

ordinary Magic



Supporting Children, Young People and Families to Thrive

From Bump to 25
Impact Report 2025/2026

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Message from the founder

This year has felt different.

Across the country, children's mental health services are under unprecedented strain. Austerity pressures, rising operational costs, increasing SEND demand and stretched statutory systems mean families are waiting longer, thresholds are higher and the voluntary sector is being asked to do more with less.

Ordinary Magic has felt that pressure too.

Our overheads have risen by 21% in the past year alone. Funding has become harder to secure than ever before. Grants are smaller. Contracts are tighter. Expectations are higher. What keeps me awake at night is simple – sustainability. Ensuring that the support children rely on today is still here tomorrow.

Recently, I attended a meeting with a room full of extraordinary leaders and CEOs from across the region – organisations doing vital, life-changing work. Every single one of us shared the same concern.

We all strive to build sustainable organisations and to work “on” our services rather than constantly “in” them. And yet, in the current climate – with austerity deepening, costs rising and grant funding reducing – it often feels as though the very systems we are trying to strengthen are pushing back against us.

And yet – we continue.

Despite these headwinds, our team has flexed, adapted and risen. I am incredibly proud of how we are evolving into a medium-sized, professional, resilient organisation. Over the past year we have strengthened our core infrastructure – policies, procedures, governance, safeguarding, data systems and workforce development.

Every member of staff is trauma-informed. We have invested in specialist training including IDVA, CYVA and sexual violence training. We have provided two apprenticeships to passionate young people committed to mental health and SEND – and they are thriving.

We are not simply surviving. We are building structures. We are strengthening systems. We are creating sustainable, integrated support for children and families.

And for that – we should be incredibly proud.



So much has changed

Our evolution

This year marked significant growth. We expanded into a 0–25 service, supporting children from antenatal stages through early adulthood where additional needs are present. We refreshed our branding and launched a new website to reflect who we are becoming.

We introduced structured service strands:



Bloom & Grow

(0-5)



Little Sparks

(5-11)



Ignite

(11-18+)



Thrive Tribe

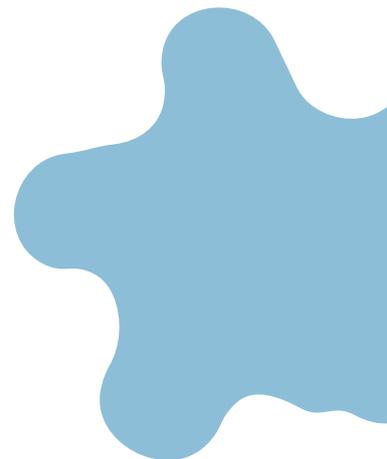
(Community & SEND)



Roots & Wings

(Family Support & Early Help)

We also took on the SEND team from Inclusive Sports CIC. When their CEO recognised that the service required further infrastructure to grow sustainably, we were honoured to step in – stabilising, professionalising and expanding the offer. This strengthened our SEND reach and increased traded income to support long-term sustainability.



Why 0-25?

As our work deepened with younger children, we recognised that many parents had experienced trauma themselves. If early help is meaningful, it must begin before crisis.

We now work antenatally, supporting attachment, parental confidence and resilience from the earliest stage. By supporting parents early – particularly those who have experienced trauma – we aim to strengthen attachment, reduce intergenerational trauma and promote emotional regulation from infancy.

We also strengthened transitional support for young people with SEND, ensuring smoother movement between primary and secondary school, into adult services and toward employment. Support now extends up to 25 where appropriate.

Growth has been intentional. We have strengthened infrastructure, governance and workforce capability to ensure sustainability and professional standards as we expand and this was made possible by the investment from the National Lottery.



It is still our mission to deliver early, accessible and inclusive support that helps children and families feel safe, seen, heard and understood. To realise a future where emotional support is never out of reach, and every child has what they need to thrive.

The changes to our services reflect what is needed to achieve this. We need to start even earlier, include the whole family, and smooth the transitions on their journey to adulthood.





Recognition

Profile and recognition of the value and impact of our services ensures sustainability. This support increases our credibility and gives us a seat at the table to make a change.

In 2025 we are proud to have won the Health & Wellbeing Impact Award at the Social Economy Awards; the Community Inspiration Award; SEND Award Solihull; and receive nominations for the Solihull Civic Innovation Award, Breaking Down Barriers Award and Organisational Leadership Award for our Founder.

