



Empowering Disability
Supporting All



CFDN

Empowering Disability, Supporting All

Trustees Annual Report
& Financial Statement 2026

Charity No: 263075 | Established in 1962

V2 - Final

www.cfdn.org.uk

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Empowering Disability, Supporting All

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A Message from the Chair



As I end my first year as Chair of the Board of Trustees, I am very proud of our achievements, which are spelt out in this report.

Congratulations and a big thank you to our staff, volunteers, executive members and Trustees, who enable so much to happen for our service users.

Whilst the charity is not expanding geographically, we have entered a phase where we are deepening our relations with partners, our profile is increasing and we have more members.

Our charity has entered into a phase where there is an increasing reliance on organisations like ourselves. Our advocacy service is dealing with a shortfall in the efficiency and effectiveness of the statutory sector. This is, in all probability, going to be a feature for a number of years to come. The challenge for CFDN is going to be how we can enhance the role of our service whilst raising the funds to deliver the services.

Society is facing a challenge with increased mental health, neurodivergent diagnoses and an increase in the uptake of personal independence issues. Our challenge is going to be how we cope with the changing landscape.

To conclude, the Prestige Award for Disability Advocacy of the Year was a very high honour and reflective of the work of all involved in our charity.

Many thanks to all at CFDN, and I hope that our work will attract greater recognition, sponsorship and support in the forthcoming years

Keith

Keith Fernett MBE
Chair of the Board & Trustee

A Message from the CEO



This year has been one of real, tangible progress for the CFDN, progress that is demonstrated through the continued increase in our membership but also the activities and services provided to our members.

Nowhere is that more evident than in the growth in our community. Membership has seen a marked increase up 11% during the year and 22% since our last annual report, with more events and activities happening across our groups than at any time in the charity's recent history. Alongside growth, we have built the systems and processes that let us see our charity clearly: membership, advocacy casework, finances, risk and incidents all now live at our fingertips, letting trustees, staff and volunteers make quicker, informed decisions.

Further to the work of our groups is our advocacy services. What began as a new offering has become genuinely embedded in the life of the charity, supporting some of our most vulnerable members through the moments that matter most: benefits claims, care reviews, and meetings where families previously felt alone facing impossible systems. Watching a member whose social work review had been delayed for over two years have it completed within weeks of our advocate's involvement, and then start a job at a local hospital is exactly why this charity exists. It is no surprise to me that our charity and the work of our advocacy service have been recognised externally, with the Prestige Award for Disability Advocacy NPO of the Year 2026/27.

Further recognition we received this year also lifted our profile beyond our community. Being chosen as one of the Redbridge Mayor's charities of the year was phenomenal. The fundraising it enabled and, just as importantly, the profile it gave us across the borough have opened doors we could not have created alone. My thanks go to the Mayor, and to every volunteer and supporter who made the most of that opportunity.

Of course, the year has not been without its challenges. Volunteer recruitment remains difficult, the financial landscape for small charities is tight, and the capacity of our existing volunteers is finite.

We had hoped, by this point in our strategy, to be expanding into new areas but, without the volunteer base to sustain new groups, we made the honest decision that we cannot yet expand in that way. The encouraging news is that within our existing groups, member numbers continue to rise markedly and our dedicated volunteers stay, so our focus for Year Three is to grow the support around the members we already serve.

With that in mind, I am pleased to say, through the tremendous support of our volunteers, staff and trustees, we have made huge progress across our four strategic areas. I want to recognise the Board of Trustees' willingness to shift priorities as the year unfolded and new priorities emerged: placing some objectives on hold and bringing others to the forefront. One of the clearest examples is our approach to simplifying administration and increasing our fundraising focus.

Last year the board moved us toward a focus on community fundraising, but for that we needed to build the infrastructure, making tools available to volunteers, centralising banking and having better financial controls and oversight. Community fundraising remains a challenge across the whole sector, but creating that infrastructure was essential, and it means every pound raised by our groups now works harder.

Financially, fundraising income has increased considerably alongside increased expenditure, which is a direct reflection of the growth in activities, events and support we are delivering. We are a charity that is growing its reach while adapting to the challenges we and our members experience.

I am immensely proud of our volunteers, staff, trustees and members. The CFDN enters the final year of this strategic plan as a more capable, more visible and more confident charity preparing for many years to come, and I look forward to what we will continue to achieve together.

