Bullying Week reaching 80% of schools across the UK, to summits helping inform the government's Best Start in Life strategy, our reach enables us to work across the different sectors that children and families rely on.

Depth: rooted in evidence and lived experience

Our work is grounded in rigorous research and shaped by the voices of children, young people, families and adults. That combination gives our work credibility and relevance. Over the year, children and young people informed SEND reform through FLARE (our youth advisory group to Department for Education (DfE), contributed to the National Youth Strategy, and helped shape understanding of vulnerability in Ofsted's inspection processes. Across our participation work, from Young NCB Advisory Group input on our work, to coordinating the Youth Voice Matters conference, we have ensured that lived experience is not an afterthought but a driving force in policy, practice and service design.

Sustained expertise: over 60 years of impact

With more than six decades of experience, NCB brings trusted relationships, continuity and a deep understanding of what works. That expertise can be seen in our long-term influence such as the Childhood Bereavement Network's contribution to grief education being embedded in statutory curriculum guidance, and in our continuing leadership on children's social care, early years and workforce development. It also underpins our ability to respond to emerging challenges with confidence, whether through evidence reviews on reducing youth violence for the Youth Endowment Fund, or support for countless practitioners from the 210+ organisations that make up Research in Practice's Partnership network, or practical tools that help professionals deliver better outcomes for children and families.

Pushing boundaries: looking beyond childhood to work across the life course

Extending our impact beyond childhood remains central to NCB's mission to improve outcomes across the life course. In 2025/26, we built on our work to support better transitions to adulthood, strengthening how young people move from child to adult services and advancing national thinking on Transitional Safeguarding.

Through Research in Practice, we deepened evidence-informed practice across children and family services, and adult's services, including in adult exploitation, mental capacity, safeguarding, and family group conferencing for adults. We also supported professionals working with parents with learning disabilities and difficulties through the Working Together with Parents Network.

At a pivotal moment for adult social care, we reflected on Baroness Casey's recommendations, highlighted the implications of key reforms for our networks, and contributed to emerging debates on the future direction of policy.

Articulate the challenges, recognise the scale of the response

Looking across these pages, what stands out is not only the scale of the challenges, but the determination, collaboration and expertise being brought to bear in response. NCB is uniquely placed to bridge sectors, connect evidence to action, and keep children and young people at the heart of change. In an uncertain world, that role has never mattered more.

As this report demonstrates, NCB's contribution is both practical and strategic: supporting professionals, influencing policy, amplifying young and adult voices, and helping systems work better for children, young people and families. We are proud of what has been achieved this year and confident that, with this combination of reach, insight and experience, NCB will continue to strengthen our impact towards building better childhoods and brighter futures.

Sarah Mullen – Chair of the Board of Trustees

Anna Feuchtwang – CEO

Our year in numbers

Goal 1

Amplifying the voices of children, young people, babies and families

1,248 children and young people involved

535 parents and carers involved

Goal 2

Driving change in the local and regional systems children rely on

222 system improvement activities

Goal 3

Driving change in national policy and legislation

23 consultation responses given

64 policy briefings submitted

56 parliamentary evidence sessions

Goal 4

Generating evidence that counts

88 research and learning reports created

Goal 5

Making sure children have the workforce they need

752 workforce development activities

Goal 6

Building respect and trust as a pioneering and high performing charity

84 key articles in national and trade press

Our achievements in 2025–26

All NCB family member organisations are united in pushing boundaries to achieve our common goals set out in our five-year strategy, Building Brighter Futures.

In 2025–26, we have continued to take an evidence-informed approach, uniting individuals and organisations and blending cutting-edge research with the voices of lived experience to improve the complex, interconnected systems that allow every child to thrive, for life. We are continually challenging ourselves to go further and to do better so that we can keep pace with a rapidly changing external environment.

By using our expertise to develop richer perspectives throughout the life course, we have been able to strengthen our approach to building better childhoods and brighter futures.

In the following pages, we outline our achievements, structured around our six strategic goals:

- Amplifying the voice of children, young people and families
- Driving change in the local and regional systems children rely on
- Driving change in national policy and legislation
- Generating evidence that counts
- Making sure children have the workforce they need
- Building respect and trust as a pioneering and high-performing charity

You will also meet the whole NCB Family

- Anti Bullying Alliance is a unique coalition of organisations and individuals working together to stop bullying and create safer environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn.
- Childhood Bereavement Network is the hub for those working with bereaved children, young people and their families across the UK.
- Council for Disabled Children is the umbrella body for the disabled children's sector with a membership of over 300 voluntary and community organisations and an active network of practitioners that spans education, health and social care.
- Special Educational Consortium is an independent voice that supports the Government to develop policies that will benefit disabled children and young people and those with SEN and challenges them when they do not.
- Research in Practice supports the learning of professionals to enable children, young people, families, adults, carers and communities to live good lives.
- Schools Wellbeing Partnership a national network of nearly 50 member organisations from the education, health and wellbeing, and children's sectors and works to improve the wellbeing of all children in education.
- Working Together with Parents Network supports professionals working with parents with learning disabilities and learning difficulties and their children.
- Children and Young People's Health Policy Influencing Group brings together 75 organisations, including charities, Royal Colleges and experts, to collaboratively shape health policy.

Amplifying the voice of children, young people and families

We prioritise the voices of children, young people and those with lived experience because they are experts in their own lives, and their insights make our work stronger, more relevant, and more effective. By involving them in research and policy development, integrating them into our board and other governance structures, and using them as a lightning rod across all our different projects and programmes, we ensure their experiences directly shape the decisions and solutions that can give them a brighter future.

Our work focused on:

- Enabling organisations to listen to and incorporate the voices of children, young people, parents and families in their development and work.
- Building and facilitating opportunities for young people to influence different agendas and priorities.
- Facilitating learning and developing resources to support practitioners and organisations to effectively and meaningfully engage with children, young people, families and those with lived experience across the full range of our programmes.

Highlights from 2025–26 include:

Lived experience influencing reform of the SEND system

Given the huge importance of the government's SEND reforms, it is vital that the lived experiences and voices of young people are at the heart of these changes. Over the past year, we coordinated FLARE, a group of disabled young people that advises DfE, provided feedback on the guiding principles to inform the SEND reforms and the Schools White Paper. They contributed their views and experiences through multiple meetings with officials to shape their thinking. They also advised on the use of inclusive language, effective engagement strategies for DfE, and how to make policy documents accessible to children and young people.

When the national consultation on the proposals for SEND reform opened in February 2026, we developed reform policy summaries, engagement plans, and interactive resources for local areas and groups to use to gather the views of children and young people to contribute to the consultation. They also ran and/or co-ordinated 47 focus groups, speaking with young people aged 8 – 25 across England, ensuring 423 young people shared their views, experiences and suggestions of the reforms with the government.

Alongside this, we have supported parents, carers and professionals to directly inform the development of SEND policy through a series of online and face to face events. More detail about how this work influenced national policy and legislation is included within Goal 3.

"Young people are the adults of tomorrow, the policies that are being shaped for the future effect young people directly, therefore, it's imperative that young people's viewpoints are directly taken into consideration." – FLARE member

"Children and Young people must be at the heart of decision making, especially in things that involve us." – FLARE member

"My personal highlight was to develop my skills further, and partake in further opportunities." - FLARE member

Fostering respectful behaviour and challenging bullying

The Young Anti-Bullying Alliance (YABA) is a youth-led programme for 13 to17-year-olds empowering young people to stand up to bullying and help build a kinder, more inclusive future. Working with the Anti-Bullying Alliance, members bring their lived experiences, insights, and ideas to the centre of work to tackle bullying.

YABA members have taken part in events at Parliament, where they shared their experiences directly with parliamentarians and key stakeholders, helping shape national conversations on bullying. Their involvement in United Against Bullying programmes has also supported the development of whole-school approaches, while their contributions have informed CPD sessions on banter and bullying delivered to organisations including the Premier League.

"Being part of YABA has reinforced my skills on stopping bullying and being an upstander. My knowledge has expanded so I can help a range of people from Year 7 to Year 13."

"Best thing I learned from being part of YABA is understanding other people's situations – through different kinds of bullying that I hadn't experienced myself. It's helped me understand other people's experiences."

National Youth Strategy

On behalf of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), Young NCB members took part in a series of workshops to inform development of the National Youth Strategy. This provided an opportunity for children and young people to share their ideas directly with the government whilst it worked to better coordinate youth services and policy at a local, regional and national level.

Youth Voice Matters 2026

In February, the Council for Disabled Children brought together over 100 disabled children and young people and those with SEND from across England for the annual Youth Voice Matters conference. Designed and delivered by young people, the event focused on youth citizenship, supporting attendees to recognise their collective power and role in driving change.

Through interactive workshops and activities, young people built self-confidence, developed participation skills, and explored how to influence decision-making, covering topics such as leadership, digital engagement, and involvement in politics and advocacy.

Critically, the conference provided direct opportunities to engage with decision-makers, including discussions with the Minister for School Standards, Georgia Gould MP, enabling young people to share their experiences and priorities for improving the SEND system.

Supporting bereaved young people's advocacy

CBN's Young People's Advisory Group (YPAG) worked throughout the year to shape Children's Grief Awareness Week and the sector's approach to evaluation. Two members of the group presented to Minister Merron and the UK Commission on Bereavement, chaired by the Archbishop of Canterbury, about how to make this safe for young bereaved people.

Enabling organisations to listen to and incorporate young voices

NCB's participation team hosted a thriving community of practice and delivered a range of sessions at events to support participation practice for over 90 organisations, youth groups and schools. NCB staff also supported young people to lead sessions at a national event on transitions and the Research in Practice 'Strengthening Transitions' conference.

Co-production and participation across Research in Practice's work

Evidence-informed practice underpins the work of Research in Practice, which means that our learning programme and other activities draw on research evidence, practice wisdom and the experience of people who are supported by adult's and children's services. We amplify the voice of people with lived experience in a range of ways and this year this has included:

- Developing resources for professionals about working relationally and inclusively with Autistic parents and their families. They have been developed in collaboration with Autistic parents and child and family practitioners across England, reflecting the lived realities of families and the practice contexts of professionals.
- Collaborating with people who have been involved in Family and Group Conferences (FGCs) to share their experiences in a suite of resources to support the learning of practitioners and systems leaders.
- The development and delivery of co-production workshops, co-produced and co-delivered with adults who draw on care and support
- Co-creating a blog about supporting separated children seeking asylum with Salar, on his experiences of social care entering the UK as a separated child seeking asylum.
- Publishing a report commissioned by Ofsted sharing children and parent's views about vulnerability, their views on a new definition of the term, and how they think vulnerability should be recognised in inspection processes.

An illustration capturing just one of the discussions at the Youth Voice Matters 2026 national conference.

Driving change in the local and regional systems that children rely on

More than ever, the decisions that shape the quality of children's lives are made at a local and regional level – not just by national policymakers. That's often where real change happens and where we can have meaningful impact.

We bring decades of expertise in helping partners redesign local systems, so they deliver the outcomes that matter most to children and families. By focusing on what works on the ground, we enable local systems to create meaningful, lasting impact where it counts most.

Our work focused on:

- Delivering bespoke local and regional interventions using a range of evidence-informed approaches leading to clear actionable recommendations for system improvement.
- Delivering a range of evidence-informed interventions and knowledge-sharing opportunities to support and develop effective sustainable partnership working across systems and the application of evidence in policy and practice.
- Identifying areas of systemic challenge and develop cross team programmes designed to address them.

A snaphot of our local impact

We evaluated the Limavady Shared Education Campus in NI, studying the impact of integrated infrastructure and activities shared between two high schools, using surveys and focus groups with over 800 participants.

A whole-region project in the NW identified learning needs for the children's residential care sector, and developed recommendations to support a pan-regional approach to CPD for this workforce.

Four LAs in the NW took part in piloting and testing the STAR supervision tool, we trained them in its use and gathered their feedback through online focus groups.

We operate the national Information Advice and Support Services Network (IASSN) across Yorkshire. This includes direct operational support and information for children with SEND through regional entities like KIDS Yorkshire and The Humber.

A multi-stranded programme in Staffordshire comprising CPD for social workers, strategy & practice development for youth justice, development of the local education system, and leadership development

We developed an online learning pathway to support Trauma-Informed Derbyshire, which is a whole systems approach to trauma-informed working across Derbyshire. The resource is aimed to support people working across Derbyshire to understand the foundations of trauma-informed approaches.

We supported Norfolk County Council to explore implementation, learning and early impacts one year after they expanded a new model of multi-disciplinary and multi-agency Family Help teams county-wide.

We developed and delivered a conference to colleagues across the SW region, focused on transitions.

Ahead of the publication of the Schools White Paper, we hosted a series of engagement events across the country for DfE to listen to and understand the views and experiences of parent carers, teachers and other SEND experts across the system. This included the SE alongside many other regions.

In Camden, we are working in partnership to support the ecosystem around babies and young children by working with VCS organisations and parents and families.

Highlights from 2025–26 include:

Building capacity in the social care workforce

Research in Practice played a significant role in supporting leadership in local systems improvement through both capability building and system-wide improvement. This included creating Tackling Child Exploitation principles to improve and inform cross-government multi-agency responses. The principles were backed by a tool to help professionals apply them in practice as they worked with children affected by Child Sexual Exploitation.

The CPD team delivered thousands of instance of tailored support, including of reflective supervision workshops, reaching hundreds of practitioners and leaders. These sessions, aimed at strengthening practice, supervision and leadership, received consistently positive feedback.

Alongside this, Research in Practice supported the planning and delivery of more than 30 system improvement events, covering key themes such as reflective supervision and knowledge exchange. The team also promoted and shared research on safeguarding children with partner organisations across England and Wales, including Local Safeguarding Partnerships and multi-agency forums.