Our Founder also now represents Birmingham and Solihull as the Children and Young People Lead for the VSCE Mental Health Collective.

Local confidence and trust in our services have meant: Our Short Breaks contract has expanded. We now hold contracts in Birmingham. We have secured a Learning Disability & Autism pathway contract with the local NHS Trust and a West Midlands Combined Authority contract to support young people aged 16+ with mental health needs and Not in Education Employment or Training back into employment, training, and other opportunities to develop.

Our reach and **impact**

4,013 children,
young people and
families supported
across Solihull and
Birmingham

In a year marked by austerity, rising costs and increasing SEND pressures, Ordinary Magic expanded its reach, strengthened its infrastructure and supported children and families across prevention, early intervention and specialist tiers of support.

Referrals into Ordinary Magic Services:

1,070

1,070 children referred directly into tier 2 and 3 services including therapy, family support, specialist workshops and targeted interventions.

SEND & Specialist Provision:

97

97 children supported through the Ordinary Magic SEND Team.

39

Inclusive Sports CIC SEND provision successfully integrated and strengthened; meaning 39 young people are now receiving personal assistance services as well as access to a range of activities, trips and educational opportunities as part of the Ordinary Magic family.

79

79 children supported through Domestic and Sexual Violence support.



Community & Prevention:

1,600

1,600 children and young people attended community workshops.

631

631 children and parents reached in small group programmes.

497

497 children and parents reached in online programmes so far.

An Online support offer launched for parents and carers unable to attend in person to ensure that we are able to support those that are hard to engage with due to personal circumstances.

Core 10 improvements

The CORE-10 is a 10-item NHS questionnaire used to measure common psychological distress and monitor progress. It covers anxiety, depression, physical symptoms, trauma, and risk. Where young people have used this tool, we have identified:

51.9%

51.9% increase in their feelings of self confidence

22.5%

Those with Moderate to Severe Mental Health Concerns have clinically improved by 22.5%

49.3%

All participants experienced Overall Health Improvements of 49.3%

59.9%

Community engagement and connectedness improved by 59.9% - loneliness and isolation.

Joining the dots results in significant social return on investment

£30.7 million

Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis identified **£30.7 million** total social value generated annually, with **£22.87** returned for every **£1** invested.



Connected Care Network (CCN)

1,090

In addition to Ordinary Magic's support for 1,070 children and young people, a further 1,090 children were referred straight to the Community Care Network (CCN). These children and their families, facing multiple and complex needs, received triage, assessment, and support from CCN's multi-disciplinary team.

Ordinary Magic launched the Connected Care Network in 2022 to bring together voluntary, community, social enterprise, health, and statutory partners to support children, young people, and families with complex needs.

Each week, a GP, HCPC-registered mental health specialists, therapists, counsellors, wellbeing coordinators, and social workers meet. They look at cases together and decide the best way forward. Partners from voluntary, community, and statutory services share updates and spot gaps. Together we tweak care plans based on real feedback from families and design support that matches what they actually need.

This multi-disciplinary team approach ensures everyone knows what is happening. No family has to repeat their story for every professional. Care is joined up and quick to adapt.

The Connected Care Network keeps care coordinated and stress low for families. It demonstrates the power of integrated, place-based working across sectors.

It operates hand-in-hand with the Ordinary Magic's extensive range of support services. With no barriers to access, those in need move between services via the CCN triage and action-planning process; and the impact of this is now really being seen. Independent evaluation undertaken by NHSE, Aston University with Ipsos Mori, and Make an Impact CIC in the past year has revealed:



Health & Mental Health:

52%

52% improvement in mental health

68%

68% improvement in managing long-term health conditions

50%

50% improvement in physical health

Education:

48%

48% improvement in behaviour and education support needs

47%

47% improvement in neurodiversity needs

Social & Personal:

66%

66% reduction in loneliness and isolation

54%

54% improvement in ability to make friends

Family Stability:

74%

74% improvement in financial difficulties

46%

46% improvement in housing stability

Access:

90%

90% improvement in access to food

54%

54% improvement in accessing specialist services

100% of children showed positive movement on wellbeing scales.

CCN strengthens statutory services, prevents escalation, and reduces long-term system cost.