Daniel

Daniel Ruscoe
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

About the charity

This wonderful charity has been in existence since 1962. Our mission is simple but important: to serve people with disabilities and their families from all faiths and none by creating a supportive community and promoting opportunity through our network and events.

Our charity is run by volunteers and led by our trustees and CEO, who are dedicated to keeping our community strong and vibrant. From swimming events at Leyton Lagoon to family discos, bi-weekly pub group for adults, Wednesday Club (Ilford), Saturday Centre (Havering), theatre trips, family BBQs, seaside coach trips, adventure days at Lambourne End Centre for Outdoor Learning and much more, we offer a diverse range of events to suit everyone's interests.

At the CFDN, we believe everyone deserves to feel included and part of a supportive community while promoting what's possible. We are committed to promoting the long legacy built over 60+ years by many of the amazing volunteers and members, past and present.

Our charity is committed to making a positive difference in the lives of those we serve, and we rely on our amazing volunteers to help us achieve our mission.

In summary, what we do at the CFDN...

Promote Independence, Inclusivity & Friendship

Create Support Networks to Share Experiences

Support Communities and Advocate People's Needs

CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES
Registered Charity No: 263075

Registered with
FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR

CFDN
Empowering Disability, Supporting All

Our Mission

To provide for the social, material and spiritual needs of individuals with disabilities and their families of all faiths and none across Essex and East London. To achieve this, we facilitate events, activities and networks whilst advocating and educating on the needs of our members.

Our Values

C — Compassionate Community
Creating a safe, supportive environment where empathy and understanding guide interactions and socialisation, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual support amongst members, families, volunteers and staff.

F — Fostering Inclusivity
Promoting equal participation, diversity and representation for individuals with disabilities, ensuring that all voices are heard and valued.

D — Developing Knowledge
Advocating for and raising awareness of the needs of people with disabilities and their families whilst providing education, resources, and support networks through developing our knowledge and shared learning.

N — Nurturing Opportunity
Working together to provide environments to enable individuals with disabilities to reach their full potential, fostering a culture of empowerment, opportunity and independence.

Strategy Focus Areas

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The CFDN's 2024–2028 Strategic Plan is built around four core focus areas that underpin our mission to empower individuals with disabilities and support their families across East London and Essex. Each area represents a pillar of growth, sustainability, and impact, ensuring that the charity remains strong, inclusive, and future-ready. Together, they provide a clear roadmap for how we will strengthen our people, enhance our financial resilience, expand our community reach, and advocate more effectively for those we serve.



1. Volunteers & Human Resources

Actively increase our support numbers and recruit a diverse pool of volunteers and staff to support the charity's activities, focusing on succession planning. This will require a strategy for forward-thinking 'talent management' in order to serve our membership for years to come.



2. Fundraising & Financial Stability

Review, monitor and innovate our income and expenditure through budgeting, coherent reporting, diversifying income streams and the use of technology whilst making it easier for people to donate, raise funds and support our charity through a variety of income streams.



3. Network & Community Focused

Increase the charity's membership numbers to provide more support to people with disabilities, with a strong focus on supporting families across the boroughs we serve, and create a more diverse variety of activities. In turn, this will build upon our support network and relationships with like-minded organisations, deliver what's asked for, raise awareness of our charitable activities and integrate more within the community.



4. Advocacy & Responding to Changing Societal Needs

Take a more direct approach in advocating for the needs of our members at the individual, local and national levels, whilst proactively adapting charity services and support to address shifting societal challenges, rising health needs, and neurodivergent diagnoses, and maintain a key focus on safeguarding our members, carers and families

Governance & Administration

Constitution

The charity is constituted through a Trust Deed adopted on the 12th day of October 1976 as amended in October 1998, 5th October 2003, 10th October 2010, 17th July 2023, 3rd Nov 2023 and 15th August 2025 (hereinafter referred to as “the Trust Deed”) and is registered with the Charities Commission in England and Wales under charity number 263075.