This year, Research in Practice also shared learning from national change projects, including work on responding to domestic abuse in child protection and improving compassionate pre-birth support. In addition, it supported the social work workforce to reflect on the opportunities and risks of artificial intelligence, exploring its implications for ethical and effective practice.

You can find out more about this work under Goal 5: Making sure children, young people and adults have the workforce they need.

Supporting transitions to adulthood for disabled children and those with SEN

Over the year, our SEND social care team led a series of stakeholder workshops in Islington to improve how young people transition from children's to adult social care. Across these sessions, each attended by around 22 participants, the team first shared research findings and explored a range of transition pathway models, before progressing to present the key elements of a business case for redesigning services. Together, these workshops helped build a shared understanding and informed a clear, evidence-based approach to supporting young people as they move into adulthood.

Addressing key system challenges in SENDIAS services

Through the Information, Advice and Support Services Network (IASSN), we worked closely with local SENDIAS services and their partners – including local authorities and Integrated Care Boards -to address key system challenges. This support focused particularly on strengthening funding and commissioning arrangements, while safeguarding the independence and impartiality that underpin effective advice and advocacy for families.

Supporting marginalised parents

Research in Practice continued to grow the Supporting Parents Community of Practice (CoP), now in its sixth year and funded by the Segelman Trust, supporting services working with parents who have experienced child removal in public family law proceedings.

The CoP brings together service leads and practitioners to share learning and contribute to research and policy development, with sessions on emotional regulation, mental health and trauma, strengthening practitioner confidence and improving support for families.

This work has influenced national policy in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' guidance, which helped frame our contributions to the Baby Victoria Marten Review, where CoP expertise informed recommendations and subsequent learning.

This year, NCB also became the new home of the Working Together with Parents Network, highlighting research on challenges faced by parents with learning disabilities and difficulties.

Driving change in national policy and legislation

Our long-standing expertise in evidence-led policy development, grounded in the lived experiences of children and young people, has enabled us to shape and influence major legislation and policy debates.

We act as a constructive and influential voice, challenging decision-makers to drive meaningful change where it matters most. 2025/26 was in many ways a story of several years of influencing culminating in key milestones across many of our key priorities – tackling child poverty, securing investment in social care, strengthening support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and ensuring every child has the best start in life.

Our work focused on:

- Putting the needs and voices of babies, children and young people at the top of the political agenda, through our convening of the children's sector, the strength of the NCB Family, and our work in broader campaigns and coalitions.
- Significantly expanding our influence and connections as sector leaders across policy agendas, integrating our expanding research, practice and programme expertise.
- Maintaining NCB, and the NCB Family, as key advisors and partners to government officials and advisory bodies – across early years, health, SEND, schools, early years, social care and the justice system.

Highlights from 2025–26 include:

Reducing child poverty

When the UK Government published its Child Poverty Strategy, Our Children, Our Future, in December 2025, NCB worked with the End Child Poverty Coalition to establish eight key tests to assess whether it would deliver meaningful change.

Central to our approach was the principle that social security must form the foundation of any credible strategy. We made the case for structural welfare reform, including abolishing the two-child limit and benefit cap, and positioning social security as a vital investment in children's development and life chances.

Following publication, we worked with parliamentarians and partners to press this case, including collaborating with Lord Bird and The Big Issue to call for statutory poverty targets and sustained reform of the benefits system.

This coordinated advocacy contributed to a major policy shift: in March 2026, the government legislated to remove the two-child limit – an important step towards reducing child poverty and improving outcomes for families.

In recognition of this work, the End Child Poverty Coalition was awarded the 'Campaign of the Year' award from the Sheila McKechnie Foundation for our work to scrap the two-child limit.

Securing investment in children's social care

We played a key role in securing an additional £2 billion for children's social care through the three-year Spending Review announced in October. This investment, aligned with the recommendations of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, marks a significant step towards improving support for children and families.

This has been a long-standing priority for NCB and has involved working with a range of partners to build momentum for positive change over an extended period. This work has included supporting the development of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care and building sector-wide consensus, our partnership work through the Children's Charities Coalition to strengthen collective advocacy, and sustained engagement with HM Treasury.

This year this work has involved convening the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Children to maintain focus on this agenda. We have supported several APPG events focusing on Family Help and raising the profile with parliamentarians of the work of the Children's Services Funding Alliance research analysing trends in funding and spending on children's services and care. We have drawn on evidence and insights from our Living Assessments programme, including from a group of young people with lived experience of children's social care who have been supported to share their perspectives directly at APPG events and in other policy forums.

We have also directly engaged with the Department for Education on a range of aspects of social care policy, including the Stable Homes, Built on Love reforms and contributing to the Families First for Children evaluation. Together, these efforts have helped build the case for meaningful investment and reform.

Galvanising government thinking on the early years

Over the year, NCB convened two major summits, bringing together around 100 senior leaders from across the early years sector to develop a shared vision for improving outcomes for babies, young children and their families.

With growing government momentum and strong ministerial interest, this was a key opportunity to influence system-wide change. The summits brought together experts from across government, charities, health, early years provision and statutory services to identify challenges and set priorities for reform.

These discussions directly informed the Government's Best Start in Life strategy, including areas where NCB has particular expertise:

- Place-based approaches: Through the A Better Start programme, we demonstrated how community-led models can deliver measurable improvements in child development
- Home learning environment: Our Making it REAL programme was recognised as best practice,

shaping the strategy's focus on supporting parents to build children's language and literacy skills.

By aligning expertise across the sector, we helped ensure the strategy is grounded in evidence, practical experience and a shared ambition to give every child the best start.

Shaping national thinking on SEND policy

NCB and the Council for Disabled Children (CDC) played a central role in shaping the SEND reform agenda by facilitating engagement between stakeholders and the Department for Education, amplifying the voices of children, young people and families, and providing evidence-based recommendations.

Influencing the SEND policy agenda

The Government published the consultation paper on SEND reform: Putting children and young people first in February 2026, opening a national consultation on the policy proposals it contained. In advance of the consultation launch, the National Children's Bureau and Council for Disabled Children had sought to influence the direction of the reforms, by convening four thematic roundtable discussions which informed a series of policy briefings and recommendations. These discussions brought together leaders across education, health and youth justice, demonstrating the strength of our convening role across different sectors. As members of the Disabled Children's Partnership, we have also supported their policy work and recommendations on SEND reform. We have directly influenced ministerial thinking as Amanda Allard, Director of CDC, sits on the two Ministerial groups chaired by Schools Standards Minister Georgia Gould which act as a sounding board for the Department's policy thinking and reforms.

Supporting consensus

As Strategic Reform Partner for SEND, CDC coordinated a national programme of engagement, bringing together policymakers, families and professionals. This included Ministerial roundtables with parent carers on SEND reform principles, regional engagement events attended by hundreds of participants, and thematic discussions with sector leaders across education, health and youth justice. Following publication of Putting Children and Young People First, CDC has continued to support engagement by creating accessible guidance to support participation by families and professionals, leading national engagement events, and attending DfE deep dive sessions looking at focused policy areas such as accountability and integration. This work has supported collaboration between government and the sector, helping to build a more inclusive and effective SEND system.

Strengthening health policy

Our work on health policy is strengthened by the collective voice of the Children and Young People's Health Policy Influencing Group (HPIG), bringing together more than 75 organisations to influence national health policy and reform. In 2025–26, this included launching the Child Health Workforce Alliance with over 25 partners, securing ministerial engagement on implementation of the NHS Ten-Year Health Plan, and successfully influencing the Neighbourhood Health Framework to recognise children and young people as a priority group. Through its role as NHS England's Stakeholder Council for the Children and Young People's Transformation Programme, HPIG continued to ensure that the needs of babies, children and young people were reflected in national policy, workforce planning and service reform.

Supporting children's grief literacy

The Childhood Bereavement Network and National Bereavement Alliance successfully campaigned over two decades to include grief education in Relationships, Sex and Health Education. Drafting policy positions and consultation responses, convening a group across the sector, and working with officials, their sustained advocacy has now led to grief and loss being formally embedded in statutory curriculum guidance – an important step in ensuring children receive the support they need during some of the most difficult experiences in their lives.

Supporting submission to Casey Review on Adult Social Care

Research in Practice supported the Chief Social Worker for Adults (CSW) in her submission to the Casey Review for Adult Social Care, articulating the value of social work. We convened and hosted online and in person round tables led by the CSW with sector leaders including Principal Social Workers, colleagues from Social Work England and the British Association of Social Workers and people who draw on care and support services. The reports and themes from these events were used in the submission to the Casey Review from the office of the Chief Social Worker.

Generating evidence that counts

NCB is a leader in generating insight and evidence through our programmes and dedicated research team. We draw on our networks of practitioners, commissioners and policymakers, alongside the lived experiences of children, young people and families, to understand emerging needs and design effective responses.

Young people are central to this work and they help ensure our research reflects real-world experiences and produces meaningful, practical insight.

Our work focused on:

- Building and disseminating evidence and learning on the impact and implementation of some of our key practice development programmes.
- Generating and disseminating high quality research evidence in key thematic areas including prevention and reduction of youth offending, bereavement support, social care reform and workforce, what works in SEND and children's mental health.
- Enabling organisations to understand and generate evidence on their services through the provision of evaluation and impact measurement support.

Highlights from 2025–26 include:

Preventing youth violence

NCB is the Evidence and Synthesis Partner for the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) Toolkit, a free resource supporting practitioners, police and policymakers to identify effective approaches to preventing serious youth violence.

This year, we produced systematic reviews on problem-oriented policing (POP), formal pre-court diversion and youth provision. Evidence indicates that POP – a targeted, problem-solving approach – may reduce violence involving children and young people by up to 24% and overall crime by 23%, particularly when focused on groups most affected by risk factors.

We found that formal pre-court diversion can reduce reoffending and youth violence, reinforcing its potential to divert children from the justice system, and we assessed the effectiveness and implementation of youth clubs. We also published equity-focused analysis highlighting disparities in how interventions are delivered and experienced by children and young people from underserved communities.

Our research team developed new Toolkit strands on Universal and Targeted Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). Universal SEL, delivered to whole classes through structured programmes, shows a meaningful impact on preventing violence, with evidence suggesting around a 25% reduction, alongside wider benefits, and is relatively low cost when implemented with high-quality, sequenced and engaging teaching, supported by training and culturally accessible, equitable practice. Targeted SEL, aimed at children at higher risk, demonstrates an even stronger estimated impact - reducing violence by up to 43% - while also improving school engagement and behaviour.

Fairer funding for children's services

Our Social Care team, in partnership with Public Alchemy, conducted research for London Councils on proposed reforms to the Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) relative needs formula – a key element of planned local authority funding reforms from 2026/27. The research assessed the Department for Education's proposed model, which uses child-level and local area data to estimate need. It identified areas for improvement to ensure funding is distributed more fairly and accurately reflects levels of disadvantage and need.

We made practical recommendations to strengthen the model, including refining metrics, improving measures of special educational needs and deprivation, and ensuring robust modelling and impact assessment. We also called for phased implementation to support local authorities in managing change. Together, this work provides a strong evidence base to support fairer, more effective funding for children and young people.

Paternity and shared parental leave

We submitted written evidence to the Women and Equalities Committee's inquiry into Paternity and Shared Parental Leave, drawing on insights from the A Better Start programme.

This led to an invitation to provide oral evidence, with both a programme director and a father sharing their experiences directly with Parliament. This demonstrated the value of embedding lived experience in policy development and ensured the voices of babies and parents were reflected in the Committee's findings.

Improving outcomes for vulnerable children

Research in Practice was commissioned by the Department for Education in a four-strand research project on Improving outcomes for looked-after children and young people in complex situations with multiple needs, at risk or subject to a deprivation of liberty. This included a systematic review, a case law review, case file reviews of 21 children and case studies of three innovative residential homes.

The resulting report, examines the growing use of Deprivation of Liberty Orders, the needs of affected children, and gaps in current support. Its findings are informing national policy development to better protect and support some of the most vulnerable children.

Understanding good practice in SEND

Our What Works in SEND (WWiS) programme continued to generate new evidence on the focussed on the SEND system. We published three new research reports focused on service delivery and effective joint commissioning within local SEND systems, and what good coproduction looks like. In partnership with researchers at the University of Birmingham, new research will soon be available focussed on the use of profiling tools to identify neurodivergence and inclusion bases in mainstream schools.

Alongside these, ten case studies highlighting strong local practice meeting WWiS evidence standards, across a range of themes including: strengthening co-production with families, amplifying children and young people's voices, embedding youth voice in decision-making, developing specialist alternative provision, and innovative ways to improve speech, language and communication in the early years.

CDC's work as part of the REACh consortium, working with 32 local SEND systems, produced a series of insights and practice guides which are published on the What Works in SEND website and which all local areas across England are now accessing to support their SEND system reform planning.

Together, this work identifies actionable insights and approaches to improving outcomes and strengthening local SEND systems

Effective practice in reunification

Commisioned by Foundations, NCB led a major research programme on reunification – where children return to their birth parents after time in care. The project combines a systematic review of interventions with qualitative research capturing lived experience. It identifies what works, for whom and in what circumstances, as well as the barriers and enablers to effective practice. Findings are being used to inform a Foundations Practice Guide, supporting more consistent, evidence-based approaches to reunification.

The impact of the pandemic in Northern Ireland

Our Mental Health and Wellbeing team delivered two major reports for the Public Health Agency in Northern Ireland, including a rapid evidence review on the impact of Covid-19 lockdowns. Drawing on over 100 systematic reviews and more than 220 primary studies, the research examined effects on mental health, education, physical health and social isolation. It highlighted significant and unequal impacts, particularly for children with SEND, those living in poverty and young carers. The findings informed engagement activity, including webinars, helping to strengthen understanding of the pandemic's lasting effects on children and young people.