(This case study was written with a young person who accesses our service, who has agreed for their story and experiences to be shared but also anonymised to protect their identity)

Case Study: Finding My Voice Again – A Teen’s Journey with Ordinary Magic after being referred into the Connected Care Network

When I first met the team from Ordinary Magic, I didn’t really want to talk to anyone. I was 15, I’d stopped going to school regularly, and everything just felt too much. I was helping look after my younger brother, who has additional needs, and my mum was exhausted. I used to lie awake at night worrying about her – about money, about my brother, about school. I felt like I was the only one keeping things together.

When Support Started

It started when our GP referred us into the Connected Care Network (CCN). I didn’t think much would happen – we’d had people come and go before – but this time it felt different.

The Ordinary Magic worker actually listened. She didn’t just ask about my brother; she asked about me. She said I mattered too.

They worked with Mum to get her support as a carer – she got linked in with specialist carer services which Ordinary Magic referred her to as well as access to Short Breaks, which meant she finally got a rest. She also had someone she could talk to about how hard things were. I think that helped her breathe again.

Getting Back to School

For me, school had become a nightmare. I couldn’t concentrate and was behind in everything. I felt embarrassed, anxious, and angry all the time. The CCN team worked with my school, my GP, and a counsellor from Ordinary Magic to help put things in place for me.

They set up regular sessions where I could talk about what was going on, and they helped the teachers understand what it’s like when you’re caring for someone at home.



After a few months, I was back at school more often. My attendance went from 82% to 94%, and I even started enjoying being around people again. I also started a weekly group and tried boxing through Ordinary Magic – it helped me manage my stress and feel strong again.

Family Changes

Everything at home started to feel calmer. My brother got more help in school through an EHCP, and Mum said she didn't feel like she was fighting the system on her own anymore.

The Roots & Wings team helped us get routines back – bedtimes were easier, mornings weren't chaos anymore, and we even started having Sunday breakfast together again.

How Things Feel Now

Before all this, I used to rate my mood and wellbeing really low. When I did the SDQ (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire) at the start, it came out as moderate to severe. The last time we did it, it was low to moderate, and that felt like proof that things had actually changed.

Our family's wellbeing scores went up by 76%, which sounds like just a number – but it's real. It means my mum smiles again. It means my brother laughs more. It means I feel like we've got a future again.

What I'd Say to Others

“Ordinary Magic didn't judge us – they just helped. They understood that we needed more than one thing to change. It wasn't just about school or counselling – it was everything working together. They gave me my confidence back, and they gave our family hope.”

Key Impact Highlights

Outcome Area	Impact
Family Wellbeing	76% improvement in overall wellbeing
School Attendance	Increased from 82% to 94%
Child SDQ Score	Improved from Moderate/Severe to Low/Moderate
Carer Support	Parent engaged with carer services, improved resilience
Youth Engagement	Teen attending community activities weekly
Youth Engagement	Reported increase in self-esteem, reduced anxiety

Challenges in 2025 and moving into 2026

This has been one of the most challenging financial climates we have experienced. Rising operational costs and increasing SEND demand have placed significant pressure on voluntary sector services.

Over the last year, local organisations have operated in a context of national and regional uncertainty. At a recent event for leaders of social enterprises in Birmingham, CEOs shared the impact on them, their teams and beneficiaries.

The change of government has brought shifts in public policy and economic priorities, resulting in delays to decision-making and increased caution on investment across the sector.

Rising costs have also been a key challenge. The West Midlands has experienced above-average cost pressures, with 49% of organisations surveyed in late 2025 expecting to raise prices.

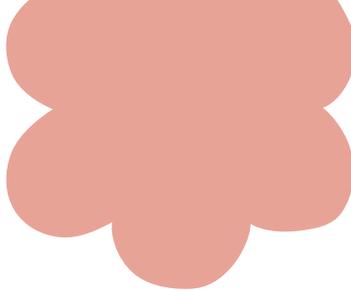
Grant funding has become significantly more competitive and less predictable. The end of long-term EU structural funding and irregular availability of new local grants have combined to limit opportunities and increase competition for all available funding sources.

Social Enterprises and charities alike have found it harder to access grant support to cover rising core costs or invest in development.

This challenging policy and funding environment has required us to be more adaptable and strictly manage finances. We have responded by diversifying income streams, increasing traded work, securing new contracts and we are currently establishing a charitable arm to widen access to funding.

Despite these challenges, we remain committed to building stable, trauma-informed and integrated support for children and families and working hard towards sustaining our core work through traded services, and implementing our 3-year sustainability strategy.

