

The logo for CF DN, with 'C', 'F', and 'D' in a larger font than 'N'. The letters are green with a dark green outline.

Empowering Disability, Supporting All



Empowering Disability

Supporting All



Case for Support

1 in 4 people live with a disability in the UK.
(DWP, FFS)

For thousands of disabled people and their families, the hardest part of the day isn't getting ready; it's stepping into a world that doesn't always guarantee belonging or inclusion.

That's why the CF DN exists: to ensure no disabled person or family has to face life alone.



Our Mission

The CFDN connects disabled people and their families to inclusive communities, friendships, and opportunities across East London and Essex. Through social groups, community events, peer networks, and advocacy support, we help people build confidence, independence, and meaningful relationships.



Who the CFDN Support

We support disabled children, young people, adults, and their families of all faiths and none across East London and Essex.

In summary, we...

- Promote Independence, Inclusivity & Friendship
- Create Support Networks to Share Experiences & Help Each Other
- Support our Communities and Advocate for Their Needs

The Problem: What Disabled People & Families Face

Across the UK, disabled people are still being excluded from everyday life, not by choice, but by the way society is designed.

The Reality:

In East London and Essex, we serve hundreds of disabled adults, children and families who are living through a silent crisis, and it's not medical, it's social! It's the **absence of connection, opportunity, and belonging.**

The Gap:

When formal schooling ends, the **“cliff edge”** hits hard, often after navigating **6+ years of complex and underfunded systems.** The support falls away, friendships disappear and services shrink. Families are **left navigating impossible systems** alone, like elderly parents in their 80s and 90s who still provide direct support to their disabled children.

The Feeling:

Too many people are spending day after day **staring at four walls** while their **families fight exhausting battles** for **basic dignity**, which are often lost due to pressures.

The Truth:

- National data shows that **50% of disabled adults feel lonely** “often or always”, compared with 21% of the general population (ONS).
- **80% of families struggle** to find inclusive activities, whilst **3 in 4 say social isolation is their biggest challenge**
- Many disabled adults report weeks passing without any social interaction outside their home

Loneliness and complex systems are the epidemic no one talks about! The CFDN exists to change that by creating inclusive communities and advocating for disabled people and their families.



About the Charity & Activities

This wonderful charity has been in existence for more than 60 years, building inclusive community spaces where **disabled people and their families can connect, grow, and belong.**

Our strength lies in our community-led approach, where members, volunteers, and families shape the programmes themselves. We are proudly independent, funded by supporters, community fundraising and charitable partners rather than government contracts. This creates trusted spaces where friendships grow, confidence builds, and people feel valued and part of the long-term mission.

From swimming events at Leyton Lagoon to family discos, bi-weekly pub group for adults, a weekly Saturday club for adults, 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.



Welcoming Community



Weekly Saturday Centre



Celebrating Occasions



Social Interaction & Friendship



Your Host
Dawn Rowley - CEO of the CFDN

Key Speaker
Rosalie New - Community Disability Advocate, CFDN

Contributor
Sara Challice - Author, Speaker & Coach

Contributor
Julia King - Chartered and Certified Financial Planner

Contributor
Lisa - Careers Practice Development Officer

Young Career
Ryan - Young Career with Experience

The Catholic Fellowship Disability Network

Transition Webinar

Presentation - 2025

Waiting to Start...



Carers Week Webinar

Presentation - 2024

Waiting to Start...

Siblings Support



Adventures with Family & Friends



Celebrating Each Others Achievements



Christmas Parties and Meals



Accessible Activities & Opportunities



Christmas Parties

Activities for All Ages



Raising Issues with Local MPs



Holidays



Pub Group with Friends

Our Impact

At year-end 2025 the CFDN achieved:

- **445 total members**, increasing by 36% year-on-year and our highest number in 6+ years,
- More than **120 inclusive community events** created safe spaces where disabled people built friendships, confidence and independence.
- **Weekly and bi-weekly programmes delivered** across three boroughs of Ilford, Havering, and Wanstead & Woodford.
- Our **Community Advocate visited more than 45 families** with an 80% case resolution rate and an 89% satisfaction rate.
- **70p in every £1** was spent directly on charitable activities.
- **Parents express trust and gratitude** in the charity, and members gained **independence and confidence** through recurring programmes.
- Raised key issues on disability benefits and rights at a ministerial and MP level, **holding seminars and public meetings** with key leaders and families.
- Increased our dedicated team of **49 active volunteers** with 13 new recruits
- Worked closely with with other local charitable organisations, including One Place East, EPT, Redbridge Council, Learning Disability Partnership Board, Lambourne End Centre, Redbridge Foodbank and more.



Meet Harry

“Finding His Place in the World”

“ Rosie came to our house; she was informative, and after she contacted our social worker, we had meetings arranged very quickly, which was great! ”

At 23, Harry is someone who lights up a room the moment he walks in. He’s grown up as part of the CFDN community, attending discos, parties and gatherings with his family since he was a child. What began as a place where he came with his family has slowly become the space he feels confident to experience himself.