Improving community cohesion in NI

Our evaluation of the Limavady Shared Education Campus in Northern Ireland studied the impact of integrated infrastructure and activities shared between Limavady High School and St Mary's Limavady. Using surveys and focus groups with over 800 students, staff, parents, and governors, it assessed collaboration, curriculum delivery, community relations, and wider community engagement. The findings show more shared classes, broader subject choices, and enhanced staff collaboration. Older students reported improved community relations and more friendships across schools, with the visible mixing of young people influencing wider community attitudes. Overall, the evaluation highlighted the positive contribution of shared education, fostering inclusion, collaboration, and better community cohesion.

Understanding school readiness

Our Insight Report for A Better Start (ABS) synthesised ten years of learning from across the programme on school readiness, adopting a holistic view that spans how children, schools, and families and communities all have a role to play. Drawing on extensive evidence and the UNICEF model, it showed how play-based activities, strong practitioner collaboration, and trusted relationships with families can improve outcomes. Case studies highlighted the importance of inclusive, community-based support and moving beyond narrow assessments of development. Building on this, we produced a practical guide for early years practitioners, offering tools, reflections, and resources aligned with the current policy focus on improving school readiness. To widen engagement, we also launched a podcast featuring expert and parent perspectives, bringing real-life experiences of preparing children for school.

Transitional Safeguarding in youth justice and probation services

Research in Practice collaborated with the University of East Anglia to produce a scoping study that investigated how youth justice and probation work together (and separately) to provide services to young people aged mid-teens to mid-twenties. The study, commissioned by HM Inspectorate of Probation was informed by a literature review, surveys, interviews and focus groups, as well as secondary data analysis. The focus of the work was in five sites in England.

The scoping study highlighted areas of promising practice, and made recommendations for improvement to the offer for young people in the youth justice and probation services. Outputs from the project include practitioner briefings, senior managers briefings and policy briefings, as well as webinars presented to HM Inspectorate of probation and the Academy for Social Justice.

Supporting better safeguarding and understanding vulnerability

Through Research in Practice, we are the qualitative research partner to ADCS for their Safeguarding Pressures research. On their behalf, we collected and analysed qualitative data from local authorities to evidence and better understand changes in demand for, and the provision of, children's social care services since 2010. Our work highlighted the ways in which children's safeguarding needs are shaped by parental mental health, housing, and inequality. We have been reappointed to this role for the next round of Safeguarding Pressures research.

We also completed work on conceptualising the label of 'vulnerability', commissioned by Ofsted. This work involved mining insights from a rapid literature review with consultation findings from professionals, parents and young people. In recognition of the quality of the work in our report 'From Trait to State: How Ofsted Might Consider Conceptualising Vulnerability for Inspection and Regulation', the Ofsted Research and Evaluation team, in collaboration with Research in Practice at the National Children's Bureau were praised for championing underrepresented voices and informing Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework.

We won an award from Government Function Analysis for this work.

"Great example of some incredibly impactful analysis – which was both itself inclusive and should drive more inclusive outcomes for children."

- Judge at the Government Function Analysis Awards

Making sure children, young people and adults have the workforce they need

Through engaging, evidence-informed training and development, we equip professionals with the skills, confidence and insight needed to deliver high-quality support for children, young people and adults.

Our work goes beyond building capability. It helps shift mindsets about what is possible for services. By grounding learning in evidence and the lived experiences of communities across England, we empower practitioners to drive improvement, innovation and better outcomes for children, young people and families.

Our work focused on:

- Delivering effective learning and CPD for the children, young people, and adults' workforces through our funded programmes and the Research in Practice CPD offer.
- Developing new training courses including Your Baby and You, anti-bullying support for teaching assistants, and a new online course about banter and bullying.
- Developing and delivering a range of whole setting approaches and a new programme to promote belonging in schools.
- Building practitioner capacity through systems improvement across a growing number of programme areas.

Highlights from 2025–26 include:

Sector-wide workforce development

Research in Practice continues to strengthen workforce development by enabling Research in Practice's membership network to embed evidence-informed practice at every level. Supporting more than 210 organisations across local authorities, the voluntary sector and universities, our support to practitioners, managers and leaders spans children's and adults' social care, safeguarding, youth justice, and health.

During 2025–26, Research in Practice provided 495 workforce development opportunities reaching 5000+ diverse learners.

A core element of this offer is a comprehensive approach to continuous professional development (CPD). Members benefit from flexible learning resources, including podcasts, research summaries and recorded webinars, alongside a digital CPD tracking tool that supports reflection and helps meet regulatory requirements such as those set by Social Work England.

Research in Practice also delivers a national and regional events programme, including webinars and workshops, conferences, leaders' forums and peer learning sessions, fostering collaboration and the practical application of research. Its Learn and Deliver programme has further strengthened local capacity by equipping local training leads to design and deliver tailored learning.

Early years workforce

The Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs support settings and childminders to adopt evidence-based approaches that improve outcomes for children. Through leading this programme between 2022 and 2026, NCB's Early Childhood Unit (ECU) equipped Hub leaders with the knowledge and confidence to embed and share best practice. This cascading model has reached over 10,000 settings nationwide. We also worked with early years practitioners to focus this year on anti-racist practice and improving support for babies in group-based care.

Through Family Hub and Start for

Life funding, ECU has delivered the Making it REAL (Raising Early Achievement in Literacy) programme at scale, strengthening early years practitioners' knowledge of literacy and language development and their confidence to work with families in the home.

ECU has also expanded a suite of evidence-informed programmes originally developed through the Lambeth Early Action Partnership. These include Your Baby and You, Parent and Infant Relationship Support (PAIRs) and Natural Thinkers, which promotes outdoor learning and children's connection to nature. Together, these approaches help practitioners strengthen relationships, support early development and improve outcomes for babies, young children and their families.

Social care and SEND workforce

Our social care team delivered five regional online training sessions through the RISE contract, engaging over 100 delegates to strengthen understanding of the social care offer within an inclusion framework. The programme supported practitioners and leaders to apply inclusive approaches in their day-to-day work, with a focus on improving outcomes for disabled children and young people.

Training also increased understanding of the legal framework underpinning rights and entitlements, equipping participants to apply this confidently in practice. By combining practical insight with a strong rights-based focus, the programme is helping to build a more informed, inclusive and responsive workforce.

Understanding workforce development needs in the SEND workforce

As part of the RISE programme, our health and systems improvement team designed and delivered a national SEND workforce survey to better understand training and development needs across the system. A total of 998 professionals took part – an increase of 121% on the previous year -spanning health, education, social care, local authorities, and the voluntary and parent-carer sector. Insights from this survey are now shaping a comprehensive national workforce development offer. This offer enables us to provide a programme of regional and national training on inclusion and the social care offer, including around 50 sessions spanning webinars, e-learning and events, all informed by national workforce needs.

The What Works in SEND programme shared evidence-based practice through primary research, case studies and learning syntheses, supporting local areas to strengthen inclusive early years provision and continuous improvement across SEND systems.

We also developed a new social care training course on Family Help for disabled children, equipping practitioners to embed inclusive approaches as services shift towards earlier intervention and prevention.

Education workforce

The Council for Disabled Children (CDC) strengthened understanding of disability duties under the Equality Act by launching a new training package to accompany its guidance for schools. Developed as the Strategic Reform Partner with the Department for Education, the training includes accessible videos to help school staff apply legal requirements in practice. In the first month, the videos were viewed 743 times, demonstrating strong demand for practical support.

The Mental Health & Wellbeing team refreshed guidance for schools participating in the Wellbeing Award for Schools, ensuring materials reflect the latest policy and evidence. This supports school leaders and staff to embed whole-school approaches to mental health and wellbeing.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) continued to promote belonging as a foundation for inclusive school cultures. Our training reached over 400 school staff, increasing confidence to create inclusive environments. Evaluation shows improvements in pupils' sense of belonging and safety, particularly for those with SEND. Schools also reported calmer classrooms, improved attendance, fewer behaviour incidents and greater engagement among vulnerable groups. The launch of ABA's belonging impact report further strengthened the profile of this work in practice and policy.

Support for social care sector leaders

Research in Practice has continued to provide support for both the Adults and Children & Families Principal Social Worker networks, Principal Occupational Therapist network and the Approved Mental Health Professional Leads network. This work supports the running of the networks, and enables the chairs to carry out their duties as national leaders. In addition to administration and event logistics, the support offer has included coaching from NCB senior leadership team and a series of continuing professional development sessions for members of all four networks.

Building respect and trust as a pioneering and high performing charity

We are proud of the culture we have built at NCB and remain committed to continually strengthening how we work and how we are perceived by partners, stakeholders and the communities we serve. We actively seek feedback, reflect on our impact and adapt our approaches to ensure we remain a modern, responsive and high-performing organisation. This commitment enables us to attract and retain talented staff, foster innovation and create meaningful opportunities for professional growth.

Crucially, we make every penny count and this year we have taken action to respond to the financial challenges facing our own organisation and impacting the sectors we serve. This has meant scrutinising our expenditure to ensure we deliver the best at the best value for money, and considering how we can reshape our organisation to adapt and evolve towards a more coherent, agile and sustainable model to support long term impact and resilience.

This firm basis enables us to strengthen our focus on advancing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) across the organisation. As we strive towards being an anti-racist organisation, we are working to ensure our workforce, leadership and ways of working reflect the values we champion. By embedding inclusive practices across the organisation, we recognise that a diversity of perspectives strengthens both our culture and the impact of our work.

Alongside this, we maintain a strong commitment to financial sustainability and accountability. We are focused on ensuring that every pound we spend delivers maximum value for children and young people, while maintaining the robust systems and governance needed to support long-term impact.

Our work focused on:

- Strengthening processes and procedures across NCB as a 200+ employee organisation undertaking work of a high complexity.
- Bringing together the cultures of Research in Practice and NCB to harmonise, strengthen and improve internal communication across the larger and more diverse organisation.
- Refocusing our DEI work to make ourselves a more inclusive and diverse organisation, including through a new multi-year DEI plan.
- Reviewing our whole-organisation approach to safeguarding and design a system-wide approach.

Highlights from 2025–26 include:

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)

NCB's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is central to how we work and the impact we seek to achieve. With a clear ambition to be a truly anti-racist organisation, we are taking practical steps to embed equity across our culture, governance and decision-making.

Over 2025/26, we strengthened accountability by ensuring every team held a dedicated DEI objective, supported by DEI Champions who help drive progress and maintain focus. We refreshed our style guide to promote confident, consistent use of inclusive language, improved processes for reporting discrimination, and introduced anonymous applicant tracking to support fairer recruitment. The expanded use of Equity Impact Assessments is also helping to embed more inclusive decision-making across the organisation.

We continued to invest in our people, delivering anti-racism training to all staff and a specific leadership development module on anti-racist leadership. We also launched and delivered an in-depth development programme specifically open to Black and Global Majority colleagues. We then held our first session with a new dedicated group of Black and Global Majority young people, and we will be seeking to fund this work into the future.

We have also created opportunities to deepen understanding of identity and inclusion within the organisation, through involvement in national campaigns including Black History Month, South Asian Heritage Month, Pride Month, and Disability History Month, helping to underline our commitment to learning, dialogue and shared anti-discriminatory practice.

We have also started to embed equity more fully into our external facing work, for example by campaigning to end the "No Recourse to Public Funds" rule as part of our anti-poverty work. We also delivered six sessions to local authorities, utilising the voices of children and young people who experience racism to understand the kinds of challenges they face at school. We looked at how understanding this can help LAs advance their anti-racist practice to start to address some of these difficulties.

Together, these actions are building a more reflective, inclusive and accountable organisation, with progress reviewed regularly to sustain momentum and continuous improvement.

Strengthening our organisational infrastructure

This year, NCB strengthened its systems, governance and assurance through key ISO accreditations and wider organisational improvements. Work towards these standards resulted in clearer policies, procedures and registers, particularly for information security, and the introduction of an Improvement Log to support quality assurance. In September, NCB achieved ISO 27001 certification, alongside ISO 14001 for environmental management and ISO 9001 for quality management.

These achievements support a broader focus on consistent, high-quality practice. Plans are in place to maintain and build on ISO standards, including enhanced business continuity planning ahead of the September 2026 audit. Staff capability has been strengthened through targeted learning, including information classification training for 70 staff. NCB also introduced a new Safeguarding Policy, safeguarding training and Safeguarding Champions network, and agreed Ethical Principles to guide decision-making across income generation, procurement and investment, reinforcing its commitment to transparency and accountability.

Enhancing our public profile

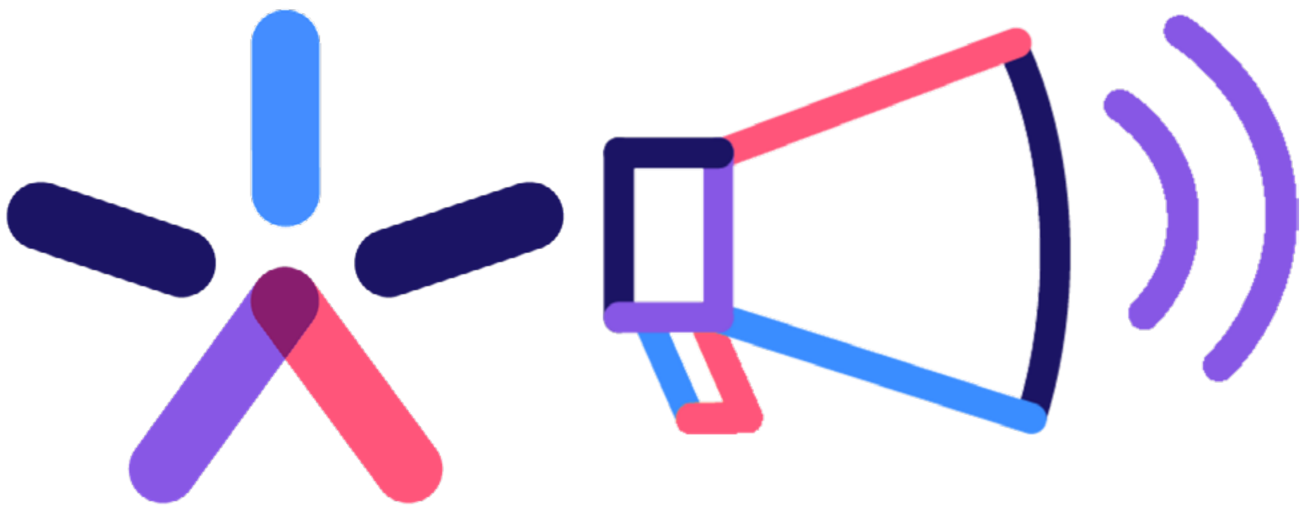
Over the course of the year, NCB has strengthened its public profile through high-impact communications and media engagement, amplifying our voice on key issues across the breadth of our work. This has included working with national media to share our stance on our strategic priorities in The Guardian, The Times, and BBC news.

