



2025

Impact report

Making sure nobody is
left out of learning



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Introduction

An introduction from our Chief Executive, Jane Rigbye

The year has been one of transition. Early in the year we said goodbye to our previous Chief Executive after almost five transformative years at the helm. The organisation benefited from excellent stewardship by the interim leadership team, who ensured stability and continuity during a period of change.

When I arrived it quickly became clear that our team is committed, capable, and driven by a shared purpose: delivering the very best for our learners. Despite political change, economic uncertainty, and the often-challenging reality of working in prisons, our commitment to supporting people with literacy and numeracy needs has never wavered. Our mission is too important, and the people we serve too deserving, for us to do anything but move forward with clarity, purpose, and compassion.

That sense of mission runs deep across Shannon Trust and is evident in everything we do. I have been struck by the extraordinary contribution of our mentors. We could not do what we do without them. They offer so much more than support to learn to read or use numbers; they provide hope, encouragement, and a sense of possibility.

This year, we have also celebrated the vital role of volunteers. I've had the pleasure of observing staff and volunteers working together to develop and share resources. This has been a great reminder that collaboration is at the heart of Shannon Trust's success.

Beyond the prison gates, we have taken bold steps forward. We secured funding to pilot an innovative approach to mentoring in the community, continued to develop our digital offerings, and we have also begun reflecting on the future direction of Shannon Trust.

We are now entering an exciting new phase. A new strategy will launch in 2026, supported by new trustees who joined our Board in December, and we are in the process of actively searching for our next Chair of Trustees. We are committed to co-production and consultation as we develop our new strategy together. This will shape the future of Shannon Trust and ensure we remain responsive to the needs of those we serve.



"I'm incredibly proud to present this impact report, highlighting Shannon Trust's leading role in supporting people with low-level literacy and numeracy skills in prison and through the gates.

Central to our success is a strong commitment to collaboration and partnership. I'm delighted with the progress we've made in understanding our impact. While our figures are impressive, reaching more learners than ever in 2025, they represent just one part of the transformative work we do.

I'm grateful to everyone who has helped us bring hope and opportunity to the many thousands we've supported this year."

We all extend our gratitude to Michael Wemms, whose term as Chair of Trustees ends in 2026. Under his outstanding leadership, Shannon Trust has grown from a small, largely volunteer-led team into the well-funded, impactful organisation it is today.

To our supporters, partners, staff, volunteers, mentors, and learners – thank you. You make our work possible, and your commitment, energy, and belief in the power of learning move us collectively forward, ensuring nobody is left out of learning.

Dr Jane Rigbye
Chief Executive

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Jane Rigbye". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Who we are

We believe in a future where everyone can experience the positive impact of learning.

Throughout 2025, we have been working towards this vision, supporting people in the criminal justice system and wider community to learn to read and improve their numeracy skills, so they can pursue wider opportunities and thrive in the future.



The individual

We are supportive and non-judgmental with our learners, mentors, volunteers and each other. By focusing on learners' unique and individual needs, we can grow skills and confidence so they can reach their full potential.



Inventiveness

We know reading can be the first step to transforming lives, yet we also recognise wider needs. Ambitious, energetic and creative, we take a learner-led approach to innovation to increase the breadth and impact of our work.



Collaboration

We can't achieve our vision alone, so we are resourceful and collaborative. By working with mentors, volunteers and partner organisations, we can ensure our programmes are widely accessible across the criminal justice system and communities.

Established for over 20 years, we support people who can read to teach those who can't, in prisons and communities.

It's only with your support that we can continue to work towards our vision.

Together, we can make sure nobody is left out of learning.



Our impact in 2025

11,380

learners engaged with one or both of our programmes



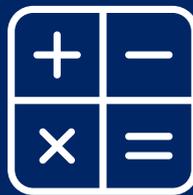
142,185

learning sessions were delivered in 2025



5,029

new learners joined our reading programme



1,880

new learners joined our numeracy programme



4,841

Turning Pages reading manuals were completed



69

new volunteers were recruited, joining a team of 132



2,833

Count Me In numeracy manuals were completed



1,980

new mentors were trained

Tom's learner story*

"Getting to know and trust my mentor enabled me to open up. With his guidance, he helped me to get the right help with regards to accessing therapy."

"Working with Shannon Trust has given me the confidence to tackle issues head on and if I get stuck, ask for help. As I'd never ask for help before. Getting to know and trust my mentor enabled me to open up about other personal issues and with his guidance, helped me to get the right help with regards to accessing therapy for PTSD and trauma. Which has made a real positive change to my life and helped me challenge my past demons. I wouldn't have done this without the help of Shannon Trust and so I'd like to extend my thanks to all concerned.

I have struggled with reading my whole life. I have engaged with education many times over the years but did not get the one-on-one help needed. I had given up on the system! Life became even harder to cope with day-to-day things such as bills, forms and applications. I now have the skills and a dedicated mentor who I work with every day. I am now working on Turning Pages 3 and my confidence is growing every day. Thank you for not giving up on me."