Trustees

During the period of April 2025 to March 2026, there was no retirement and no appointments;

Trustee Name	Office / Appointment
Ellen Teresa McHale	Trustee
Margaret Todd	Trustee and Secretary of Board
Chuka Agbasiere	Trustee
Keith Fernett MBE	Trustee and Chair of Board

Executive Officers

Name	Office / Appointment
Daniel Ruscoe	Chief Executive Officer

Patrons

Name	Office / Appointment
Bishop Alan Thomas	Patron (Retiring Dec 2026)

Advisors

Name	Office / Appointment
Zeeshan Munawar (Ames Ltd)	Accountant & External Auditor

Banks and Investments

HSBC UK Bank Plc	Barclays Bank
Natwest Markets Plc	CCLA Investment Management
Close Brothers Group Plc - Investment	

Trustees Annual Report YE 2026

Summary of Main Activities and Benefits

The CFDN continues to grow as a strong, inclusive charity dedicated to supporting people with disabilities and their carers of all faiths and none across Essex and East London. Our mission “to promote the social, material, psychological and spiritual wellbeing of those we support” remains at the heart of everything we do.

This year has been one of transformation and consolidation: the second year of our 2024–2028 Strategic Plan. With modern governance and digital foundations now firmly in place, 2025–26 was the year the charity simplified how it works, adopting a new delivery model that concentrates decision-making with trustees while empowering local volunteer leadership in every community, while continuing to grow our membership, deepen our advocacy service, and secure civic recognition of our work.

Membership grew from 445 to approximately 490 registered members by 31 March 2026 (+11%), rising further to 545 by September 2026 (+22% on the position reported at the last annual report), including a 22% increase in members identifying as disabled. The advocacy service opened 23 new cases during the year, resolving 20 by year end, and completed a planned transition of advocates without interruption to members. CFDN was proud to be selected as one of the Redbridge Mayor's charities of the year for 2025 to 2026, and our volunteers and long-serving members received civic honours.

The year was also marked by change in our leadership: we said farewell to Canon Bob Hamill on his retirement as Chaplain, celebrated long-serving volunteer Ann Kyndt's 90th birthday, and were delighted that she was subsequently awarded the Redbridge Lifetime Achievement Citizens Award in recognition of her decades of service.

Group Activities and Achievements

Our groups continue to form the heart of the CFDN. Each group's leadership team and volunteers have worked hard throughout the year to ensure our members feel part of a supportive and vibrant community. Their commitment is what sustains our charity's mission and demonstrates the strength of our Fellowship in action.

Across our groups; Wanstead & Woodford, Ilford and Havering, more events and activities were delivered this year than at any time in the charity's recent history: 23 events were listed and bookable through our website, attracting 390 bookings, up from 18 events and 284 bookings the previous year. Alongside the headline events, it is the weekly rhythm of the CFDN that makes the difference: the Saturday Centre and Wednesday Club opening every week, the biweekly pub group, coffee mornings, theatre and seaside trips, family BBQs, quiz and bingo nights, and parish Masses that anchor us in our local communities. Between gatherings, our WhatsApp groups have thrived, keeping members connected, informed and included every day.

As important as the activity is the care that surrounds it. Group welfare leads made hospital visits, sent cards at difficult times, kept in contact with members moving into residential care, and supported families through bereavement. During the year we were saddened by the passing of long-standing members and friends, and we remember with gratitude the joy they brought to our groups.

As always, we extend our heartfelt thanks to every volunteer, committee member and supporter who gives their time and care so generously. Their work is as vital as ever, and this year, for the first time, every volunteer's role, training and compliance is tracked digitally, giving trustees live assurance that every activity is safely and properly supported.

From October 2025, following the adoption of the new delivery model, each group is led by a Group Leadership Team, which works alongside the CEO and trustees to deliver safe, high-quality local activity with centralised financial oversight. The change was made deliberately: it concentrates decisions and accountability with trustees, brings every pound raised by our groups into a single, transparent financial framework, and most importantly, frees local volunteers to focus on what they do best, caring for members and building community. The transition could not have happened without the goodwill and positive spirit of our group committees, who embraced the change and helped shape it.

Wanstead & Woodford Group

The Wanstead & Woodford Group, led by Lead Nicole Squires and her committee, has enjoyed a full and varied year.

• In June 2025 the group hosted a members' coffee morning attended by our local MP, the Rt Hon. Sir Iain Duncan Smith, who heard first-hand from members and families about the challenges faced by disabled people and offered to take the issues raised to local councillors and parliament.

• Quiz and bingo nights continued to raise vital funds, with the March 2026 quiz alone generating £1,403 in income and over £1,090 profit, and a fundraising calendar that included raffles, collections and seasonal events.

• The group's fortnightly pub group for adult members went from strength to strength with around 20 regular people attending each week and supported by around 10-12 regular volunteers.