A key focus has been ensuring lived experience informs our media presence. For example, NCB has worked closely with care-experienced young people to amplify their perspectives including a broadcast feature on LBC radio and an article in The Big Issue.

We have also concentrated on strengthening and focusing our communications through the development of a cross-organisational, coordinated communications approach, to support the corporate strategy and advance our strategic goals.

We have started to drive forward improvements to enhance our impact, supporting sustainability and growth. This work has included enhancing our communications infrastructure, supporting and progressing DEI though our communications, identifying and managing communications-related risks, and considering how we capture and share our impact.

Together, these activities help reinforce NCB's reputation as a trusted, authoritative and values-led organisation. By combining strong governance, a clear commitment to inclusion, and an influential public voice, we continue to position NCB as a leading advocate for children and young people.



Meet the NCB family

Our membership groups draw partners together to drive change in key areas where we can make childhoods better and build brighter futures.

The NCB family includes:

- Anti Bullying Alliance is a unique coalition of organisations and individuals working together to stop bullying and create safer environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn

- Childhood Bereavement Network is the hub for those working with bereaved children, young people and their families across the UK.

- Council for Disabled Children is the umbrella body for the disabled children's sector with a membership of over 300 voluntary and community organisations and an active network of practitioners that spans education, health and social care.

- Special Educational Consortium is an independent voice that supports the Government to develop policies that will benefit disabled children and young people and those with SEN and challenges them when they do not.

- Research in Practice supports the learning of professionals to enable children, young people, families, adults, carers and communities to live good lives.

- Schools Wellbeing Partnership a national network of nearly 50 member organisations from the education, health and wellbeing, and children's sectors and works to improve the wellbeing of all children in education.

- Working Together with Parents Network supports professionals working with parents with learning disabilities and learning difficulties and their children.
- Children and Young People's Health Policy Influencing Group brings together 75 organisations, including charities, Royal Colleges and experts, to collaboratively shape health policy.

ANTI-BULLYING ALLIANCE

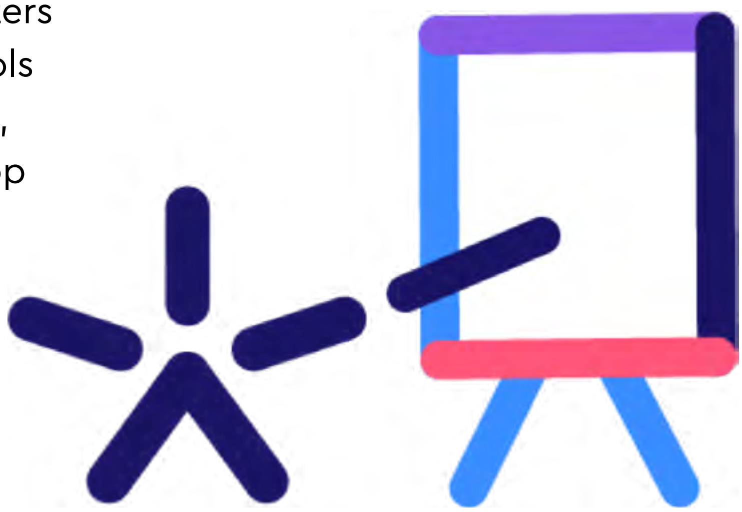
The Anti-Bullying Alliance's vision is to stop bullying and create safer environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn.

Highlights in 2025–26 included:

- Delivering CPD training and new anti-bullying resources for thousands of school staff and professionals.
- Delivering Anti-Bullying Week 2025: Power for Good and Odd Socks Day, reaching millions of children and young people across the UK and 80% of schools.
- Successfully piloting and expanding our Belonging Matters programme, supporting schools to strengthen pupil belonging, improve wellbeing and develop whole school approaches to inclusion.
- Launching the United Against Bullying whole school programme in England.
- Growing our membership and Young ABA programme.
- Expanding our network of patrons and supporters, including Manchester City defender Rúben Dias.
- Continuing to influence policy and practice to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Find out more at:

anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk



CHILDHOOD BEREAVEMENT NETWORK

The Childhood Bereavement Network brings together those working with bereaved children and young people and those caring for them, underpinning our members with essential representation and support.

Highlights in 2025–26 included:

- Securing the inclusion of grief education in the national curriculum
- Running focus groups with children, young people and parents bereaved by suicide to inform new guidance
- Supporting our members to strengthen their evaluation practice through a community of practice
- Working with officials and parliamentarians on the new right to statutory bereavement leave, the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill and the Modern Service Framework for Palliative and End of Life Care
- Collaborating with our members to deliver Children's Grief Awareness Week on the theme of Sharing Stories, Strengthening Hope
- Delivering webinar sessions to over 1,000 colleagues
- Advising on national bereavement research projects including Equitable Bereavement Support for Ethnically Diverse Communities and the Bereavement Codebook
- Helping to steer the work of the new All-Party Parliamentary Group on Grief Support
- Submitting evidence to the Covid-19 inquiry about the challenges of bereavement on children and adults during the pandemic.

Find out more at:
childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk

COUNCIL FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

We are the umbrella body for the disabled children's sector with a membership of over 300 voluntary and community organisations and an active network of practitioners that spans education, health and social care. As a membership body we provide a collective voice that champions the rights of children, young people and their families and challenges barriers to inclusion.

Highlights in 2025–26 included:

- SEND system reform: CDC hosted roundtable workshops bringing together partners across education, health, youth justice and special schools to explore how the SEND system can better meet children's needs through inclusive mainstream provision, clearer guidance and stronger multi-agency working.
- National policy influence: CDC played a central role in shaping and responding to national SEND reform, convening stakeholders, sharing sector concerns with the Department for Education, and producing accessible information for local areas, families and young people.
- Children, young people and parent carer voice: Through FLARE and wider participation activity, CDC supported young people and parent carers to inform national policy, including SEND reform principles, inclusive language, accessible documents and engagement approaches, drawing on insights from 15 focus groups.
- Youth Voice Matters 2026: CDC hosted a national conference designed and delivered with young people, bringing together 110 disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs to build confidence, leadership, advocacy and engagement with decision-makers.
- CDC SEND Awards: The first CDC SEND Awards celebrated effective practice, co-production, inclusive

leadership and partnership working, highlighting approaches that can be shared across the SEND system.

- Local system support: CDC worked with local area leaders and partners to address SEND challenges through training, strategic support, service reviews and practical help on commissioning, safeguarding, co-production and outcomes frameworks.
- Guidance, learning and resources: CDC provided practical guidance, e-learning and resources for schools, early years settings, FE colleges, practitioners and local systems, including support on sensory processing, SENDIAS, Parent Carer Forum partnership working and SEND reform.
- Membership and evidence-informed practice: CDC grew and supported its membership network of more than 400 voluntary and community organisations, while sharing research, case studies and learning through What Works in SEND and wider programmes.

Find out more at:
councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL CONSORTIUM

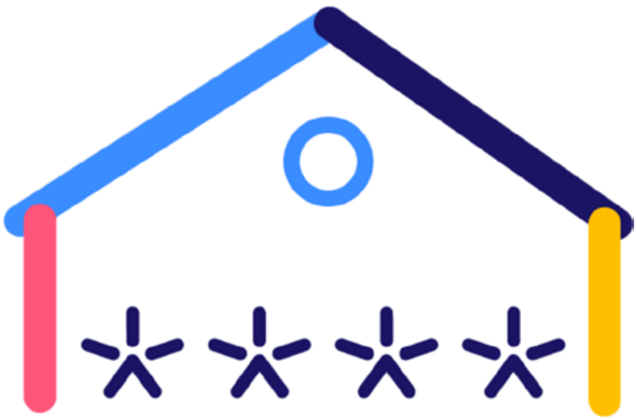
The Special Educational Consortium is a group of organisations, who protect and promote the interests of disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs. SEC membership includes the voluntary and community sector, education providers and professional associations. SEC believes all children and young people have a right to a high-quality education which meets their needs and enables them to reach their full potential.

Highlights for 25-26 include:

- Submitted six consultation responses, including on restraint guidance and Solving the SEND Crisis.
- Three amendments tabled and debated on Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill relating to free breakfast clubs, the attendance code of practice, and the use of seclusion.
- Three new organisations successfully applied to join the consortium.
- We expanded our commitment to include the lived experience of children and young people in our work, including a partnership with the Thomas Pocklington Trust's Student Voice programme.
- Two appearances at All-Party Parliamentary Group meetings.

Find out more at:

[Special Educational Consortium]



research in practice

Research in Practice works with and for professionals aross children's and adults' social care, health, justice, and higher education, offering resources, learning opportunities and specialist expertise. We support professional learning and development to enable people – children, young people, families, adults, carers, and communities – to live good lives.

We are proud to work with a membership network of over 210 local authority, health and voluntary sector organisations, alongside partner universities.

Highlights for 25-26 include:

- Exploitation: We strengthened practice responses to exploitation through new resources on adult exploitation, a flagship conference exploring adult sexual exploitation across the life course, and contribution to the Partners in Care and Health expert reference group.
- Children's social care reforms: We supported practitioners to translate national reforms into everyday practice, with targeted resources for Family Help Lead Practitioners, a highly rated Making Families First a reality conference, and workshops on family group conferences.
- Specialist practice resources: We developed specialist resources to support confident decision-making, including guidance on foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, good decision-making in adult social care, and tools for complex mental capacity decisions.
- Pre-birth work: We continued to develop and share pre-birth practice resources across social care and health, supported by workshops, webinars and policy-facing work following the Baby Victoria review.
- Impactful resources: We added practical resources on adult safeguarding, attachment-informed children's social care and inclusive practice with autistic parents, drawing together lived experience, research and practice wisdom.

- Targeted programmes and partnerships: Alongside our membership offer, Research in Practice works with local and national government, research institutions and third-sector organisations to deliver targeted programmes. In 2025–26, this work included a four-strand Department for Education research project on children and young people at risk of deprivation of liberty, alongside a detailed review of relevant legal frameworks. We are in the final year of a project led by Oxford University and funded by Nuffield, which explores how to improve the use of information in work with children and families. Our role has been to lead a national network of data and practice leads, and to develop practical resources to support the effective and ethical use of data.
- Our partnership with the University of Birmingham and Community Catalysts created the first nationally held learning resources for Family and Group Conferencing with adults.

Find out more at:

researchinpractice.org.uk

WORKING TOGETHER WITH PARENTS NETWORK

The Working Together with Parents Network supports professionals working with parents with learning disabilities and learning difficulties, and their children. It's a UK-wide network for professionals sharing positive practice that seeks to engage with key stakeholders from adults and children's social care, health, education, legal and independent advocacy sectors to work towards a common vision and effective ways of joint working.

Highlights for 25–26 include:

- **Publishing a newsletter:** A regular update and information-sharing tool designed for professionals who work with parents with learning disabilities or learning difficulties and their children. The newsletter also supports researchers to share research opportunities, promote studies, and connect with practitioners. supporting parents with learning disabilities and learning difficulties and their children.
- **Publishing a research briefing** sharing insights from NIHR-funded studies examining how Adult Services and Children's Services can collaborate more effectively to meet parents' needs.
- **Building relationships with researchers:** Developing collaborative partnerships with academic researchers to inform research proposals and joint projects, ensuring that work is evidence-informed and relevant to practice.
- **Expanding the network** with over 1,300 members from adult and children's social care, education, health, legal, and independent advocacy sectors to work towards a shared vision and effective ways of joint working.

Find out more at:

[Working Together With Parents Network]

SCHOOLS WELLBEING PARTNERSHIP

The Schools Wellbeing Partnership's vision is for every child and young person to thrive in a learning environment that prioritises and supports their mental health and wellbeing.

Highlights in 2025–26 included:

- Recruiting a new Chair of the Schools Wellbeing Partnership, Steven Baker OBE, CEO of The People's Learning Trust, the official multi academy trust of Everton Football Club.
- Growing the Schools Wellbeing Partnership to over 400 members across education, health and the voluntary sector.
- Holding Parliamentary and member events focused on the progress and implementation of whole-school approaches to wellbeing and mental health.
- Working with our Chair Steering Group to develop a new three-year strategy focused on embedding evidence informed whole school approaches nationally and locally.
- Working together to influence the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.

Find out more at:

[Schools Wellbeing Partnership]

Children and Young People's Health Policy Influencing Group (HPIG)

HPIG brings together 75 organisations, including charities, Royal Colleges and experts, to collaboratively shape health policy. Convened by NCB through CDC, HPIG amplifies a collective voice, working closely with government to ensure the needs of babies, children and young people are reflected in legislation, policy and systems. As NHS England's Stakeholder Council for the Children and Young People's Transformation Programme, HPIG plays a key role in influencing national priorities.