*Name has been changed.

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Our commitments

In this report you will read how, in 2025, we have continued to work towards the 3 key goals set out in our last organisational strategy.

1 Increase the number of people completing our reading programme in prisons

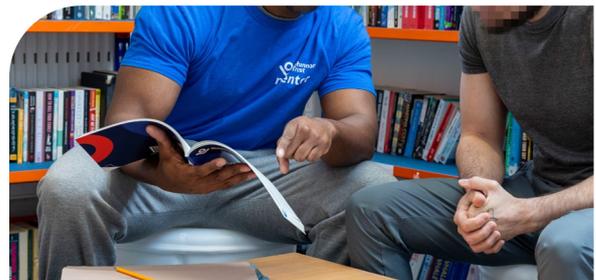
In 2022, we estimated that we were only reaching about 10% of people in prisons. We now estimate that we are reaching closer to 15% of people, which shows good progress, but we'd like to continue to increase the number of people we reach.

2 Grow availability of our programmes in the community

Most people in prison will be released, many in the near term, meaning learning is either interrupted or does not start. We want to build on our community pilots, and extend our offer so that prison leavers can continue or start our programmes, as well as supporting people in touch with the criminal justice system.

3 Test new ideas to address other basic skills gaps, scaling what works

Reading is foundational, but part of a bigger picture. We want to test new approaches to address other basic skills gaps, such as numeracy and digital literacy.



Working with Shannon Trust has changed my life completely. It has given me confidence in reading and maths. I have finished Entry Level 3 English and passed my exam. I like learning and working with mentors, and those I have worked with have really pushed me and opened my soul. I have also found a friend in another learner, and I hope in the future he gains confidence too. Thank you, Shannon Trust.

– Shannon Trust learner, HMP Ashfield

1.

Increase the number of people completing our reading programme in prisons

After building a strong and supportive cohort of prison facilitators in recent years, this year we recruited for additional prison-based staff to further improve the quality and impact of our programmes. We introduced reading support specialists and reading strategy coordinator roles, which help oversee the delivery of the prisons' reading strategies or provide specialist support to those who are not yet ready to work with a mentor. We currently have eight people working in these new positions in prisons, and the number will continue to grow into 2026 and beyond.

Shannon Trust has been awarded 57 contracts to deliver literacy and numeracy services in prisons this year – these are a mix of new and re-tendered contracts. Through the Literacy Innovation Fund, a pilot scheme funded by the Ministry of Justice aimed at reducing crime by transforming reading in prisons, we were able to continue our work within seven prisons. We have further tested evaluation methods to demonstrate the impact of our programmes.

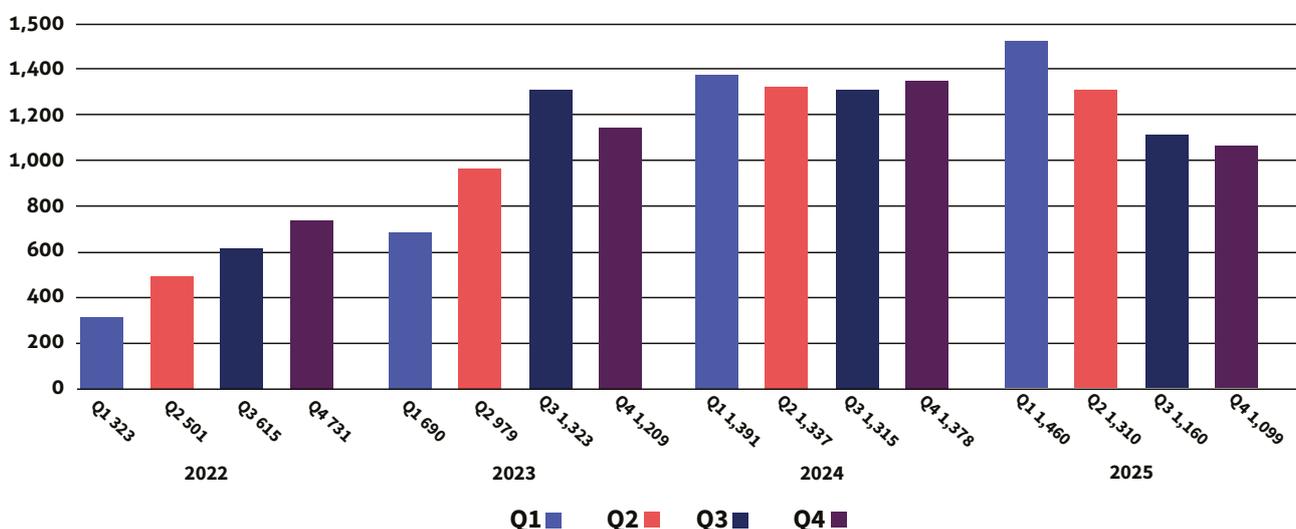
There have also been some exciting developments with our first prison library contract at HMP Ashfield, where we have our own librarian as well as a facilitator who oversees our programmes. The two work well together, and this year ran several successful events and workshops. These included our learners and mentors recording 'The Midnight Library', a group activity writing a poem for National Literacy Day, and hosting their first celebration event for learners and mentors.