• Members celebrated the 90th birthday of long-standing volunteer Ann Kyndt with a special Mass, and the group marked the retirement of Canon Bob Hamill as Chaplain with affection and gratitude for his many years of pastoral care.

• The group successfully completed the transition to the new Group Leadership Team model and centralised finances, with the committee noting improved transparency and simpler oversight.

• With the support of former Mayor Beverley Brewer, the group's relationship with the Mayor's charity programme has opened up new opportunities, with plans being developed for a seaside or theatre coach trip funded from the Mayor's charity distribution.

Havering Group

The Havering Group, led by Chair Louis Vella and a dedicated committee, has once again demonstrated the warmth and strength of its community spirit, nowhere more so than at its Saturday Centre.

- The Saturday Centre in Romford remained the cornerstone of the group's work, opening every single week, including throughout the summer, and consistently well attended. It offers members a safe, welcoming environment to socialise, play games and enjoy creative activities, and the sense of camaraderie among members and volunteers remains as strong as ever.
- Seasonal celebrations brought the community together, from an Easter celebration at the Saturday Centre in April 2025 to a small Christmas celebration at the final session before Christmas, where every member received a gift box to take home.
- The group's Celebration Mass for Canon Bob Hamill, held in June 2025 and followed by fish and chips in the parish hall, was a great success and a fitting tribute to his years of pastoral care for members.

- The Spring Party in March 2026 was well attended and a great success.
- The group honoured its late friend Mort O'Sullivan, with summer plans including a party or picnic in Harrow Lodge Park held in his memory, a reminder of how deeply members are woven into the life of the group.
- The group also welcomed the CFDN's Community Advocate to the Saturday Centre during the year, a sign of the advocacy service embedding itself in the daily life of our groups, meeting members where they already are.
- Pastoral care and welfare remained at the heart of the group's work, with visits and cards for members in hospital, support for members moving into residential care, keeping in contact wherever they move, and bereavement support for families. We were saddened by the passing of long-standing member Margaret Keating, whose funeral was held in January 2026.
- Following the group's AGM in July 2025, formal committee meetings were paused until January 2026, but the Saturday Centre and member activity never stopped. The committee returned with renewed energy in January 2026, planning a busy year ahead: a theatre trip to the Queen's Theatre in June 2026, a Southend day trip in September, a Christmas celebration of Mass followed by fish and chips, and as a milestone for the whole charity to look forward to, the group's 60th anniversary in 2027, to be celebrated with all CFDN groups.
- The group embraced the charity-wide changes with a positive spirit, working with the CEO on the centralisation of the Havering account and representing the group at the Delivery Forum.

Ilford Group

The Ilford Group, led by Teresa McHale and supported by its leadership team and Wednesday Club volunteers, has had another busy and active year, with a strong focus on friendship, social activity and making sure members with different support needs can continue to take part.

- The Wednesday Club remained at the heart of the group, offering regular themed evenings, film nights, music, art activities and social events. Valentine, Easter and Christmas celebrations were all well received and helped maintain a strong sense of community throughout the year, with between 30 to 40 members attending each activity.
- Trips and outings continued to be a major part of the programme, including theatre visits, the annual Butlins holiday, a summer BBQ and a day trip to Clacton for those unable to attend the Butlins holiday.
- The group made a particular effort to include members who were unable to attend residential holidays because of health, disability or care needs. Smaller day outings, including a beach-hut trip, proved successful and helped ensure more members could enjoy time away with friends and volunteers.
- Advocacy became more embedded within the group during the year, with members further engaging in the charity’s advocacy service and support offered to individuals experiencing difficulties that may not previously have come to the attention of volunteers.
- The committee continued to strengthen the planning and compliance arrangements around larger activities, including volunteer checks, risk assessments, and support planning for the Butlins holiday.
- The group also continued to adapt to wider CFDN changes, including new membership arrangements, banking and financial processes, and the closer integration of Wednesday Club into the wider Ilford Group and charity structure through the hard work of volunteers.
- Looking ahead, the leadership team continue to explore new activities, recruit additional volunteers, improve communication with members and ensure that members with increasing or more complex support needs remain included in the life of the group.















Some Event Highlights













Advocacy

Our advocacy service, which provides free, independent support to disabled members and their carers navigating health, social care and welfare systems, completed its second full year and became a core gateway into the charity's wider community.

