Together Co
Impact Report 2025/26

Creating connections to change lives

Introduction

I am delighted to introduce our impact report that sets out the difference made by Together Co in the past year. It was a particularly important one for the charity as we marked 25 years of making connections that have changed the lives of people across Brighton and Hove.

We know that the support we give can be nothing less than life changing and, in this report, we have shared experiences from some of the thousands of people we have helped. People who receive weekly calls when they would otherwise have heard from no one; who are supported to find the confidence to join a local social group; who access targeted support at a moment of crisis through our social prescribing team. The dramatic improvement we see in that person's wellbeing and sense of belonging demonstrates the power of the connections we make.
Alongside celebrating our 25th anniversary, we also worked with our team, trustees, volunteers and partners to develop our plan for the future. We face real challenges including continued uncertainty around funding and increasing high demand as more people experience acute isolation. Our new three-year strategy sets out how we will respond to this need and adapt to these risks while supporting our team and volunteers to thrive.

I want to take a moment to thank everyone who makes our work possible: our volunteers, staff, trustees, ambassadors, funders, donors, partners and the people who use our services. Your generosity and commitment enable us to help those who need it the most and show the transformation that can be achieved by making a connection.

Natalie Orringe
Chair of Trustees

Our Impact in Numbers

In 2025/26, we marked a major milestone: 25 years of creating connections across Brighton and Hove. It was a year of celebration, growth, learning and deepening impact.

Our work reached people aged 18 to 100. Through befriending, social prescribing, volunteering, community connection, campaigns and partnerships, we continued to support people to build confidence, improve wellbeing and reconnect with their communities.

Behind every number is a person. Someone receiving a weekly call, someone taking their first step into a community group, someone opening a handwritten letter, or someone feeling hopeful again.

In 2025/26, we:

Supported 3,006 people through our Connection Hub, befriending, social prescribing, connector project, connection by letter scheme, and managing UOK's Central Access Point.

Worked with 472 volunteers

Benefited from 12,341 volunteer hours

Connection Hub

The Connection Hub provides a clear, welcoming and responsive front door for people seeking support, connecting them with the right Together Co service or wider community support. During 2025/26, our experienced social prescribing link worker and coordinator provided advice and guidance in response to enquiries and referrals.

We continued delivery of the UOK Central Access Point through the Connection Hub. This strengthened the Hub's role within Brighton and Hove's mental health and wellbeing system, giving people and professionals clear, local information, advice and support.

In 2025/26, the Connection Hub:

- **Provided 481 one-off interventions and signposting conversations**
- **Triaged 477 referrals and allocated people to services**

Social Prescribing

Social prescribing helps people access the support, activities and connections that can improve their health and wellbeing.
Our skilled link workers build trusted relationships and work alongside people to identify goals, overcome barriers and connect with local groups and services.

In 2025/26, Together Co social prescribing and SP Plus partner services received 1,328 referrals and delivered 2,405 sessions. Our link workers made 4,070 onward referrals to 540 different agencies, showing both the complexity of people's lives and the strength of our partnerships across the city.

People told us the support made a real difference:

- **100% reported a positive change in at least one area of their lives**
- **92% felt better informed about what was available to them**
- **81% reported improved wellbeing**

> *Thank you for your support. Your calls and the information you shared have been really helpful. I felt listened to, understood and supported across my physical health, mental health and social support needs. -* ***person supported through social prescribing***

HMP
Kitten
Jigsaw Puzzle

Reaching People Where They Are

In 2025/26, we strengthened our focus on neighbourhood-based support, prevention and health inequalities. Social prescribing link workers were embedded in the community and contributed to local leadership groups and health forums.

They delivered more than 139 outreach and community events, offering on-the-spot support, signposting and referrals in trusted spaces including food banks, libraries, community and family hubs, and Job Centres.

431 people aged 18+ self-referred, helping people access support without needing to go through their GP

SP Plus

Together Co continued to lead the SP Plus partnership, working alongside Switchboard, Friends, Families & Travellers, Sussex Interpreting Services and Trust for Developing Communities. Partners bring specialist knowledge, trusted relationships and culturally appropriate support, helping social prescribing reach people who might otherwise be missed.

In 2025/26:

SP Plus received 375 referrals

The service supported an average of 65 people each month

Together Co worked with Switchboard to strengthen social prescribing support for LGBTQ+ communities

Befriending

Befriending remains at the heart of Together Co's work. It supports people through in-person visits, telephone calls and befriending groups across the city. Every match is carefully considered by our coordinators who look at people's shared experiences and interests.

In 2025/26, we supported 468 people through all our befriending activities, including 132 new people who benefited from befriending for the first time.