Looking ahead



We are at a key moment in our journey.

Ordinary Magic must now use all our learnings and experience to build a robust and futureproof structure on these strong foundations. It should combine robust compliance, governance, financial resilience (diverse revenue and cost management), measurable impact, and multi-year goals aligned to community benefit. We will be focusing on:

Purpose, mission and vision

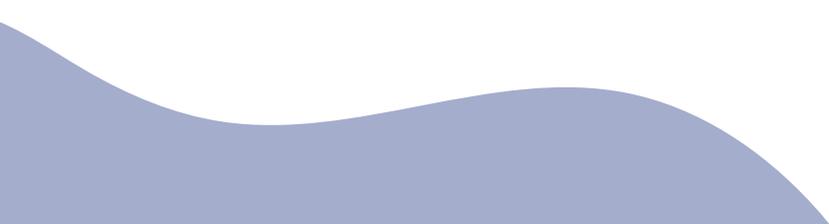
Ordinary Magic has evolved to meet the complex and often varied needs of local people. We now need to ensure complete clarity of our goals and avoid mission drift. We will be undertaking an overhaul of our purpose, mission and vision to ensure we have a clear 'north star' that guides us, our decision-making, aligns our teams and leaves donors in no doubt about who we are and what we do: support a child or young person's mental health and wellbeing.

Forming a charitable CIO arm

We will build, year-on-year, a CIO through which we can engage new and more diverse trustees and support. New trustees and donors will bring their experience, new ideas, and fresh impetus. We will slowly build financial credibility and attract investment from new donors while building a loyal database of individual-givers.

Financial resilience

Whilst we continue to generate income from diverse sources such as grants, contracts, trading income, and social investment, we must consciously increase the value of each strand, year on year, and plan for covering core costs through regular and ongoing sources:

- **Grants** - continue to apply for one-off and multi-year grants using both the CIC and the newly formed CIO.
 - **Traded services** - Expand our fee-for-service trading activities, ensuring core income is generated through mission-driven products or services. We will invest in resources and the sales expertise and capacity of our team to support this.
 - **Contracts** - identify and secure contracts for provision of our services, such as the PA services provision in Solihull.
 - **Social Investment**
 - **Regular-giving** - we will be driving individual and team fundraising, running focused community campaigns, publicising and securing a regular income from Easyfundraising; and Fundraising events. We will build a donor database and execute an effective communications strategy, that utilises our new branding.
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Business and corporate engagement

We are designing packages through which businesses can sponsor our programmes and are building an EAP offering and app for businesses who wish to support employees who are struggling due to the impact of poor mental health and wellbeing of their children.

Maintain robust impact measurement

We will roll out the SROI evaluation annually and maintain regular stakeholder feedback, use baseline assessments, and ongoing evaluation. We will undertake a review of our CRM tool and tracking methods to ensure they are fit for purpose and support us to be efficient.

Structure our resources effectively and invest in capacity building

We are reviewing our staffing structure in line with our current position, moving people into new roles with appropriate focus and building a senior team who can share responsibility for the next phase of Ordinary Magic.



Closing reflection:

Ordinary Magic was founded on a simple belief: that every child deserves to feel safe, supported and able to thrive.

In a year defined by pressure and complexity, we have strengthened our foundations, expanded our reach, and remained rooted in compassion. We have navigated uncertainty, shifting landscapes and growing demand, while staying true to the values that sit at the heart of our work.

Together, we are not simply responding to crisis – we are shaping stronger systems for the future.

I couldn't be prouder of the team behind this work. Every single person has flexed, adapted and stepped up in the face of challenge. The resilience, care and professionalism shown – often in moments of real uncertainty – has been extraordinary. Even within this context, what we have achieved is phenomenal. The impact captured in this report is not accidental; it is the result of commitment, courage and a shared belief in doing better for children, young people and families.

We are deeply grateful to our funders for their continued belief in our work – especially The National Lottery Community Fund, whose support over the last few years has been instrumental. Without this backing, our growth and the impact we have achieved simply would not have been possible.

Thank you also to our partners, and to the families who place their trust in us. The work is hard, the need is real – but so is the hope we are building, every single day.

With gratitude,

Katie Washbourne



Katie Washbourne
Chief Executive Officer
Ordinary Magic

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Get in touch!
We're here to help.

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