Highlights of 25–26 include:

- Child Health Workforce Alliance: Launched in May 2025, the Alliance brings together over 25 organisations to strengthen the children's health workforce. It published a position paper, engaged senior ministers, and contributed directly to the NHS Workforce Plan, with its work recognised by NHS England and sector media.
- Influencing the Implementation of the 10-Year-Health Plan: HPIG published a briefing welcoming the NHS Ten-Year Health Plan's ambition to raise the healthiest generation ever. The briefing secured ministerial engagement, including a meeting with Baroness Merron to discuss mental health and whole-family approaches.
- Influencing neighbourhood health guidance and reform: Through coordinated advocacy, HPIG successfully influenced the Neighbourhood Health Framework to recognise children and young people as a priority group, while continuing to shape the Children and Young People's Modern Service Framework through direct engagement with NHS England.

Find out more at:

[Children and Young People's Health Policy Influencing Group (HPIG)]

Our plans for 2026–27

We will remain focussed on the unacceptably high number of children living in poverty, working to deepen anti-poverty work across England and Northern Ireland, especially ensuring full implementation of the UK Child Poverty Strategy. A key pillar of this work will be delivered though our new Local Voices, National Change anti-poverty project. Thanks to National Lottery players, we have received almost £3.5 million from The National Lottery Community Fund to support this work. The funding will be used to link community-based youth participation directly to decision makers, enabling young people to shape local and national policy developments, change systems and challenge the stigma of poverty.

Our work with adults dovetails with our work on child poverty, this year we have a strand of Research in Practice work looking at how we effectively support adults who are experiencing poverty. This is through a safeguarding adults lens, as well as looking at developing financial literacy tools to support practice. Linked to this work is a focus on the exploitation of adults, we will continue to work closely with Partners in Care and Health as part of an expert reference group looking at this area of practice, and contribute to a forthcoming resource to support practitioners.

We also know the publication of the Every Child Achieving and Thriving white paper represents a once-in-a-generation chance to fundamentally reform the SEND system. NCB and especially the

Council for Disabled Children (CDC) will continue to serve as a vital bridge between the government, education, health and social care sectors, and families, centring the voice of children and advocating for key improvements.

As chairs of HPIG, we will play a central role in ensuring that priorities of children and young people and of the wider sector are reflected in the NHS Modern Service Framework for Children and Young People – a huge opportunity to set an ambitious 10-year vision for child health.

We know that national policy change is only ever the first chapter of improvements. Across NBC we will continue to support local areas with implementation of reforms and across SEND, children's social care, health, and early years – including on how national initiatives can best join up at local level.

We will continue to convene the sector on early years policy and reform implementation – further deepening the legacy of the "A Better Start" programme and its enormous influence on policy and practice.

We continue to contribute to national developments in both child and adult social care, and we are pleased to be part of the adult social work workforce strategy steering group. We are also really pleased to have been commissioned by DfE to continue our support of the Principal Social Worker (PSW) network. We have also been commissioned by Skills for Care to support the Adults PSW network, Principal Occupational Therapist network and the Approved Mental Health Professional Leads network.

We will further grow Anti-Bullying Week as a vital moment for schools and the wider sector to raise awareness and call for change.

We also have a programme of work to continue to modernise our digital tools and streamline our internal processes, challenging ourselves to improve further in both efficiency and effectiveness. This will include new tools for work planning and refreshed approach to performance management.

As artificial intelligence reshapes how organisations across our sector work, we are adopting these tools thoughtfully and responsibly, putting in place clear governance, a staff AI policy and a live risk framework so that innovation is matched by oversight and accountability. As a charity working with and for children and young people, we are especially mindful of the responsibilities this carries, and we see AI governance not as a brake on progress but as the foundation for using new technology with confidence and in the interests of those we serve.

Looking further ahead, we also intend to lend NCB's voice to the wider public conversation about what AI means for children and young people, a debate too often dominated by hype and alarm, and one that needs a measured, child-centred perspective.

Across all of the above work, we are continuing to deepen our approach to diversity, equity and inclusion – our number one priority is embedding a fully anti-racist approach in our external delivery work.

Last but not least, we will be refreshing our corporate strategy – ensuring that our vision and priorities remain fit for the long-term in a fast-changing external environment.

Trustees' annual report

Incorporating the Directors' Strategic Report and Administrative Report for Companies Act Purposes.

The Trustees of the National Children's Bureau present their Annual Report for the Year Ended 31st March 2026 under the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006, including the Directors' Report and the Strategic Report under the 2006 Act, together with the audited financial statements for the year.

Board of Trustees

Sarah Mullen	Chair (from 1 January 2026), Vice Chair (to 31 December 2025)
Alison O'Sullivan	Chair (to 31 December 2025)
Steven Crocker	Vice Chair (from 6 February 2026)
Tayo Leigh	Treasurer
Emma Beeden	
Onder Beter	
Professor Neal Hazel	
Bethan Hoggan	
Dr Catriona Hugman	
Marjorie James	
Dr Dominic McSherry	
Jadesola Olusanya	
Kathryn Pugh, MBE	
Sarbjit Rana	
Nainan Shah	

Members of the Board of Trustees under charity law are also Directors of the charitable company for the purpose of company law.

Independent committee members

Claire Burgess	People & Culture Committee
Adam Land	People & Culture Committee
Shimona Chowdury	Finance, Risk & Audit Committee
Jacqui Woodward	Finance, Risk & Audit Committee

Strategic leadership team

Anna Feuchtwang	Chief Executive
Amanda Allard	Strategic Director – Practice and Programmes (until 31 March 2026)
Dez Holmes	Deputy CEO (from 1 April 2026) (Strategic Director – Practice and Programmes prior to this)
Phil Anderson	Strategic Director – External Affairs
Kaveed Ali	Chief Operating Officer

Advisors

Auditors

Sayer Vincent LLP
110 Golden Lane
London EC1Y 0TG

Bankers

Barclays Bank PLC
1 Churchill Place
London E14 5HP

Investment managers

CCLA Investment Management Ltd
80 Cheapside
London EC2V 6DZ

The National Children's Bureau (NCB) was registered as a charity in 1969 (charity number 258825), although it was founded in 1963 as the National Bureau for Cooperation in Child Care. NCB is also a company limited by guarantee (registration number 952717) and has a subsidiary charity NCB RiP (registration number 15336152, charity number 1211290) and a subsidiary trading company, National Children's Bureau Enterprises Ltd (registration number 2633796).

NCB's Registered Office is at 23 Mentmore Terrace, Hackney, London, E8 3PN

NCB was established for the public benefit in order to advance the well-being of children and young people in particular by (but not limited to):

- Relieving poverty, sickness and distress
- Safeguarding and maintaining health and well-being
- Encouraging positive and supportive family and other environments for children and young people
- Advancing education and training
- Reducing inequalities
- Ensuring that children and young people have a strong voice in all matters that affect their lives.

For the purposes of carrying out these objects, NCB's Articles of Association expect it to promote and organise cooperation and partnerships and to influence and inform policy, practice and service development by bringing together voluntary organisations, statutory authorities, individual professionals and all those concerned with the well-being of children and young people.

The liability of members in respect of the guarantee, as set out in the Articles, is limited to £1 per member of the company.

Governance and management

The Board is ultimately accountable for NCB's strategic and financial sustainability and growth and that this is achieved through an organisational culture based on integrity, accountability and transparency.

With this, NCB is committed to upholding its organisational culture and values in-line with the seven principles of the Charity Governance Code (updated 2020):

- Organisational purpose
- Leadership
- Integrity
- Decision making, risk and control
- Board effectiveness
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Openness and accountability

NCB's Board of Trustees and Strategic Leadership Team reflect these standards across practices, function and behaviours, conscious of the fact that the organisational culture is influenced and embedded from these levels.

The Governance Code is also embedded across NCB particularly with regard to setting the foundations for the governance objectives and outcomes in the organisational strategy 2024–2029.

As set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association, NCB's Board of Trustees comprises a maximum membership of fifteen, including the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Treasurer and at least two Trustees must be under the age of 25 years at the time of appointment to fulfil NCB's young governance requirements. The maximum size of the Board of Trustees exceeds the Governance Code's recommended maximum in recognition of the fact younger trustees are at a stage in life where they typically have less control over their time so are less likely to be able to attend all meetings.

Each Board member serves a maximum of two terms each of three-years, with the possibility of a one-year extension at the end of their second term in exceptional circumstances, and Honorary Offices allowed to serve a maximum of nine years.

At Year-end 31st March 2026, the Board membership was fourteen with the above requirements met.

The Board remains fully committed to promoting an inclusive approach recognising that a more diverse Board better supports its leadership, effectiveness and decision making from harnessing a broader range of perspectives and that lived experience is as equally valuable as professional expertise. The Board seeks to continuously develop and enhance its structures and ways of working to support inclusivity. As part of the process, the Board periodically reviews its collective membership and individual expertise, lived experience and development requirements.

Annual one to ones are held with each Trustee and either the Chair or Vice-Chair, an annual appraisal of the chair is performed, and all Board members sign the Trustee Code of Conduct. External effectiveness reviews are undertaken periodically to obtain independent assessment and advice.

The Board has continued to seek

ongoing improvement through the year, using the annual Trustee Strategy Day to include a focus on developing the group leadership skills of the Board. This development focus will continue through the year ending 31 March 2027.

The Finance, Risk and Audit Committee (FRAC) ensures that NCB is compliant in its financial obligations, auditing standards and legal requirements of regulatory bodies, including the Charity Commission, through an appropriate framework of policies, processes and controls. A focus of FRAC through the year has been the documentation of our Risk Assurance Framework.

The People and Culture Committee is focused on all matters pertaining to 'people' including Board membership, succession planning, Trustee recruitment, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and delivery of key strategic objectives. The development and approval of our second five-year DEI plan has been a priority this year.

The Board may establish advisory groups to support the development of strategic objectives. The Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) continues its work with focus on delivery against our strategy.

Senior pay

NCB aims to ensure that all staff are paid on a grade appropriate to the nature of the work and the experience, knowledge and skills needed to carry out the job within the organisation.

NCB also aims to ensure that all jobs are at a pay level which is reasonable when compared with the external market pay ranges for the charity and civil service sectors.

The grades of all roles are assessed as part of NCB's job evaluation process, with the exception of the Chief Executive's and Directors' salaries which are proposed by the People and Culture Committee of the Board of Trustees for determination by the Board of Trustees.

Fundraising

NCB has not contracted the services of professional fundraisers or commercial participants.

NCB benefits as one of four recipients from donations secured by Childlife, a consortium charity whose methods include door-to-door, street fundraising and payroll giving. All activity lines are rigorously observant of industry recognised, best practice in ethical fundraising.

We delegate our low-level individual giving because our work does not lend itself to a large scale, fundraising opportunity with the general public. Accordingly, the advice we give to those wishing to fundraise on our behalf, is offered on a case-by-case basis, with Institute of Fundraising best practice in mind.

NCB and Childlife are registered with the Fundraising Regulator. No complaints have been received about our fundraising activities.

Risk and internal control

The Trustees continue to review the risks facing NCB group, controls in place and mitigating actions being taken using the organisation's general statement of risk appetite with its corresponding set of principles around generally acceptable levels of risks.

The Trustees remain of the view that appropriate control procedures are in place to manage risks and that the systems of financial control comply in all material aspects with the guidelines issued by the Charity Commission. NCB's approach to management of risk is set out in a Risk Assurance Framework that is regularly reviewed and updated.

Risks	Key mitigating actions
People – Delivering organisational change while protecting capacity and retention During the year NCB undertook a significant restructure to address its deficit, with the new organisational model going live in July 2026. While the change reduces recurring costs by around £800k a year, the transition carries risks to staff capacity, engagement and the retention of senior staff and key expertise, compounded by pay restraint and the loss of colleagues through the change.	• Phased implementation, with redeployment maximised to keep compulsory redundancies to a minimum. • Regular pulse surveys and close monitoring of engagement and workloads. • Structured support for affected staff, including Employee Assistance Programme and exit support. • A review point to assess whether further savings are required.
Financial – Operating model and financial sustainability NCB has been operating with a deficit, and the cost base growing faster than income in recent years. If the operating model is not brought back into balance, this risks an unsustainable draw on reserves over time and a reduced ability to invest in the charity's mission.	• The organisational restructure as the principal mitigation, delivering around £1m a year of recurring savings. • A projected residual deficit of around £500k for 2026/27, kept under review. • Detailed budget monitoring, cashflow forecasting and active cash management. • A robust level of reserves held above the policy minimum to maintain continuity of programmes.

Risks	Key mitigating actions
Delivery – External environment and demand for our work Ongoing change in government and public bodies, a constrained spending environment and rising costs continue to create uncertainty around future income and make longer-term planning challenging. At the same time, major reform of the SEND system represents both a significant opportunity and a delivery risk for NCB and the Council for Disabled Children. The quality and breadth of work we can deliver for beneficiaries is at risk if income becomes harder to secure while cost pressures persist.	• Executive and trustees building and maintaining strong relationships with stakeholders across all political parties. • A dedicated CDC Director role to lead engagement on SEND reform, supported by refreshed strategy work. • Plurality of income sources, enhanced by Research in Practice, providing resilience to volatility. • Detailed contract management and a robust level of reserves to maintain continuity of programmes.
Technology – Artificial intelligence AI tools are increasingly used across the organisation and the regulatory and funder expectations around them are developing quickly. Used without appropriate governance, AI could create risks around data protection, the accuracy and quality of our work and our reputation; equally, moving too slowly carries its own risks. The Trustees have begun bringing AI formally into NCB's risk governance during the year.	• AI added to the strategic risk register, supported by a dedicated AI risk register, for discussion by the Board in 2026. • Draft staff guidance on the responsible use of AI, with training beginning with trustees and then staff. • A named governance line and a regular review cycle, with NCB keeping its options open rather than committing to particular tools.