HMP Ashfield is also the first prison in the country to trial the use of our online learning tool, Turning Pages Digital. Both learners and mentors have provided positive feedback, which is being used to help shape the tool for future prison use. This new initiative provides another way to encourage people in prison to learn independently, as well as building digital inclusion and employability skills – all of which ultimately reduce re-offending. Learners and peer mentors have already had great success using Turning Pages Digital and we aim to roll this work out in more prisons.

There have been other further advancements with Turning Pages Digital, and we are pleased to be working in partnership with Ingeus Creating Future Opportunities (CFO) Hubs across the West Midlands, East Midlands and the North East to provide literacy support to people outside of prison. We have been further developing the digital tool this year to enable us to deliver digital coaching for our peer mentor programmes both in and out of prisons.

We are really pleased to have reached 11,380 learners over the past year. A key focus this year has been on the quality of provision, particularly how well learners progress once starting with us. The number of new learners taking up our programmes has stabilised due to the focus on increasing the number of sessions or manual completions, and we hope to continue this trajectory next year and beyond.

New reading learners



2.

Grow availability of our programmes in the community

We recognise the importance of developing pathways to help learners and mentors continue working with Shannon Trust after they have been released from prison, which involves partnering with other services and organisations operating in the community.

Throughout 2025, we worked with several partners who have been using our Turning Pages Digital programme and we currently have over 250 active learners. Plans are also in place to advance and utilise our Count Me In Digital programme next year.

A focus over the past year has been setting up a quality assurance process to ensure that our digital programmes are continually performing to the highest standard. Our team are now holding monthly focus groups with staff and volunteers, where we look at one area of these tools that we can develop. We've identified a range of potential improvements in terms of how learners and coaches sign up to our programmes and the training that they can access, all of which will be actioned in 2026.

Throughout 2025, we worked closely with prisons across England, Wales and Northern Ireland to develop a pool of mentors who are interested in working with us after their release from custody. We currently have 37 mentor referrals.

We also have a small number of learner referrals through our post-release pathways project, who have been referred to other charities or agencies for reading support. This project also creates opportunities for our mentors to continue supporting learners in the community, after their own release.

As we look ahead to 2026, we'll continue to ensure that key information is shared in prisons and referrals are prioritised, so that we can support more learners and mentors to continue with Shannon Trust post-release. To further develop our community footprint, we plan to create a remote coaching platform. Through this tool, we will offer partner organisations the chance to refer service users to us for one-to-one support using our digital programmes. We are planning a pilot in 2026 and intend to recruit and train a team of online coaches to support this.

It's crucial that our work in the community is always be carried out in co-production with those with lived experience. This year, two of our former Shannon Trust mentors attended an event in London with Shannon Trust staff and volunteers to help shape resource development – a hugely beneficial exercise that helped keep our learner and mentor experiences at the heart of everything we do.



3.

Test new ideas to address other basic skills gaps, scaling what works

Data from the Ministry of Justice published in September 2025 shows that almost three-quarters of initial maths assessments and two-thirds of initial English assessments taken by people in prison result in an entry level score. This reaffirms the continued need for people in prison to receive support with both literacy and numeracy.

Since its launch in early 2024, we've seen over 2,500 new learners use our numeracy programme, Count Me In. In 2025 we rolled out the second edition of the Count Me In manuals, based on feedback from learners, mentors and our prison-based facilitators, which feature clearer instructions for mentors.

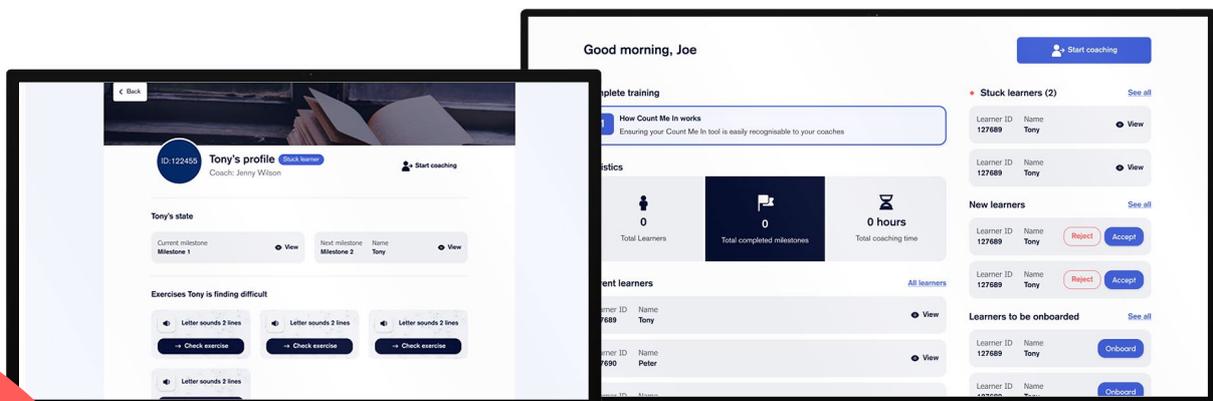
We have also updated both our Turning Pages and Count Me In manuals to incorporate the 'progress levels' system that was introduced as part of our monitoring and evaluation process in 2024. This system, which gives learners a clear way to track their personal progress as they work through our manuals, enables us to objectively measure the skills development of learners on both programmes.