The service opened 23 new cases during 2025–26, closing 20 by year end (an 87% resolution rate), with a further five cases opened since April 2026. Referrals came most often from families (10), followed by self-referrals (8), CFDN volunteers and staff (4) and partner charities (1). Five cases involved formal mental capacity considerations, reflecting the complexity of the needs of those we support.

The year included a planned transition of advocates after saying farewell to Ismat in November 2025. We record our gratitude to Ismat, who further shaped the service from its launch and established new trusted relationships with members and families on which the service is built. Our new advocate, Imran, has continued the services development and support, introducing structured caseload management and new referral routes to statutory advocacy services where a member's needs are better met there. The CEO oversees the service and is deliberately not involved in individual casework; the advocate reports key risks and issues through the CEO to trustees, and the caseload is continuously monitored.

Whilst we celebrate the success of the service, this comes with recognition for those who have had to navigate complex systems, not receive their right to statutory assessments and support, wait years for basic carers' assessments, not receive the financial support they are entitled to and not have their voices heard in a way that meets their needs.

It is recognised that we have seen some of the most complex cases in the most recent year, and the capacity and boundaries of the service are very clear. We recognise the delay or lack of trust in statutory advocacy services across some of our boroughs and will continue to advocate for our members where we are able to do so whilst holding the statutory services to account.

Illustrative outcomes from the year (all identities protected):

- A member facing significant language barriers was supported to understand her entitlements and successfully apply for Personal Independence Payment, giving her new financial security and confidence accessing services.
- A member's family was supported through a Continuing Healthcare review with our advocate attending meetings alongside them, explaining their rights, and ensuring his health and care needs were fully presented and considered.
- A young member whose social work review had been delayed for over two years saw it completed within weeks of our advocate's involvement, followed by a carer's assessment, and this year, he started a job at a local hospital.
- Building on this, a new Parent and Carer Coffee Morning has been developed, with a bi-monthly format open to members and families across all groups, to reach families earlier, before crises arise.
- Advocacy at the local MP level, coordinating an open forum for parents and carers to raise their challenges and concerns with local MPs and health and social care commissioners.
- Supported a member who became homeless into emergency accommodation and supported the referral and recognition of mental health support and coordination.
- Built relationships with other local charities and referral bodies, including Citizens Advice, CVS, Vision Redbridge, Inclusion Hub, Lifeline Projects and LBBD Family Connectors.

Structure, Governance and Management
The CFDN remains constituted under a Charitable Trust Deed, originally adopted in 1976 and most recently amended in August 2025, and is registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales under charity number 263075.

During the period the charity completed a significant governance simplification. From October 2025, group sub-committees became Group Leadership Teams, and the former Executive Committee became a Delivery Forum, a meeting represented across the groups without governance power. Larger decisions are now taken by trustees centrally, and group finances were centralised into a single framework, with fundraising income received into one pot and only earmarked donations ring-fenced for a specific group. The change removed the need for separate group AGMs while preserving and strengthening local volunteer leadership in every community. The board believes this model delivers stronger financial control, clearer accountability and better safeguarding oversight, while keeping each group rooted in its local community and parish.

The charity's digital transformation matured: the SmartSuite platform now underpins membership records, advocacy casework, the live risk register, incident reporting and bookkeeping, giving trustees real-time oversight of the charity for the first time.

Trustee recruitment, induction and training follow Charity Commission guidance, and the board continued its programme of policy review, with a comprehensive review of all policy and procedure documents undertaken.

Volunteer recruitment, DBS checks, safeguarding training and compliance continued to be tracked digitally, with volunteer roles centred on member support preserved, and new fundraising and communications roles developed to broaden the charity's capacity.

Financial Management
The charity remains financially stable. Total income for the year was £81,373 (including investment income of £36,028), against total expenditure of £136,873, giving a planned deficit of £64,790 consistent with the charity's deliberate reinvestment in advocacy, staffing and systems during Year Two of the strategic plan.

Total funds carried forward at year end were £646,604, held within Close Brothers and CCLA investments, generating stable returns above sector averages, alongside funds within the HSBC operating accounts. Trustees have designated £400,000 as a core-strengthening and development fund to safeguard the charity's long-term sustainability and support planned strategic growth. This is reflected as a designated fund in the final accounts.

No trustee remuneration was paid during the period. The trustees are grateful to the accountant for preparing the draft accounts, which are being finalised following trustees' review.