For years, though, life wasn’t always easy. As Harry transitioned into adulthood, the support that once surrounded the family disappeared. Emails went unanswered. Promises of reviews and assessments were delayed again and again. Harry went two years without the annual review he needed. His mum felt invisible and unheard, trying to navigate a system that didn’t seem to work or listen to increasing need.

It was at this point that they reached out to CFDN’s Advocacy Service.

Working alongside Harry and his mum, our advocate stepped in, holding the local authority to account, ensuring communication was clear, and making sure their voices and needs were finally heard. Within weeks, the social worker review that had been delayed for over 2 years was completed, and a carer’s assessment followed. For the first time in a long time, the family felt supported and listened to.

As Harry’s confidence grew at home, it grew in our community too. He began arriving at discos and social events independently, walking through the doors with the quiet assurance of someone who knows he belongs. Friendships deepened, and his confidence expanded. He no longer needed anyone to go in with him; he chose it for himself.

And this year, something wonderful happened: Harry started a job at a local hospital. A step toward independence that fills his family, and everyone at CFDN, with enormous pride.





Meet Lydia



“Stepping Into Confidence, One Dance at a Time”

Lydia is 23, and anyone who’s met her will tell you the same thing first, her smile arrives before she does. She lives with Down syndrome and has always had a bright, creative spirit, especially when it comes to dance. But finding her place socially hasn’t always been easy.

For much of her time in college, Lydia felt isolated. Navigating friendships was confusing, and the unspoken rules of social interaction often left her feeling unsure or left out. Her world stayed small, and despite her mum’s reassuring presence, a long-standing CFDN volunteer, both of them wished for a space where Lydia could grow, connect and simply be herself.

Everything began to change when Lydia joined CFDN’s biweekly pub group.

Surrounded by peers, volunteers and a warm, familiar community, she found a place where socialising felt natural and fun. Week by week, she practised being in public spaces, chatting, laughing, and taking small steps towards independence. The friendships she built there became real anchors, people her own age who understood her, celebrated her, and looked forward to seeing her.

The group also gave her mum something precious: the chance to connect with other parents who understood the journey, too. They shared advice, shared worries, and shared pride, serving as a reminder that no family should navigate this journey alone.

With new confidence came new opportunities. Lydia now travels independently on public transport, volunteers for another charity, and works in a local café, roles she takes on with pride and a growing sense of purpose. She attends many CFDN events, embracing each one with openness and joy.

And this year, she met one of her biggest dreams with courage and excitement:

Lydia performed on stage at the annual Disability Festival, dancing her heart out in front of a cheering crowd.

The Challenge We Face

The Need Keeps Growing, and Social Care is Shrinking, but Funding is Harder Than Ever for Charities.

Membership grew 36%, demand for groups is rising, and families increasingly rely on CFDN as their primary source of community, advocacy and support. Yet the cost of delivering inclusive spaces, safeguarding, transport, hall hire, specialist support, and volunteer infrastructure continues to rise.

We must generate significantly more fundraising income to keep pace with the real needs of disabled people and their families, while ensuring no one is turned away.

Without sustainable corporate partnership, the vital connections we provide risk becoming overstretched at the moment they're needed most.

By 2027 we aim to be supporting over 1000 members, providing over 200 events and opening 2 additional support groups in communities such as Romford, Barking and Dagenham to meet the growing demand. To achieve this, we need to generate over £150,000 per year.

Your support could help:

- **£500** – fund an inclusive and safe disco for members and their siblings where difference is welcomed
- **£1,500** – fund a coach for 30 disabled members for an annual inclusive holiday to Butlins
- **£5,000** – launch a new community support group or cover a group's venue hire for 12 months
- **£25,000** – fund our advocacy service for 12 months

How You Can Help

When you support our projects, you're not funding an event; you're funding

A young adult's first friend and social circle.

A family's first weekend away, free from loneliness and the confines of four walls.

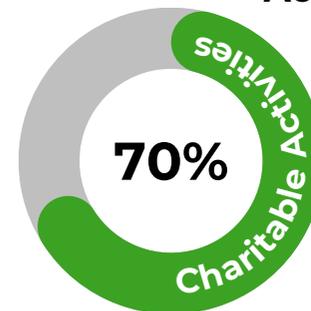
A parent's first moment of breathing room in a safe space with like-minded parents.

An advocate to support a desperate elderly mother out of a 2-year waiting list to support their disabled son.

You can support us by;

- Champion equality and inclusion through a corporate partnership
- Make the CFDN a chosen charity of your organisation
- Sponsor a dedicated programme in your area
- Fund a new community group across the region
- Help fund our Advocacy Service
- Invest in our sustainability and growth
- Mobilise your employees through fundraising
- Dedicate time for your employees to volunteer for us on special events

Spend on Charitable Activities, Services & Events



70p in every **£1**