Throughout 2025 we have prioritised the development and testing of a digital version of Count Me In, our numeracy programme. This has been supported by our digital partner, Yalla, and will be launched in 2026. Count Me In Digital will give learners an opportunity to work with a coach or on a self-study basis, incorporating all the topics covered in the manuals and using the power of technology to boost the interactive nature of the programme.



I'm finding using Turning Pages Digital easy. It makes me think in a more interactive way than with the books. I like the smiley faces and the trophies because they're motivating and make me want to keep learning. I don't mind the books, but I find it much easier using the [in cell technology]."

– A learner at HMP Ashfield using Turning Pages Digital.



Lucy's story*

An old man had a habit of early morning walks on the beach. One day after a storm, he saw a human figure in the distance moving like a dancer. As he came closer, he saw that it was a young woman and she was not dancing but was reaching down to the sand, picking up a starfish and very gently throwing them into the ocean.

"Young lady," he asked, "why are you throwing them into the ocean?"

"The sun is up, and the tide is going out, and if I do not throw them back they will die," said the young lady.

"But young lady, do you not realise that there are miles and miles of beach and starfish all along it? You cannot possibly make a difference," said the man.

The young woman listened politely, paused, and then bent down, picked up another starfish and threw it into the sea, past the breaking waves.

"It made a difference to that one," she said.

This is why I work with Shannon Trust.

— Shannon Trust mentor at HMP Eastwood Park.

 Shannon Trust
Nobody left out of learning

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*Name has been changed.

Quality assurance and technology

This year, we've combined the use of practical technology along with updated learner progression tools to help us reach more learners, and to monitor progress and support staff, volunteers, partners and mentors.



Efficiently tracking learner progress and outcomes

In 2025, we fully embedded our new progress level system, which significantly strengthened our ability to demonstrate the incremental skills development achieved by our learners. Previously, our evidence of skills progression was inferred from the number of programme manuals a learner completed. While this reflected sustained engagement and general growth, it did not provide concrete evidence of the specific skills learners were developing.

Each programme manual contains three progress checks, designed to help learners reflect on and practice the skills introduced in the preceding sections. By tracking learners' scores on these informal, quasi-assessment check-ins, we can measure their skills development, whilst allowing learners themselves to gain reassurance and recognition for their progress.

We are continuing to evaluate and strengthen our programme's alignment with universally recognised functional skills standards. This enables us to demonstrate that our peer-led, flexible learning model is as effective as more traditional education delivered by core prison education providers.

Another major improvement delivered this year was the rollout of a system for capturing non-accredited outcomes for learners. Previously, we only measured broader wellbeing improvements. In 2025, we expanded our outcomes framework to include practical, everyday skills demonstrating the wider impact of our programmes. These outcomes include progressing into further education, training or employment, completing application forms, reading a newspaper, writing letters to family or friends, budgeting income, and other real-world tasks that support learners' independence and confidence.



Strengthening our digital tools

We have focused on building on the foundations established last year and delivering improvements that strengthen our digital infrastructure, enhance data quality, and increase the support available to staff and volunteers.

Our work continues to be guided by our technology roadmap, ensuring that our focus has resulted in the greatest benefit.

Alongside implementing these updated policies, processes and training last year, we successfully renewed our Cyber Essentials certification in 2025. This accreditation continues to reassure our partners and stakeholders that we are taking strong, proactive steps to safeguard learner and mentor data and maintain organisational resilience.

Our internal systems and platforms, such as Microsoft 365 and Salesforce, have seen continuous development throughout the year alongside expansion of our staff intranet, introducing new regional hubs and enhanced staff wellbeing resources.



Technology supporting volunteer management

This year we've seen significant progress in volunteer engagement, support and communication through the introduction of Assemble, our centralised volunteer management platform. Assemble has improved the way volunteers connect with the organisation, access resources, and manage their roles. Volunteers have responded positively to the system, with 79% finding it easy to use and 96% valuing its messages and news features for keeping them informed.

By recording volunteer activities and programme engagement in real time, Assemble provides a clear picture of the scale and impact of volunteer contributions. It also centralises communications, onboarding, and guidance, helping volunteers feel informed, supported, and connected. Survey feedback shows volunteers appreciate the platform's accessibility and effectiveness in strengthening engagement, with 77% recognising it helps them feel well supported. Assemble is now a central pillar of our volunteer strategy and a foundation for a responsive, modern volunteering experience, enabling volunteers to contribute effectively and make a meaningful difference.