Income Category	Income (£)
Investment	36,028
Donations & Legacies	17,624
Activities & Other	27,720
Total Income	**81,373**

Expenditure Category	Expenditure (£)
Charitable Activities	(49,933)
Matterial / Operating	(80,889)
Other / Raising Funds	(6,051)
Total Expenditure	**(136,873)**

No trustee remuneration or expenses were paid during the period, and there were no related-party transactions. The Trustees are satisfied that CFDN's finances remain sound, transparent, and compliant with the Charities Act 2011, positioning the organisation well to deliver its strategic objectives and realise the long-term benefits of its investment in people, systems, and sustainability.

Despite operating at a controlled deficit, this year's accounts demonstrate a period of strategic investment and growth, aligning closely with the approved annual budget and long-term financial objectives.

Our pence in the pound representation of spend has improved over the last 12 months, representing alignment with industry expectations. We continue to work on improving our charitable proportion whilst improving our charity's infrastructure from investments, prioritising public donations for charitable activities.

For every £1 spent during the year, 66p supported charitable activities, services and events, 30p supported administration and organisational overheads, and 4p was spent on raising funds. It's important to note that public donations are directed straight to frontline charity services, while administrative and governance overheads are supported by designated reserves and investment income.

Fundraising and Future Income Development

Fundraising remained a key strategic priority during 2025–26. The accounts reflect a year in which CFDN invested in developing its fundraising capacity, including the introduction of an employed fundraising lead. Following the early conclusion of that appointment during probation, the Board decided to pause further investment in the role while it reviewed the most effective and sustainable model for generating future income. Rather than immediately replacing the post, Trustees considered it important to assess the return expected from a dedicated fundraising salary and ensure that future investment is matched by clear outcomes, measurable income generation and long-term value for the charity.

This does not represent a reduction in CFDN's commitment to fundraising. Instead, the charity is broadening its approach and returning greater emphasis to the community relationships on which CFDN was originally built. During the year, work began to strengthen links with churches, schools, local businesses, community organisations and supporters, alongside developing more accessible fundraising resources and opportunities.

A key part of this direction is the launch of our Community Champions approach, seeking volunteers from within our communities who can help share the work of CFDN, build local relationships, identify opportunities and support fundraising in ways that suit their skills and connections. This sits alongside continued work on grants, partnerships, sponsored challenges, digital giving and other income streams.

The Board remains committed to future-proofing the charity's activities by diversifying income and reducing reliance on any single source of funding. In an increasingly competitive fundraising environment, CFDN will continue to test, review and adapt its approach so that investment in fundraising directly supports the sustainability and growth of services for disabled people and their families.

Conclusion

The CFDN closes 2025–26 as a stronger, more connected and increasingly resilient charity. Year Two of the 2024–2027 Strategic Plan has seen significant progress in strengthening governance, financial oversight and operational systems, creating clearer accountability from the Board of Trustees through the CEO to Group Leadership Teams. The move towards a single financial framework and more consistent digital systems has improved oversight and efficiency, while our Community Disability Advocacy Service has become an increasingly important route into wider support, membership and community involvement. Alongside these organisational developments, the charity has also delivered a substantial programme of activities, events and support across Essex and East London.

This progress has been achieved against a challenging backdrop. The needs of disabled people, families and carers are becoming increasingly complex at a time when statutory and community services remain under significant pressure. Demand for advocacy, practical support and opportunities for social connection continues to grow. At the same time, recruiting and retaining volunteers is becoming more difficult, with people often having less time available to commit regularly. Although CFDN has maintained a strong volunteer base, future sustainability will depend on continuing to adapt how we recruit, support and deploy volunteers and on finding new ways for people to contribute that reflect changing lifestyles and expectations.

The fundraising environment is similarly challenging. Competition for grants and charitable income remains high, while the cost of delivering accessible activities and services continues to increase. The charity cannot rely solely on traditional fundraising methods or historic ways of working. Building stronger partnerships, diversifying income, developing community fundraising, making better use of technology and demonstrating clearly the impact of our work will remain essential if CFDN is to protect and grow its services.

The year has nevertheless demonstrated the strength of the community around CFDN. Relationships developed through the Mayor's civic programme, local MPs, local authorities, partner organisations, donors, funders and the families we serve have increased the charity's visibility and created new opportunities for collaboration. Membership is at its highest level in the charity's recent history, reflecting both increased reach and a growing need for the support and community that CFDN provides.