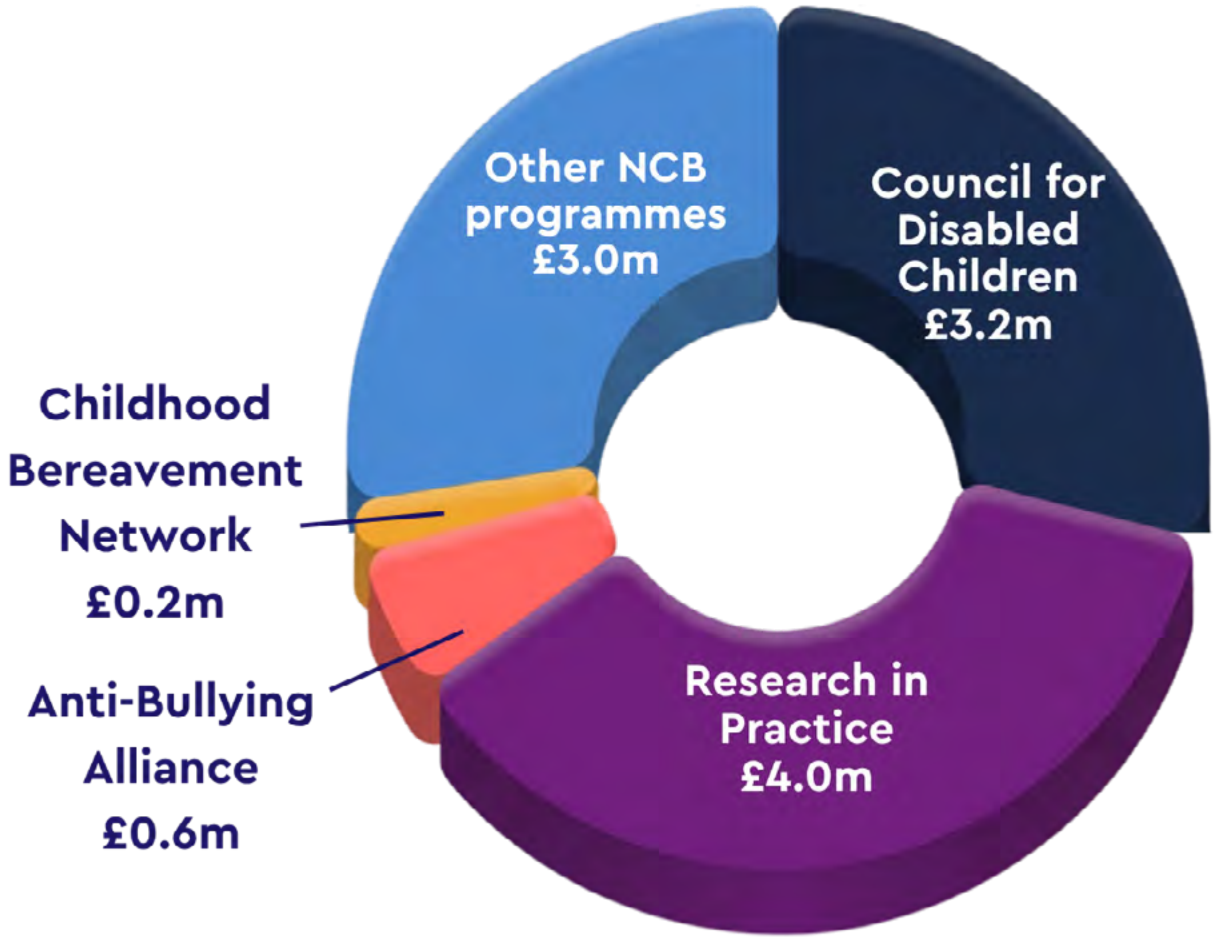
Financial review

Understanding NCB's finances

NCB's structure

NCB is a unifying voice in the sector and our core family of membership networks play a vital role to help us achieve our charitable mission.

While programmes are often delivered collaboratively across NCB, the £11m 2025/26 net income (after £0.9m has gone to delivery partners) is broadly broken down as follows:



NCB's unrestricted income

Our accounts show £9.1m of "Unrestricted" income this year. Counter-intuitively most of the income labelled "Unrestricted" is not at our discretion to spend, as it relates to contractual income for specific services, where all the costs of delivery must be met from this income. Accounting standards dictate that these very real limitations on discretion to spend do not constitute 'restrictions' for accounting purposes.

While this may give the impression that we have a large sum of money to cover discretionary costs or projects we choose to undertake, this is not the case. Only £166k (1% of our income) was given to us with free choice as to how we spend it, which when combined with interest earned on cash deposits (£127k this year), gives us around £293k of truly unrestricted income.

NCB's reserves and reserves policy

NCB's Trustees maintain a reserve policy in line with the Charity Commission's best practice.

Risks and Requirements

The Trustees have adapted a benchmarked framework to assess risks to the organisation, informed by the organisation's risk register, and considered the possible financial impacts that these may have, alongside anticipated proactive requirements to spend funds. The most material items are:

- Cessation of, or delays or cuts to, funding including at short notice. These could arise from disruption to government spending plans or change of funder priorities and require NCB to cover staff and other continuity costs.
- A need to invest in new products, services and income streams, and methods of delivery thereof, to continue meet emerging and evolving policy aims and societal needs. The costs of this are often not recoverable through our grant and contract funding.
- Adverse events that require unbudgeted payments, such as failure of compliance, cyber-attack or other business distraction, despite controls and insurance cover.

- Costs associated with closing the charity down, e.g., ensuring the continuity of services, administrator costs, redundancies. (This is not even perceived as being remotely likely or needed but it is considered prudent to hold funds to meet what we assess to be potentially significant costs, given the complexity of NCB.)

NCB's current reserves

Trustees consider £1.5m of free reserves a minimum, reflecting the size and complexity of the organisation, and we would explain here if reserves fell below this. Our free reserves (£2m) are currently safely above this.

We expect our funding climate to remain challenging, meaning covering necessary in-year costs fully may be difficult. We continue to invest in modernisation and efficiency of our operations. Trustees will continue to judge whether, and how much of, reserves can be safely utilised for investing in NCB's strategy and long-term future, in line with risk appetite. We will continue to seek funding for all programmes, including funding for developing new solutions to emerging needs.

Most of our free reserves are from a one-off event, being the net proceeds from selling our previous freehold office; unlike some charities, the funds are not from donors who expect these to be spent to achieve impact swiftly.

With only around £100k to £200k of truly unrestricted income each year (plus interest earned, which is currently significant but balanced by inflationary pressures on our costs), it is also extremely difficult to rebuild any reserves that are spent. As NCB's mission involves systemic improvement across a wide range of themes, we do not have an ambition to spend reserves to "complete" this mission at any foreseeable point in the future.

Trustees therefore take a prudent view on retaining these free reserves where possible. Free reserves currently stand at £2.0m and are held to cover the risks and requirements set out above, over a practically unlimited time frame.

The remaining, and majority of, reserve funds shown are then not free reserves. The fixed asset reserve (£4.2m) represents our office property and other fixed assets.

The long-leasehold property is shown at £4.0m in our reserves, based on original cost less accumulated depreciation and given the office is entirely in use as intended.

In considering reserves, we consider a lower value would be realisable through sale, given the tailored fit-out costs. This value is tied up in the property, providing office space and reducing our running costs, and not available as cash to use.

We have designated funds where we expect upcoming obligations, commitments or plans; currently to cover strategic investment in delivering our strategy, meeting evolving needs, as well as to continue to improve our delivery, quality and consistency, all during an uncertain political and economic period, as well as for VAT and other costs relating to the property purchase (all totalling £0.4m).

The £0.6m of restricted funds held are merely funds given in advance, and ring-fenced, by funders for agreed projects.

Summary for the year under review

The result seen in the financial statements can be broken down as follows:

There was an operating and overall deficit on unrestricted funds of £1,192k (2025 £10k surplus).

Net income on operational restricted funds was £0.2m, reflecting merely the timing of spend on grant funded projects. This resulted in NCB's net assets and overall funds reducing to £7.2m (2025 £8.2m) and free reserves reduced to £2.0m (2025 £2.7m). NCB therefore remains in a strong financial position, with free reserves above the policy minimum set out above, a significant property asset and a strategic plan for income generation to continue this strong financial performance in the years ahead.

Financial performance

Income

As was anticipated, overall income decreased during the year from £15.8m in 2024/25 to £11.9m. Unrestricted income decreased to £9.1m (£10.9m in 2024/25), mainly reflecting a reduced number of large programmes.

Restricted income lessened from £4.9m to £2.8m, reflecting particularly the expected ending of our LEAP 'A Better Start' programme for National Lottery Community Fund.

Outside of these the charity continues to hold a number of government contracts for the future and has secured significant grants for its projects and research from a range of government, trust and other sources.

Expenditure

Expenditure decreased in line with the changes in activity mentioned above, from £16.0m last year to £12.9m this year.

Financial position

NCB retains a strong general funds position (£2.0m) in line with the reserves policy, alongside further funds designated to meet specific needs or risks in the near future. The total net assets of £7.2m (£8.2m 2025) also includes the funds invested in our main London office and restricted grant funds.

Going concern

As is normal in the preparation of accounts, Trustees are required to determine whether the accounts are to be compiled on a going concern basis.

NCB currently holds £2.0m of free reserves (in excess of designated funds), which meets the reserves policy set out above, assures the Board of Trustees we can meet any risks that become issues, and puts NCB in a good position for the coming period.

2025/26 saw a significant deficit and steps have been take to significantly reduce costs and increase efficiency, to help ensure a better operating run-rate in 2026/27 and beyond.

Taking all these factors into consideration Trustees believe it is reasonable to expect that NCB will generate sufficient resources to finance its operations for the foreseeable future and believe there are no material uncertainties that call into doubt the charity's ability to continue. Accordingly, the accounts have been prepared on the basis that the charity is a going concern.

Subsidiaries

NCB RiP, a charitable subsidiary, undertakes the activities of Research in Practice. These were merged into NCB's group from 1st February 2024 and provide learning opportunities to professionals in social care, health, education and criminal justice, to improve outcomes. The subsidiary produced a break-even result for the year under review, including a contribution to overhead/support costs, keeping funds within the limit of the on-demand facility agreement with NCB.

National Children's Bureau Enterprises Ltd exists to manage, as and when appropriate, conference and lettings programmes, various funding activities and support services for other charities.

The majority of work has largely been stopped, and the residual, incidental trading activity handled within the charity itself, resulting in no turnover or profit in the company for the year, as was the case in the prior year. The company was dormant throughout the financial year. Any profit made by NCB Enterprises' is gift-aided to the charity.

Joint Venture

Childlife is a joint venture between four charities, with NCB therefore having an equal 25% share of voting rights. NCB recognised income of £160k from Childlife in the year.

Investment policy

NCB's investment policy is to limit investment in more volatile assets and to keep key reserves in cash deposits.

The Trustees continue to monitor this approach to investment, to ensure the best use of the significant funds from the sale of the freehold property. This is the role of the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee which is chaired by the Treasurer, with the Chair attending as an observer, and with the Chief Executive and the Chief Operating Officer in attendance.

The Committee advises the Board on investment policy to ensure risk, return and liquidity are balanced in the best interests of the charity and, where necessary, will seek independent external advice.

In addition, it recommends to the Board the proportion of its investments to be held in longer term funds against maintaining prudent cash, or cash equivalent, balances, or retaining for use directly on charitable activities, infrastructure and operations.

The risk appetite of the policy above makes it unlikely we will invest significantly in this area, but for any future investment in equities and other financial products, the charity will continue with an ethical investment policy, including avoiding companies with more than 50 per cent of their turnover in gambling, tobacco or armaments.

The Committee will also advise the Board on maintaining a reasoned ethical approach, and will seek to take external advice to set this against the need for proper returns on new funds.

Statement of responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Strategic Report, the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations. Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards) and applicable law.

Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of its net incoming resources for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue to operate.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Insofar as each of the trustees of the company at the date of approval of this report is aware there is no relevant audit information (information needed by the company's auditor in connection with preparing the audit report) of which the company's auditor is unaware. Each trustee has taken all of the steps that he/ she should have taken as a trustee in order to make himself/herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditor is aware of that information.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Compliance with statutory requirements

The financial statements have been prepared in compliance with current statutory requirements, the Memorandum and Articles of Association and the Statement of Recommended Practice 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' (SORP FRS 102) issued under the auspices of the Charity Commission.

Funders, stakeholders and sponsors

We would like to express our grateful thanks to government departments, charitable bodies, companies and individuals for their considerable support in financing NCB's activities.

Auditors

Sayer Vincent LLP has indicated its willingness to be reappointed statutory auditor. This Annual Report of the Trustees, under the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006, was approved by the Board of Trustees on 15th July 2026, including approving in their capacity as company directors the Strategic Report contained therein, and is signed as authorised on its behalf by:

Sarah Mullen
Chair
National Children's Bureau
Company Number: 952717

Independent auditor's report to the members of National Children's Bureau

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of National Children's Bureau (the 'parent charitable company') and its subsidiary (the 'group') for the year ended 31 March 2026 which comprise the consolidated statement of financial activities, the group and parent charitable company balance sheets, the consolidated statement of cash flows and the notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- Give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and of the parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2026 and of the group's incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended.
- Have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.
- Have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International

Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the group financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group and parent charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on National Children's Bureau's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the trustees' annual report, including the strategic report, other than the group financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the group financial statements does not cover the other information, and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the group financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or

otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the group financial statements themselves.
If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- The information given in the trustees' annual report, including the strategic report, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.
- The trustees' annual report, including the strategic report, been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and the parent charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the trustees' annual report, including the strategic report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 and Charities Act 2011 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- Adequate accounting records have not been kept by the parent charitable company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- The parent charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- Certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- We have not received all the

information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the statement of trustees' responsibilities set out in the trustees' annual report, the trustees (who are also the directors of the parent charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the group's and the parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the group or the parent charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statement

We have been appointed auditor under the Companies Act 2006 and section 151 of the Charites Act 2011 and report in accordance with those Acts.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud are set out below.