Supporting our learners and mentors

Providing our mentors and learners with the best resources and training remains a high priority at Shannon Trust.

Our aim is to empower them with skills and experience that will positively contribute to their future, whether that's for those at the beginning of their learning journey, or for mentors looking to advance their education to open future opportunities.



Volunteer training and resources

One of our key goals is to ensure our mentors are prepared and supported in the right way, so they can in turn provide the most meaningful and beneficial peer support to learners.

Volunteers have played an integral part in providing this support. A number of our volunteers have co-facilitated volunteer induction training and contributed to the development and refinement of mentor training modules. This also includes guidance for Count Me In, How to Be a Great Mentor, and Conflict Resolution. Specialist volunteers delivered Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (EDIB) and Pride-focused sessions, while others pilot-tested Turning Pages Digital and Count Me In Digital, providing feedback that informed programme improvements.

In October, volunteers, staff and former mentors from across England and Wales came together in person for the Resource Forum to share and explore over 70 volunteer-created resources. Their contributions informed discussions on accessibility, good practice, and ways to improve learning materials for mentors and learners. Through these activities, volunteers ensure mentors are well supported, receive high-quality guidance, and resources remain practical and accessible, demonstrating the breadth and value of their expertise.



Meaningful experiences for our mentors

Building on the success of the launch of our mentor accreditation scheme, in 2025 we launched our own bespoke Level One AQA accreditation in Teaching Reading. This is mapped to our mentor training and ensures that the knowledge and skills the mentors possess and demonstrate in their roles are captured and evidenced. Offering AQA accreditation not only recognises the value of the mentors' contribution but also enhances their employability.

In early 2025, we were fortunate to receive funding to accredit 1,000 mentors. We achieved our target by the end of August and have now accredited over 1,300 mentors from 78 prisons. We have seen this spread across contracted and non-contracted prisons and with all populations, including the female estate and young offenders. Volunteers also contributed significantly to AQA achievements. Nearly half of those prisons where we offer AQA accreditations have a Shannon Trust programme that is led entirely by volunteers.

Looking to the future, we plan to continue to grow the number of mentors who can benefit from AQA accreditation and hope to roll out our numeracy unit next year. Mentors tell us that the accreditation helps them feel valued, recognised and rewarded, which was always our main aim.



Our people

Over the past year, our organisation has focused on consolidating and strengthening the support we provide to both our workforce and the people we serve.

With our team now numbering around 90 staff members and 130 volunteers, we have reached an important stage in embedding best practice across the organisation. Our headcount has remained steady throughout the year, and we have seen key workforce stability metrics improve, with turnover reducing by 10% and sickness rates reducing by 1.5% compared to last year. Together, these developments reflect the impact of our ongoing work to refine processes, support staff, and ensure our services remain person-centred, consistent, and high quality.



Learning and development

This year we have deepened our understanding of the professional development needs of staff and leaders. Our learning and development offer has been enhanced, providing role-specific training alongside compliance support. A Learning Needs Analysis was carried out, achieving an 88% completion rate and giving us a strong breadth of data from across the organisation. It identified priority development areas and skills gaps, and these insights will inform our plans for 2026 and beyond, ensuring training remains targeted, relevant, and aligned with organisational needs. Leadership and management processes have also been strengthened, with updated manager training and clearer guidance to help them support their teams effectively, contributing to a collaborative and compassionate working environment.



Equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDIB)

EDIB has continued to be a key focus throughout 2025. Recruitment processes have been reviewed to remove barriers, improve accessibility, and ensure fairness, while our Ban the Box commitment continues to provide equitable access for candidates with lived experience of the criminal justice system. Key cultural events and targeted EDIB training sessions have celebrated diversity, strengthened understanding, and encouraged a genuine sense of inclusion. By embedding EDIB principles throughout our work, we continue to create a workplace where everyone feels respected and able to succeed.



Wellbeing

Staff wellbeing has remained central to our work. Our fully embedded Care Team provides listening services, mental health first aid, and resilience support, particularly for our prison facilitators. Targeted resilience training and broader wellbeing activities are underway, with developments focused on meeting the evolving needs of our workforce and helping staff feel increasingly supported, valued, and confident in their roles.





Volunteer network

Volunteers play a pivotal role at Shannon Trust. Learners are at the heart of everything we do, and our volunteer teams bring a huge range of skills and experience to ensure learners have a positive experience of our programmes.

Shannon Trust's volunteer network has had some significant achievements this year. Between January and December volunteers:

- **contributed 4,247 hours of activity**
- **supported 900 mentors**
- **helped train 1,082 new mentors**

The network continues to grow and diversify, with 69 new volunteers joining in 2025 across 25 roles, including prison-based, community, and business-support opportunities. Volunteers bring practical skills, insight, and experience that strengthen programmes and support staff in delivering high-quality learning experiences. Their creativity, dedication, and professional expertise have helped develop new opportunities, improve resources, and shape the way programmes are delivered across the network. Volunteers experiences remain extremely positive.