As we enter year three of the strategic plan, the challenge is therefore not simply to continue what we are doing but to continue evolving and developing the ongoing progress. To achieve this, the board has agreed to extend our strategic plan for a further year into 2028 with an expansion to our fourth strategic aim in responding to changing societal needs.

We must protect the personal, community-led approach that has defined CFDN for more than sixty years while ensuring that our structure, workforce, funding and services remain sustainable in a changing environment.

With stronger governance, improved financial management, committed volunteers and a growing network of members and partners, the Trustees believe CFDN is well placed to meet that challenge and continue its mission of Empowering Disability, Supporting All.

This Trustees' Annual Report for the financial year 2025–26 was approved by the Board of Trustees on 25th September 2026. Signed on behalf of the Board by Keith Fernett MBE, Chair of Trustees.



Summary of Key Achievements

CFDN
Empowering Disability, Supporting All



Membership up 11% to 490 by year end (445 in 2025) and 545 by September 2026 +22% since the last annual report.

Disabled members up 22% from 169 to 206.

Record year for events and increase in website engagement: 23 events and 390 website bookings, up from 18 and 284.

Volunteer base has grown from 55 → 75, with compliance up to 93% from 18% since the start of the strategy.

Advocacy: 23 new cases opened with an increase seen in complexity. 20 cases resolved (87%) during this period.

Named Disability Advocacy NPO of the Year 2026/27 by Prestige Awards



Redbridge Mayor's Charity of the Year (Mayor Beverley Brewer) with **£36,000 raised**, shared between three charities and distributed May 2026.

Ann Kyndt, a volunteer of 40+ years service awarded the Redbridge Lifetime Achievement Citizens Award and celebrated her 90th birthday.

Our local **MPs and commissioners attended events and a members' coffee morning**, taking members' concerns to council and parliament.

Outreach network of 60+ organisations, churches and groups across Redbridge, Havering and Waltham Forest.



New delivery model adopted: Group Leadership Teams, centralised finances, stronger trustee oversight.

Digital investment and transformation, including AI in supporting the functions of membership, casework, risk, incidents and bookkeeping, allowing for data-driven decisions.

Income up by nearly 50% on the prior year and a demonstrated increase in funding charitable activities across the whole charity.

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What Charitable Donations Enable



Building Independence, Community, and Support

Our committed donors and fundraisers play a crucial role in enriching the lives of individuals with disabilities. Every effort they make and every penny they raise directly contributes to a range of activities and support services that promote a sense of community, independence and a support network for our members and their families.

The money raised helps to organise and sustain our key events that are vital for disabled people. These include:

- **Summer Club:** A space for learning new skills, engaging in activities at a local adventure centre, and promoting self-reliance in a fun, supportive environment.
- **Saturday Centre for Adults:** Offering social interaction and developmental activities tailored to adult members, enhancing their independence and confidence.
- **Bi-weekly Pub Group for Over 18s:** A relaxed, inclusive setting for socialising, fostering a sense of belonging and community among our adult members.

Fostering Community and Making Memories

Charitable contributions make it possible for us to host events that bring people together, creating lasting memories and strong community relationships. These events include:



- **Theatre Trips and Discos:** Providing entertainment and cultural experiences, these outings are opportunities for members to enjoy the arts and socialise in a vibrant, inclusive atmosphere.
- **BBQs and Spiritual Masses:** Events that unite families and members in fellowship, nurturing a sense of community and shared experience.
- **Short Trips and Holidays: Offering** a change of scenery and a chance for adventure, these trips are essential for mental well-being and social bonding.
- **Advocacy Services:** Providing direct advocacy services and support to members in need, ensuring their voices are heard and needs represented.

Donations empower us to offer these activities, providing lifelines that promote independence, create a sense of belonging, and help us maintain a supportive community.

Contact Us

CFDN
Empowering Disability, Supporting All

To get in contact:

If you would like to find out more about our charity and its work or membership, please visit:



Website: www.cfdn.org.uk
Email: info@cfdn.org.uk

Local Group Support

We have several groups across Essex and East London, all of whom have a great deal of experience in supporting members, running events and signposting people to the right place. If you have any questions or need some support, please email us at info@cfdn.org.uk. Alternatively, contact the groups directly at:

Wanstead & Woodford: wwgroup@cfdn.org.uk
Ilford: ilfordgroup@cfdn.org.uk
Havering: haveringgroup@cfdn.org.uk

Or contact our Disability Advocate on:
Email: advocate@cfdn.org.uk
Mobile: 07935 699 868

THANK YOU!