Capability of the audit in detecting irregularities

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, our procedures included the following:

- We enquired of management, which included obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation, concerning the group's policies and procedures relating to:
  - ▫ Identifying, evaluating, and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
  - ▫ Detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected, or alleged fraud;
  - ▫ The internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- We inspected the minutes of meetings of those charged with governance.
- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework that the group operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a material effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of the group from our professional and sector experience.
- We communicated applicable laws and regulations throughout the audit team and remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit.
- We reviewed any reports made to regulators.
- We reviewed the financial statement disclosures and tested these to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- We performed analytical

procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships that may indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud.

- In addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, we tested the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments, assessed whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias and tested significant transactions that are unusual or those outside the normal course of business.
- In addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, we tested the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments, assessed whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias and tested significant transactions that are unusual or those outside the normal course of business.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and regulations made under section 154 of that Act. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Sayer Vincent LLP

Joanna Pittman
(Senior statutory auditor)

22 July 2026

for and on behalf of Sayer Vincent LLP, Statutory Auditor
110 Golden Lane, LONDON, EC1Y 0TG
Sayer Vincent LLP is eligible to act as auditor in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006

Financial statements

Consolidated statement of financial activities

(incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account)
Year ended 31 March 2026

	Notes	Restricted Funds £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	2026 £'000	2025 £'000
Income from:	2				
Donations and legacies		165	166	331	290
Charitable activities		2,594	8,820	11,414	15,332
Other activities		-	5	5	5
Income from investments		-	127	127	150
Total		2,759	9,118	11,877	15,777
Expenditure on:	3				
Raising funds					
Fundraising		-	52	52	48
Charitable activities		2,584	10,258	12,842	15,946
Exceptional expenditure	13	-	-	-	8
Total		2,584	10,310	12,894	16,002
Net movement in funds		175	(1,192)	(1,017)	(225)
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		388	7,789	8,177	8,402
Total funds carried forward		563	6,597	7,160	8,177

Notes 1 to 18 form part of these financial statements

Full comparative figures are shown in note 17.

Balance sheets

As at 31 March 2026

		Group		NCB	
	Notes	2026 £'000	2025 £'000	2026 £'000	2025 £'000
Fixed assets:					
Tangible assets	6	4,170	4,317	4,170	4,317
Shares in subsidiary undertaking	8	-	–	-	–
Total fixed assets		4,170	4,317	4,170	4,317
Current assets:					
Debtors	10	3,612	3,910	2,168	2,340
Cash at bank		3,390	4,375	2,777	3,732
Total current assets		7,002	8,285	4,945	6,072
Liabilities:					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	11	(4,012)	(4,425)	(1,708)	(1,887)
Net current assets		2,990	3,860	3,237	4,185
Total net assets	15	7,160	8,177	7,407	8,502
The funds of the charity:					
Restricted Funds	13	563	388	459	362
General Funds (Free Reserves)	14	2,037	2,702	2,388	3,053
Designated Unrestricted Funds	14	4,560	5,087	4,560	5,087
Total charity funds	17	7,160	8,177	7,407	8,502

Notes 1 to 18 form part of these financial statements.

The net result for the period ending 31 March 2026 was a deficit of £1.0m (2025 deficit of £0.2m).

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the trustees on and were signed on their behalf on 15 July 2026 by:

Sarah Mullen

Chair
National Children's Bureau
Company number: 952717

Consolidated cash flow statement

for the year ended 31 March 2026

	2026	2025
	£'000	£'000
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net cash used in operating activities	(1,069)	(457)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Interest from investments	127	150
Purchase of leasehold property and equipment	(43)	(58)
Net cash provided by investing activities	84	92
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period	(985)	(365)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	4,375	4,740
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	3,390	4,375

	2026	2025
Analysis of cash and cash equivalents	£'000	£'000
Cash in hand	3,390	4,375
Total cash and cash equivalents	3,390	4,375

Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities	2026	2025
	£'000	£'000
Net expenditure for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	(1,017)	(225)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	190	207
Decrease in creditors	(413)	(643)
Decrease in debtors	298	354
Interest receivable	(127)	(150)
Net cash used in operating activities	(1,069)	(457)

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 March 2026

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Statutory information

National Children's Bureau (NCB) is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee, incorporated in the United Kingdom. The registered office address and principal place of business is 23 Mentmore Terrace, London, England E8 3PN.

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with 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) – Charities SORP (FRS 102), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy or note.

In applying the financial reporting framework, the Trustees have made a number of subjective judgements, for example in respect of significant accounting estimates.

Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. The nature of the estimation means the actual outcomes could differ from those estimates.

Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects the current and future periods.

Details of the main accounting estimates can be found in the notes to the accounts.

The Trustees do not consider that there are any sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

Public benefit entity

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

Going Concern

After making enquiries, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue its activities for the foreseeable future. Accordingly, they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements as outlined in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities.

Group accounts

Group financial statements have been prepared on a line-by-line consolidation basis in respect of NCB, its wholly-owned subsidiary National Children's Bureau Enterprises Ltd and its subsidiary charity NCB RIP. No separate statement of Financial Activities has been presented for NCB alone as permitted by Section 408 of Companies Act 2006.

NCB has taken advantage of the exemptions in FRS 102 from the requirements to present a charity-only Cash Flow Statement and certain disclosures regarding NCB's financial instruments.

Consortium charity

NCB is one of four charities in the field of childcare which receive grants from the consortium undertaking, Childlife. The grants are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities with Donations and appeals. The accounts of Childlife are considered not material for the purpose of consolidation. Financial details are set out in note 10.

Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and that the amount can be measured reliably. For legacies, entitlement is taken as the earlier of the date on which either: the charity is aware that probate has been granted, the estate has been finalised and notification has been made by the executor(s) to the charity that a distribution will be made, or when a distribution is received from the estate. Receipt of a legacy, in whole or in part, is only considered probable when the amount can be measured reliably and the charity has been notified of the executor's intention to make a distribution.

Where legacies have been notified to the charity, or the charity is aware of the granting of probate, and the criteria for income recognition have not been met, then the legacy is a treated as a contingent asset and disclosed if material.

Income received in advance of the provision of a specified service is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

Fund accounting

Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure which meets these criteria is charged to the fund.

Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources received or generated for the charitable purposes. Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes. The strategic priorities fund and the building fund are expected to utilised by 31st March 2026.

Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

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

- Expenditure on *Raising Funds* relate to the staff costs and other expenditure incurred by the charity in inducing third parties to make voluntary contributions to it, as well as the cost of any activities with a fundraising purpose
- Expenditure on *Charitable Activities* includes staff costs and other expenditure undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs.

NCB is a partially-exempt body for

VAT purposes. Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

Delivery Partners

Expenditure subcontracted, or managed on, to partners is recognised to the same policy as expenditure above, or when funds are passed on, as a grant, as agreed.

Allocation of support costs

Resources expended are allocated to the particular activity where the cost relates directly to that activity.

However, the cost of overall direction and administration of each activity, comprising the salary and overhead costs of the central function, is apportioned on a basis consistent with the budgeted use of the resources. Support services are allocated by income or by full-time equivalent staff. Support services includes chief executive office, facilities, finance, human resources and equipment depreciation. Governance costs are the costs associated with the governance arrangements of the charity. These costs are associated with constitutional and statutory requirements and include any costs associated with the strategic management of the charity's activities including trustees, audit and general legal expenses.

Operating leases

Rental costs under operating leases are charged to the SOFA in equal amounts over the period of the leases.

Tangible fixed assets

Items of equipment are capitalised where the purchase price exceeds £500. Depreciation costs are allocated to activities on the basis of the use of the related assets in those activities.

Assets are reviewed for impairment if circumstances indicate their carrying value may exceed their net realisable value and value in use.

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write down the cost of each asset to its estimated residual value over its expected useful life. The depreciation rates in use are as follows:

- Leasehold property 100 years
- Fitting out costs 20 years
- Furniture and IT equipment 3–5 years
- Software 7 years

Investments

Investments in subsidiaries are at cost.

Cash at Bank and In Hand

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

Notice Deposits

Notice Deposits are liquid investments with a notice period greater than one month.

Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due

Creditors and provisions

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

Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

Pension costs

Employers' contributions are made to a defined contribution scheme, managed by Standard Life, and employees' personal pensions. These are charged in the year in which they become payable.

2. INCOME

	Restricted	Unrestricted	2026	Restricted	Unrestricted	2025
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Donations and legacies	165	166	331	157	133	290
Charitable activities						
Government grants	793	-	793	651	-	651
National Lottery Community Fund grants	-	-	–	1,855	-	1,855
Other project grants	1,801	-	1,801	2,193	-	2,193
Contract income	-	6,248	6,248	-	8,148	8,148
Memberships	-	2,572	2,572	-	2,484	2,484
Other activities	-	5	5	-	5	5
Income from investments						
Bank and other interest receivable	-	127	127	-	150	150
	2,759	9,118	11,877	4,856	10,920	15,776

Government grants are for project delivery work secured by a bidding process. Significant items are shown in note 14.

3. EXPENDITURE

	Staff	Delivery partners	Other expenses	Support services	2026
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Raising funds					
Fundraising	51	–	1	–	52
Charitable activities	8,136	917	1,718	2,071	12,842
Support Services	894	–	1,083	(1,977)	–
Governance costs	–	–	94	(94)	–
Exceptional expenditure	–	–	–	–	–
Total Expenditure	9,081	917	2,896	–	12,894

Comparative figures for the prior year

	Staff	Delivery partners	Other expenses	Support services	2025
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Raising funds					
Fundraising	48	–	–	–	48
Charitable activities	8,864	1,969	3,137	1,976	15,946
Support Services	702	–	1,187	(1,889)	–
Governance costs	–	–	87	(87)	–
Exceptional expenditure	–	–	8	–	8
Total Expenditure	9,614	1,969	4,419	–	16,002

	2026	2025
	£'000	£'000
Support Services		
Facilities and IT	1,005	1,034
Human resources	384	347
Finance	431	362
Management	157	146
	1,977	1,889

	2026	2025
	£'000	£'000
Governance costs		
Trustees' expenses	3	5
Auditors' remuneration (excluding non-governance services listed on next page)	44	42
Internal Audit	-	–
Other meeting costs (including virtual)	15	14
Trustee Recruitment	11	18
Other expenses	21	8
	94	87

		2026	2025
		£'000	£'000
Expenditure includes			
Depreciation		190	207
Auditors' remuneration provision	– Statutory audit current year	40	38
	– Statutory audit prior year	-	-
	– Project audits prior and current years	2	2
	– Other work	-	-

Non-staff expenditure on governance and support services (including auditors' remuneration) shown includes partially irrecoverable VAT (where charged by suppliers) according to the balance of business and non-business, and exempt activity supported. For 2025–26 52% of this VAT was irrecoverable (2024–25 58%), ie adding 10.4% (2024–25 11.5%) to relevant costs.

4. DELIVERY PARTNERS

	2026	2025
	£'000	£'000
LEAP (Lambeth Early Action Partnership)	0	716
Early Years SEND Partnership	341	329
RISE partnership – Targeted Support	514	480
Fostering Connections	15	395
Other	47	49
	917	1,969

NCB works in partnership to achieve the aims of its programmes; amounts shown here are subcontracting, or passing on and over-seeing the use of funding, where there is a high degree of visibility for other organisations to the ultimate funder. NCB worked with 15 organisations in this way in the year (2025: 38).

5. STAFF AND TRUSTEES

	2026	2025
	£'000	£'000
Group & NCB Staff costs		
Salaries and wages	7,451	8,079
Social Security costs	965	845
Staff pension costs	566	690
Redundancy costs	99	138
	9,081	9,614

	2026	2025
Group & NCB Average head count staff numbers	number	number
Full-time staff	130	154
Part-time staff	46	52
	176	206

Staff earning over £60,000		
between £60,000 and £70,000	17	14
between £70,000 and £80,000	3	4
between £80,000 and £90,000	-	2
between £90,000 and £100,000	4	-
between £110,000 and £120,000	-	1
between £120,000 and £130,000	1	-

The key management personnel of the Charity, comprise the Trustees, Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer, two Strategic Directors – Practice & Programmes Director and Strategic Director – External Affairs. The total employee remuneration and benefits received by the 5 key management personnel were £568k (2025: five £551k); this figure includes employer national insurance and pension contributions (excluded in the bands above, and the roles listed in the table below, which are simply gross pay, given no other benefits paid) and the impact of a 2 month vacancy in the COO role during the year.

In compliance with recommendations for disclosure from the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), NCB have chosen to disclose the full-time equivalent, gross salaries of the senior leadership team at 31 March 2026, which were:

Role	**2026**	**2025**
Chief Executive	£123,772	£116,218
Chief Operating Officer	£90,820	£86,085
Strategic Director – Practice & Programmes	£90,820	£86,085
Strategic Director – Practice & Programmes	£90,820	£86,085
Strategic Director – External Affairs	£90,820	£86,085

No remuneration is payable to trustees. Travel and accomodation expenses totalling £2,983 (2025: £4,763) were reimbursed to 13 trustees (2025: 8 trustees). Trustee Indemnity Insurance £896 (2025: £896) was purchased in the year. £98k redundancy costs were incurred (with all but £21k paid out) during the year (2025: £138k, all paid in-year). In April 2026 an organisational restructure was put out to consultation with staff; the end result in May 2026 was a reduction through redundancy of 8 further members of staff.

6. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Leasehold property	Furniture and equipment	Total
Group and NCB	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost			
Cost as at 01 April 2025	4,688	854	5,542
Additions	8	35	43
Disposals	-	-	-
Cost as at 31 March 2026	4,696	889	5,585
Depreciation as at 01 April 2025	548	677	1,225
Charge	101	89	190
Disposals	-	-	-
Depreciation as at 31 March 2026	649	766	1,415
Net book value as at 31 March 2026	**4,047**	**123**	**4,170**
Net book value as at 31 March 2025	4,140	177	4,317

7. OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

The Group has annual commitments under non-cancellable operating leases expiring as follows:

	2026 £'000	2025 £'000
Due within one year		
Land and buildings	8	13
Equipment	5	5
2 to 5 years		
Equipment	11	11
	24	29

Lease payments recognised in the year amounted to £57k (2025: £51k).

8. SUBSIDIARY UNDERTAKING

NCB RIP was incorporated on 23 December 2023 as a company limited by guarantee, and is a charity registered at 23 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. The directors are Anna Feuchtwang, Phillip Anderson and Kaveed Ali.

On 1 February 2024, The Dartington Hall Trust transferred its Research in Practice activities to NCB RIP.

NCB has consolidated the results of NCB RIP on a line by line basis.

The value of assets and liabilities acquired by NCB on transfer of NCB RIP was nil.

	Restricted Funds £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	2026 £'000	2025 £'000
Income from:				
Charitable activities	300	3,703	4,003	4,936
Total	**300**	**3,703**	**4,003**	**4,936**
Expenditure on:				
Charitable activities	222	3,703	3,925	4,935
Total	**222**	**3,703**	**3,925**	**4,935**
Net income (expenditure)	**78**	**0**	**78**	**1**

Included within Charitable activities is a management charge of £466k from NCB.
The aggregate of the assets, liabilities and reserves was:

	2026 £'000	2025 £'000
Assets	2,109	2,570
Liabilities	(2,362)	(2,901)
Reserves	(253)	(331)
Liabilities include:		
Income received in advance	(2,216)	(2,171)
Amount due to NCB	-	(358)

Shares in subsidiary undertaking represents NCB's holding of 100 ordinary shares of £1 each, which is a 100% interest, in the share capital of National Children's Bureau Enterprises Limited, a company registered in England and Wales (no. 2633796) and a wholly owned subsidiary of the charity. Financial statements are filed with the Registrar of Companies.
The company has been dormant for the whole financial year. The net assets brought and carried forward are £5k, with the debtor due from the charity, NCB. An audit was not performed.
Activity may start up again in future, through letting of the new office, or from other emerging fundraising approaches.

The parent charity's gross income and net expenditure for the year are disclosed as follows:

	2026	2025
	£'000	£'000
Gross income	7,874	10,841
Net (expenditure)	(1,095)	(226)

9. JOINT VENTURE

Childlife is a joint venture between four charities, with NCB therefore having an equal 25% share of voting rights. The information below shows the full activities, liabilities and assets, of which NCB has a 25% interest. The 25% share of these amounts are not consolidated into NCB's financial statements. NCB recognised income of £160k from Childlife in the year. Notes 1 and 13 provide further information on our relationship.

	2026	2025
	£'000	£'000
Income	1,611	1,356
Expenditure	1,010	707
Net income	601	649
Distribution to member charities	(640)	(450)
Net movement in funds	(39)	199
The aggregate of assets, liabilities and funds was:		
Assets	771	873
Liabilities	(27)	(57)
Net assets	744	816
Total funds	744	816

10. DEBTORS

	Group 2026	Group 2025	NCB 2026	NCB 2025
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Trade debtors	2,384	2,638	1,022	901
Other debtors and prepayments	113	92	90	64
Amount due from subsidiary undertaking	–	–	–	358
Accrued income (unrestricted)	418	761	374	598
Accrued income (grants due for projects)	697	419	682	419
	3,612	3,910	2,168	2,340

NCB and NCB RiP entered into an on-demand facility agreement dated 30 January 2024 under which RIP may borrow from NCB funds up to the total value of £500,000.

11. CREDITORS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	Group 2026 £'000	Group 2025 £'000	NCB 2026 £'000	NCB 2025 £'000
Trade Creditors	321	445	250	249
Social Security and other taxes	581	660	548	553
Pension contributions	70	76	70	76
Amount due to subsidiary undertaking	-	–	57	5
Other creditors and accrued charges	653	823	612	755
Income received in advance	2,387	2,421	171	249
	4,012	4,425	1,708	1,887

	B/fwd 01 April 2025 £'000	Received 2026 £'000	Income 2026 £'000	C/fwd 31 March 2026 £'000
Income received in advance in respect of 2025/26				
Services and other income	2,421	9,084	9,118	2,387
	2,421	9,084	9,118	2,387

12. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

NCB Enterprises Ltd (a wholly owned subsidiary of NCB, also registered at 23 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN) did not trade in 2025–26.
The amount owed from the parent company at 31st March 2026 was £5,374 (2025: £5,374). Further details are shown in note 9.

NCB RiP was incorporated on 23 December 2023 as a company limited by guarantee, and is a charity registered at 23 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. The directors are Anna Feuchtwang, Phillip Anderson and Kaveed Ali. NCB has consolidated the results of NCB RIP on a line by line basis.

NCB and NCB RiP entered into an on-demand facility agreement dated 30 January 2024 under which NCB RiP may borrow from NCB funds up to the total value of £500,000.

Exceptional costs were incurred in the transfer:

	2026	2025
	£'000	£'000
Due Diligence, legal & tax advice	–	8
IT migration	–	–
HR migration	–	–
Finance migration	–	–
Staff	–	–
Other	–	–
	0	8

Kaveed Ali was a trustee of **Childlife**; a consortium which donated £160,000 to NCB for 2024–25 (2023–24: £115,000). No donations were received from any other related parties.

13. RESTRICTED FUNDS

Project and Unit funds		B/fwd 01 April 2025	Income	Expenses	C/fwd 31 March 2026
Project	Funder	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Early Years SEND	Department for Education	-	581	(581)	-
Other Grants from Government Departments		20	212	(221)	11
Anti Bullying Week fundraising	Various	53	92	(137)	8
Toolkit and Synthesis Partner Review	Youth Endowment Fund	-	535	(535)	-
ABA Bukhman	Bukhman Philanthropy	-	180	-	180
Other grants and income		289	859	(888)	260
NCB – restricted funds		362	2,459	(2,362)	459
Other grants and income		26	300	(222)	104
Subsidiaries – restricted funds		26	300	(222)	104
Group – restricted funds		388	2,759	(2,584)	563

Comparative figures for prior year

Project and Unit funds		B/fwd 01 April 2024	Income	Expenses	C/fwd 31 March 2025
Project	Funder	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Early Years SEND	Department for Education	-	581	(581)	-
Other Grants from Government Departments		10	70	(60)	20
Lambeth Early Action Partnership	National Lottery Community Fund	132	1,855	(1,938)	49
REAL in Lewisham	Charity of Sir Richard Whittington	93	-	(93)	-
Anti Bullying Week fundraising	Various	137	73	(157)	53
Toolkit and Synthesis Partner Review	Youth Endowment Fund	5	436	(441)	-
Fostering Connections	Youth Endowment Fund	36	760	(714)	82
Other grants and income		176	972	(990)	158
		589	4,747	(4,974)	362
Other grants and income		26	110	(110)	26
Subsidiaries – restricted funds		26	110	(110)	26
Group – restricted funds		615	4,857	(5,084)	388

All restricted funds represent grants for specific projects, as agreed with the funder in an application process and carried forward to continue the agreed project, with the exception of the £165k of donations shown on the Statement of Financial Activities and Note 2 (2025: £157k), which were mainly given by individuals in response to our Anti-Bullying Week campaign, or by organisations to our Special Education Consortium or Health Policy Influencing Group.

14. UNRESTRICTED OTHER FUNDS

	B/fwd 01 April 2025 £'000	Income £'000	Expenses £'000	Allocations and Transfers £'000	C/fwd 31 March 2026 £'000
Designated funds					
Fixed asset fund	4,319	-	(190)	43	4,172
Strategic priorities fund	500	-	(212)	–	288
Capital Goods Scheme fund	168	-	-	(118)	50
Building fund	100	-	-	(50)	50
	5,087	–	(402)	(125)	4,560
General Funds (Free Reserves)	3,053	5,415	(6,205)	125	2,388
NCB – unrestricted funds	8,140	5,415	(6,607)	–	6,948
Subsidiaries – unrestricted funds	(351)	3,703	(3,703)	-	(351)
Group – unrestricted funds	7,789	9,118	(10,310)	–	6,597

Comparative figures for the prior year

	B/fwd 01 April 2024 £'000	Income £'000	Expenses £'000	Allocations and Transfers £'000	C/fwd 31 March 2025 £'000
Designated funds					
Fixed asset fund – designated element	4,468	-	(207)	58	4,319
Strategic priorities fund	500	-	(190)	190	500
Capital Goods Scheme fund	220	-	-	(52)	168
New building fund	68	-	-	32	100
	5,256	-	(397)	228	5,087
General Funds (Free Reserves)	2,883	6,094	(5,696)	(228)	3,053
NCB – unrestricted funds	8,139	10,920	(10,918)	–	8,140
Subsidiaries – unrestricted funds	(352)	4,826	(4,825)	-	(351)
Group – unrestricted funds	7,787	10,920	(10,918)	–	7,789

The **Fixed asset fund** represents the net book value of tangible fixed assets; our office building and it's contents, as well as our laptops and systems.
The **New building fund** is set aside to fund the remaining costs for the fit-out, maintenance and enhancement of our main London office property over the next twelve months, subject to contractor capacity and resources.
The **Capital Goods Scheme fund** is set aside for any additional expense of recovered VAT during the ten year period of the Capital Goods Scheme that NCB is required to run regarding expenditure on the new leasehold property.

This represents NCB's full exposure through the period.

The **Strategic Priorities Fund** is set aside for investment in the coming year (or just beyond) in the transition, knowledge management and legacy of our 10 year LEAP programme as it starts to come to an end, enhancing our digital capabilities and prorgamme management, strengthening the diversity and scale of our income, adapting to new needs for our expertise and celebrating and involving children and young people in NCB's 60th anniversary, as well as continuing to manage the cost of inflationary pressures.

General funds represent the net of accumulated surplus and deficits of income and expenditure after transfers to designated funds.

15. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Tangible Fixed Assets	Net Current Assets	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Restricted Funds	-	563	563
Unrestricted – Designated funds	4,172	388	4,560
– General funds	-	2,037	2,037
Group Net Assets	4,172	2,988	7,160

Comparative figures for the prior year

	Tangible Fixed Assets	Net Current Assets	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Restricted Funds	-	388	388
Unrestricted – Designated funds	4,319	768	5,087
– General funds	-	2,702	2,702
Group Net Assets	4,319	3,858	8,177

16. PENSION ARRANGEMENTS

The disclosures set out below relate to pension arrangements to which contributions are made by the charity.

Defined contribution scheme

The charity participates in a defined contribution scheme independently managed by Standard Life. Contributions to the scheme are charged to the statement of financial activities as they become payable. NCB makes twice the employees' percentage contribution, up to a maximum of 10% (2025: 10%) of pensionable salaries. The cost of NCB's contributions for the year ended 31 March 2026 was £555k (2025: £540k).

17. CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES WITH COMPARATIVES

	Notes	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Pension Reserve	Unrestricted Other Funds	2026	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Pension Reserve	Unrestricted Other Funds	2025
	1 & 2	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Income from:									
Donations and legacies		165	-	166	331	157	-	133	290
Charitable activities		2,594	-	8,820	11,414	4,700	-	10,632	15,332
Other activities		-	-	5	5	-	-	5	5
Income from investments		-	-	127	127	-	-	150	150
Total		**2,759**	**-**	**9,118**	**11,877**	**4,857**	**-**	**10,920**	**15,777**
Expenditure on:	1, 3 & 6								
Raising funds									
Fundraising		-	-	52	52	-	-	48	48
Other trading activities		-	-	–	–	-	-	–	–
Charitable activities		2,584	-	10,258	12,842	5,084	-	10,862	15,946
Exceptional expenditure		-	-	0	0	-	-	8	8
Total		**2,584**	**-**	**10,310**	**12,894**	**5,084**	**-**	**10,918**	**16,002**
Net movement in funds		**175**	-	**(1,192)**	**(1,017)**	**(227)**	-	**2**	**(225)**

18. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

At the balance sheet date the group held Financial assets at amortised cost of £3,547k (2025: £3,848k) and Financial liabilities at amortised cost of £974k (2025: £1,268k).

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S BUREAU

ANTI-BULLYING ALLIANCE

SCHOOLS WELLBEING PARTNERSHIP

COUNCIL FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

CHILDHOOD BEREAVEMENT NETWORK

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL CONSORTIUM

WORKING TOGETHER WITH PARENTS NETWORK

research in practice

For more than 60 years, the National Children's Bureau has championed the rights and amplified the voice of children and young people in the UK. We interrogate policy and uncover evidence, blending in lived and learnt experience to shape future legislation and develop more effective ways of supporting children and families. Bringing people and organisations together is fundamental to how we improve the systems that babies, children, young people and their families rely on to thrive. We push boundaries, even looking beyond childhood itself to consider transitions into adulthood and the impact of childhood issues on an entire lifespan.

We are united for better childhoods and brighter futures.

ncb.org.uk