Engagement and connection were a central focus this year. The Volunteer Hub delivered over 20 peer support and training events, which were well attended, enhanced by, and often led by volunteers. Themed Volunteer Connect sessions on safeguarding, EDIB, and peer support provided structured opportunities to share knowledge, develop skills, and collaborate.

Recognition of volunteer contribution is at the heart of the volunteer network. We're grateful to every talented, dedicated and skilled volunteer for adding value across the organisation.

Stand out celebrations include our Volunteers Week activities and our national Tom Shannon Award to celebrate outstanding commitment and impact, shining a spotlight on volunteers who go above and beyond to support learners, mentors, and the wider organisation.

This year's winners were acknowledged for their creativity, dedication, and collaborative approach, reflecting the meaningful difference volunteers make every day.

Throughout 2025, the Volunteer Hub has expanded its strategic role, supporting staff to integrate volunteers creatively across programmes, introducing volunteer-led initiatives, and providing consistent guidance through enhanced onboarding, updated policies, and tailored training.

These developments have strengthened the volunteer network, embedded a collaborative culture, and highlighted the essential contribution volunteers make to the organisation and to mentors' and learners' success. By providing meaningful opportunities to contribute, develop skills, and work alongside staff and volunteers, the Volunteer Hub ensures that volunteering remains a rewarding and mutually beneficial experience for all.



Our annual volunteer survey highlighted the positive experience of volunteering at Shannon Trust:

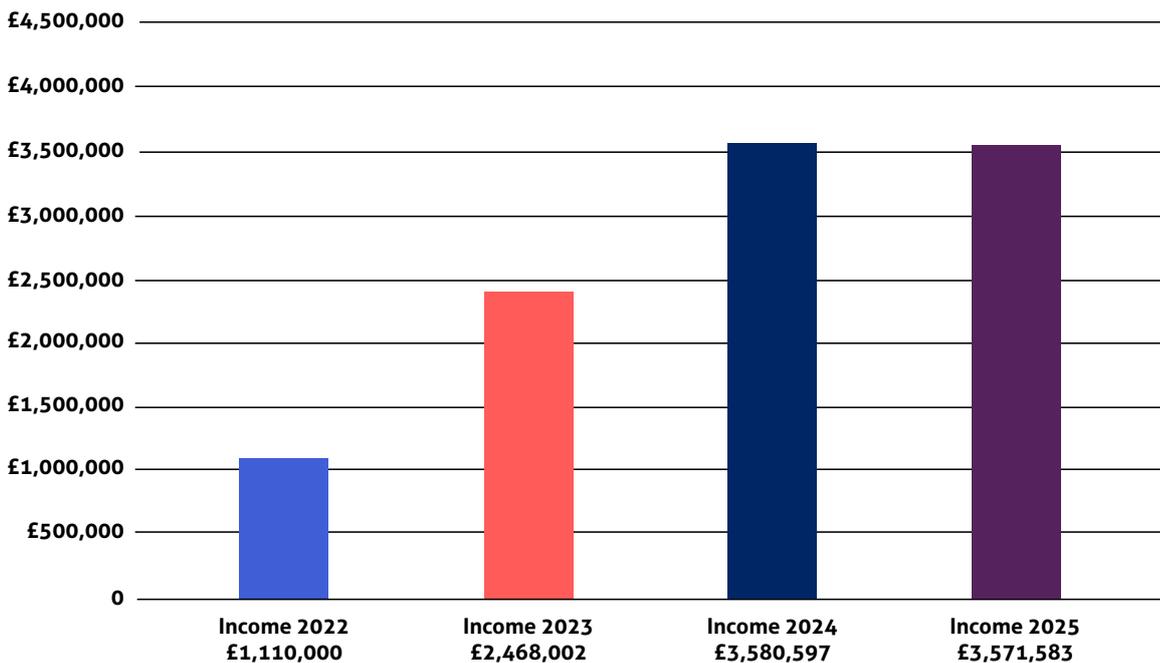


Finances and fundraising

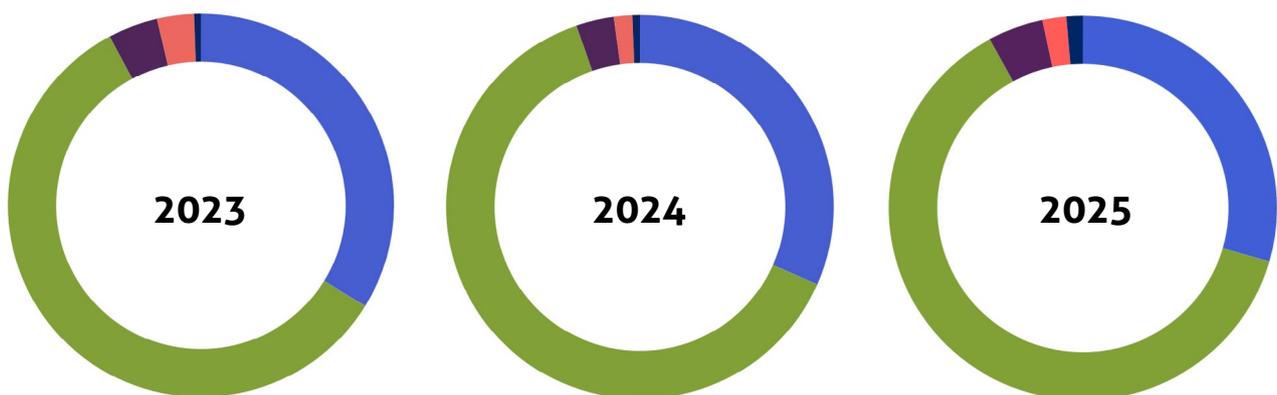
In a challenging fundraising environment, we have maintained our income in 2025, allowing us to continue to provide the highest quality support for our learners.

Contracts for the delivery of our prison programmes, and grants from trusts and foundations, remain our primary sources of income. We have also seen encouraging increases in income from individual giving and commercial sales of our Turning Pages manuals. All of these income streams allow us to maintain consistency in our programme delivery, whether in contracted or non-contracted prisons, as well as in the community.

We are proud to share our success



Sources of income through 2023 to 2025



£'000	2023	2024	2025
Trusts and Foundations	£834,137	£1,131,628	£1,053,289
Contract Income	£1,440,282	£2,258,445	£2,233,988
Individual Giving	£103,246	£113,049	£164,874
Turning Pages Sales	£76,296	£55,034	£70,858
Other	£14,041	£22,441	£48,574
Total	£2,468,002	£3,580,597	£3,571,583

Telling our story



Celebrating wins

We had a lot to celebrate at Shannon Trust in 2025. Shannon Trust staff and volunteers held a number of celebration events for our mentors and learners throughout the year, as a way to recognise their achievements and present them with certificates. These events are always incredibly powerful, bringing people together from all across the prison. They are even more special when learners choose to share their experiences.

One learner at HMP Rochester talked about the difference Shannon Trust has made to his life and how he is now able to read fluently, expressing that he's gone from being unable to read road signs to now completing the Chronicles of Narnia. Another at HMP Channings Wood was delighted to now be able to send cards and letters to his family. Having his family join the celebration event, and see him awarded a certificate for his progress with Turning Pages, was an incredibly powerful reminder of the connection our work helps to foster.

What makes these events even more memorable for our mentors and learners is how our prison facilitators and volunteers create an environment that helps them feel valued. At HMP Send, our staff were joined by members of the prison staff and other partners, including the Police and Crime Commissioner and other local voluntary groups, who were able to join in the recognition and celebration of the achievement of those who learn with Shannon Trust mentors. These acts of consideration and kindness make a huge difference to mentors and learners, who can see and feel that others really care about their journey with Shannon Trust.





Working with the media

Sharing the stories of people whose lives are transformed by learning remains at the heart of our work. This year, we have focused on reaching more people in prison and beyond by strengthening our media partnerships and creating new opportunities for learners and mentors to express themselves.

Our partnership with the Prison Radio Association (PRA) continues to play a vital role in raising awareness of Shannon Trust inside prisons. We are proud to sponsor Free Flow, hosted by poet Lady Unchained, which won Bronze for Best Specialist Music Show at the Audio and Radio Industry Awards (ARIAS) this year. Through spoken word, rap and creative writing, Lady Unchained encourages listeners to pick up a pen and share their stories. We've had fantastic responses from listeners who tell us the show, alongside our regular PRA advertising, has motivated them to join Shannon Trust and take their first steps in building confidence with reading.

In a recent survey of people in prison, 91% of respondents said they'd heard Shannon Trust mentioned on Prison Radio, and over half of people surveyed said it had inspired them to do one of the following:

-  **Talk to a Shannon Trust mentor**
-  **Improve their reading or writing**
-  **Have the confidence to read and write more**
-  **Communicate with family and friends through letter writing**
-  **Express themselves through writing**
-  **Become a Shannon Trust mentor**

Our relationship with the PRA also created opportunities to highlight our work beyond the prison walls. Our Post-Release Pathways Coordinator featured as a co-presenter on Prison Radio, speaking directly to mentors and learners about how they can stay involved with Shannon Trust after release.

This conversation helped raise awareness of the continued support available and the importance of staying connected to learning in the community. This conversation helped raise awareness of the continued support available and the importance of staying connected to learning in the community.

This year we also broadened our external reach. Working closely with ITV Anglia at HMP Norwich and ITV Yorkshire at HMP Hull, we helped produce two powerful pieces of coverage highlighting our work. Each segment featured interviews with prison staff, learners and mentors, giving audiences an authentic insight into the impact of peer-to-peer reading support.

We were thrilled to celebrate a significant achievement within our volunteer community as well. Sarah Pender, one of our dedicated volunteers, won the BBC Making a Difference Award for her commitment to Shannon Trust. She spoke on BBC Wiltshire about her role, sharing why supporting people to learn to read is so important to her. Her story helped bring attention to the challenges many people in prison face, and the life-changing difference reading can make.

Creativity has also been a powerful storytelling tool this year. Following the success of our poetry competition, we compiled entries into a printed poetry book, showcasing the talent and honesty of Shannon Trust mentors and learners. The poems give voice to personal experiences, hope, struggle and transformation, in the writers' own words. Sharing this collection with key stakeholders has helped deepen understanding of the resilience and creativity found within prison communities.

Together, these efforts ensure that the voices of people in prison, and those who support them, are heard, valued and celebrated. By telling our story, we help others understand why learning to read and improve numeracy skills matter, and why Shannon Trust's work is needed now more than ever.

Looking ahead

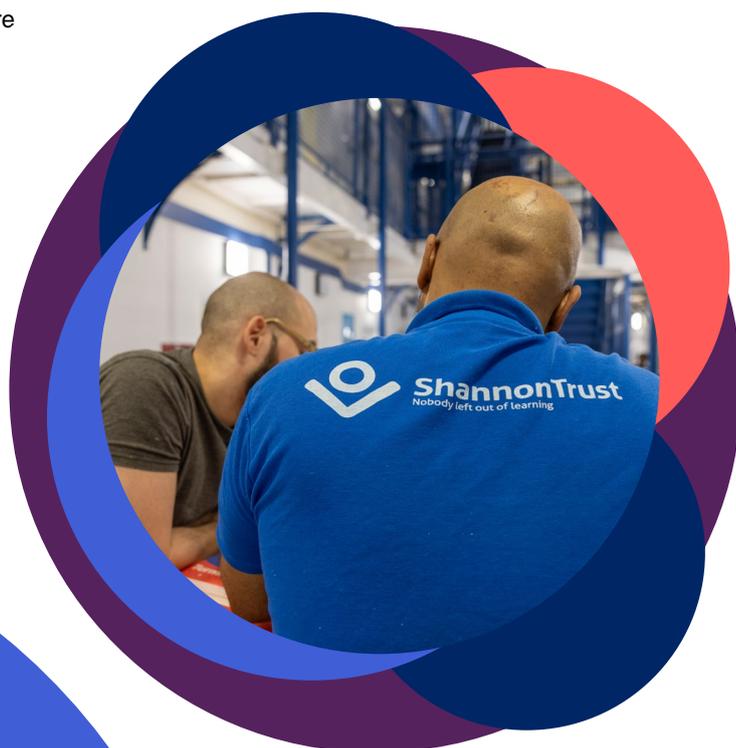
As we look to the year ahead, Shannon Trust stands at a defining moment in its journey. Driven by an important mission, delivered by a talented and dedicated team of people, and supported by a growing network of partners, we are poised to scale our impact and to reach more learners than ever before.

In the next year, Shannon Trust will face a challenging political and policy landscape. Sentencing reform and ongoing reviews in the criminal justice sector may reshape the prison population, and the demand for programmes of learning like ours. Changes to prison education contracts and potential funding reductions could limit opportunities for learners. At the same time, wider fiscal pressures on the justice system risk creating uncertainty for rehabilitation services. In this context, our role as an advocate for literacy and numeracy support becomes even more critical.

We will continue to strengthen partnerships, share evidence of impact, and ensure that the voices of our mentors and learners are heard in policy debates, so that education remains central to justice reform and every individual has the chance to learn and thrive. We're looking forward to building our influence with policy makers and commissioners, ensuring that we bring the voice of our beneficiaries to the conversations in which they are least likely to be heard.

As we look to the future, it is vital that we harness and strengthen the organisational commitment that has brought us this far. Shannon Trust has grown rapidly in recent years, and now is the time to take stock of our structures, processes, and principles. Embedding quality assurance and rigour into everything we do will ensure that our programmes remain impactful and sustainable. Our ambition is to make Shannon Trust not only a robust, high-quality organisation for learners, but also a truly great place to work and volunteer, where people feel supported, valued, and proud to contribute to our mission.

2026 will be a year of opportunity. With the launch of our new strategy and the energy of our people and partners, we are ready for the future – together.



Thank you

We could not reach as many learners and mentors as we do without the support of our volunteers, supporters, donors and grant funders.

Thank you to everyone who supported us over the past year. Your support and dedication means so much to us and has helped make all the progress we have made possible.

It is because of your generosity that we can continue to give thousands of people in prison and in the community the opportunity to change their lives by improving their literacy and numeracy skills.



Contact us

All contact details are available on our website, including staff emails.

If you aren't sure who to direct your enquiry or comments to, please email: info@shannontrust.org.uk

Call us on **020 3764 5250** or write to us at **Freepost SHANNON TRUST**



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