We supported:

- **360 people through in-person or telephone befriending**
- **91 people through befriending groups**
- **94% of people who received befriending said the service had a positive impact on their wellbeing**
- **82% said support from Together Co had increased their sense of belonging in their local community**

> *When we first met, he was sitting in the dark, his back too bad to be able to open his curtains or turn on his lights. With the right support, his world slowly opened up, his home became accessible, and he regained the freedom to get out on his own. Watching his confidence grow was incredibly moving. He told me he 'couldn't begin to describe the difference the visits made' and how deeply grateful he was.*
> ***- Erin, Befriending volunteer***

Befriending

We also set up a new befriending social group in Coldean, responding to a need in the north of the city. This now runs alongside existing groups in Kemptown and central Brighton.
Group members enjoyed activities including memory sharing, singing, seated sports, gentle yoga, music, dancing and creative sessions. These groups are more than activities, they are places where people feel welcome, recognised and part of something.

> ***I love meeting everybody and talking to people. I also enjoy the games and the music and the dancing. - Marlene, 89, group member***

Connector Project

The Connector Project provides short-term, practical, goal-focused support for people who know what would help their wellbeing or independence but need someone alongside them to take the first step.

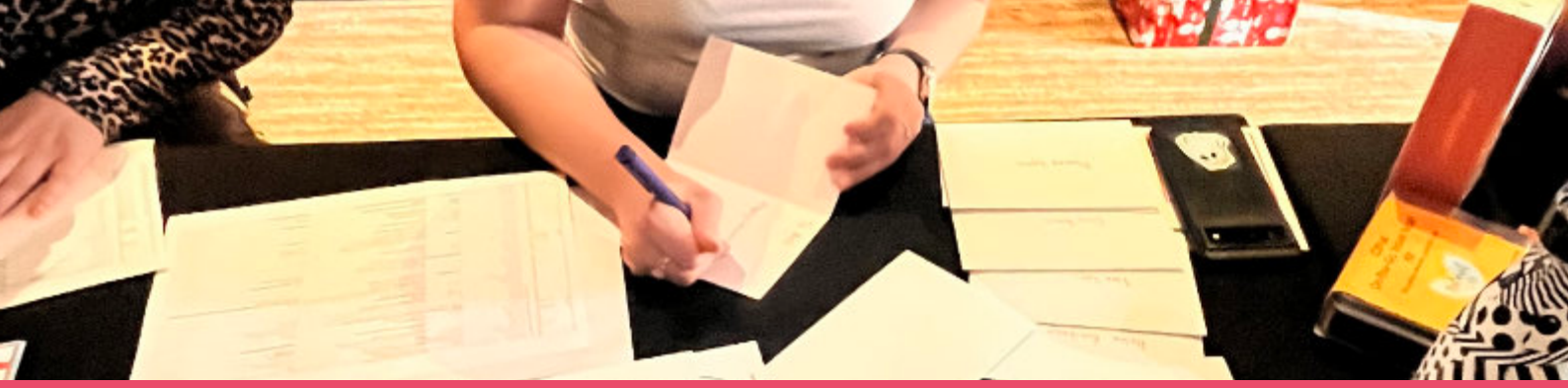
Connector volunteers support people to attend appointments, try new activities, use public transport, join groups or visit community spaces. Many people supported through the project face overlapping barriers, including disability, anxiety, bereavement, long-term health conditions, reduced mobility, low income or limited support.

In 2025/26:

- **57 Connector sessions were delivered**
- **17 new matches were made**
- **17 people received support**
- **15 volunteers were involved**

One person was matched with a Connector volunteer to attend a men's walking group after bereavement had made social situations feel overwhelming. Over three months, he grew in confidence, began speaking with other group members and chose to keep attending after the match ended.

> ***Thank you both so much for helping – onwards and upwards.***
> ***- Connector scheme member***



Connection by Letter

Our Connection by Letter project continued to show that simple forms of connection can have a powerful impact. Letter writing gives people time to share stories and build meaningful relationships at their own pace.

Connection by Letter also gained national recognition when it was featured on BBC One's The One Show, introducing Together Co's work to audiences far beyond Brighton and Hove.

In 2025/26:

- **The service supported 84 matches**
- **155 people were involved**
- **59 matches were still active at the end of March 2026**

> *I've found corresponding with Shirley so easy. I get really excited when I see her letter on the door mat and can't wait to sit down with a cup of tea to read it.*
> *- **Anne, Connection by Letter volunteer***

Volunteering

Volunteers help to make our work possible. They bring their time, kindness, skill and commitment to people across Brighton and Hove.

In 2025/26:

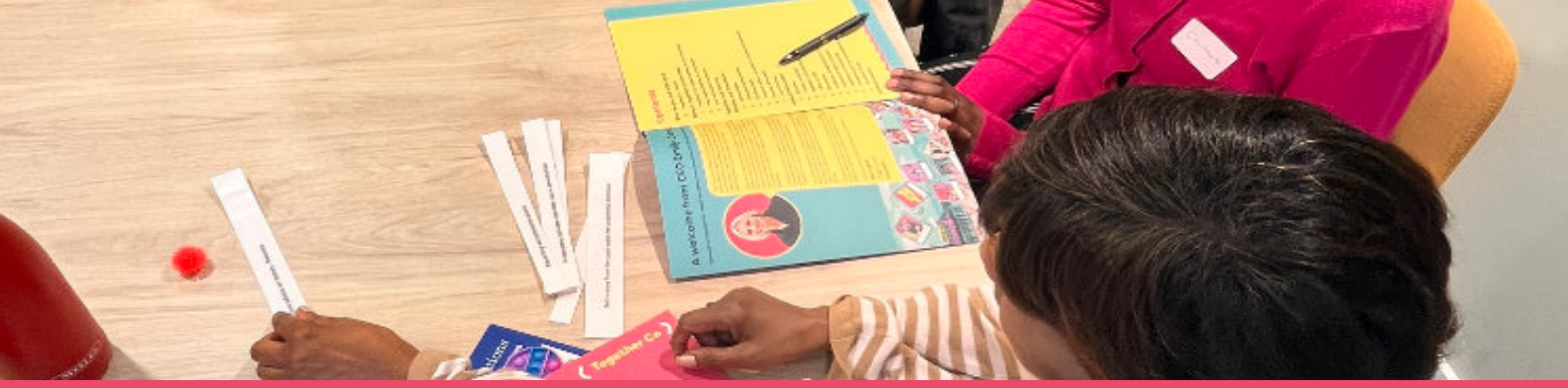
- **We onboarded 129 new volunteers**
- **95% of volunteers rated their training as “very relevant”**
- **100% of volunteers said they felt ready to start volunteering**
- **91% of volunteers reported improved wellbeing**
- **73% said volunteering increased their sense of belonging in their local community**

Volunteers supported one-to-one and group befriending, events, fundraising, social prescribing activity and office administration.

> *“Befriending Patricia was one of the best things that happened to me in 2025. Visiting her is the highlight of my week. I'm so grateful to have met her. I can't stop talking about my experience and encouraging others to join Together Co. It doesn't feel like 'volunteering' at all. I genuinely have so much fun, joy and happiness spending time with Patricia. -* ***Yolanda, Together Co volunteer***

We continued to invest in our volunteer community through newsletters, check-ins, socials, walks, creative sessions, meet-ups and training. Volunteers were also offered free mental health training and workshops on later-life planning and safeguarding.

At the beginning of 2026, we reviewed our corporate volunteering offer and developed new packages for self-managed team volunteering, hosted corporate volunteering days and longer-term partnership programmes.



Volunteering

Corporate volunteers helped us deliver practical support and moments of joy, including through our Winter Hampers campaign. A team of 45 volunteers helped pack, wrap and hand deliver 250 bespoke festive hampers to people experiencing loneliness and isolation across Brighton and Hove.

> *It was so lovely to see the difference Together Co makes within Brighton and all the smiles we put on people's faces this morning. It was really special. - Permit Room, corporate volunteers*

25 Years of Creating Connections

In 2025/26, Together Co celebrated its 25th anniversary and this gave us an opportunity to reflect on our history while engaging thousands of people in conversations about loneliness, belonging, community and social health.

Our anniversary programme centred on Connect in 25, a campaign designed to inspire people to make meaningful connections in their own lives and communities.

Highlights included:

- **A photographic exhibition launched during Loneliness Awareness Week which ran for just over three weeks in June 2025. It celebrated stories of connection, resilience and community, helping new audiences understand the importance of Together Co's work.**

- **Our Brighton & Hove Buses roadshow took the message of social health directly into communities, encouraging conversations about the role connection plays in all our lives.**

Together Co also secured coverage across local, regional and national media, including The One Show, BBC South East Today, ITV Meridian, Latest TV, BBC Radio Sussex, Brighton and Hove News, The Argus, Brighton Journal, SussexWorld, Scene Magazine and Sussex Business Times.

Funders

Together Co is incredibly grateful for the generous support we received from funders in 2025/26. We were proud to receive funding from a wide range of charitable trusts and foundations.

Thank you to Army Benevolent Fund, The Henry Smith Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, National Lottery Awards for All, Humanity at Heart, The Dodgson Foundation, Co-op Community Fund, Brighton & Hove Buses, Richer Sounds, The Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust, Innholders' Charitable Foundation, Waitrose Community Fund, Parry Family Charitable Foundation, Brighton District Nurses Association Trust, The Hadley Trust, Souter Charitable Trust, St James's Place Charitable Foundation, Mrs A Lacy Tate Trust, The Homity Trust, TK Maxx Foundation, Brighton and Hove Soiree Rotary Club, Marsh Charitable Trust, Barleycorn Trust, The Pebble Trust, Focus Foundation, The Concertina Charitable Trust, Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust, Sussex Community Foundation, The Sir Bernard & Lady Schreier Foundation, The Chalk Cliff Trust.

We extend our warm thanks to each of these organisations for their investment in our mission.

We are also thankful to our anonymous donors.

Community Action and Fundraising

Our work would not be possible without the generosity of our supporters, funders, volunteers, businesses and community partners.

In 2025/26, community fundraising continued to grow, bringing people together while raising vital income.

We'd like to say thank you to:

- Everyone who contributed and donated to our gala on Brighton Palace Pier, helping to raise more than £20,000
- Best of British Events for raising £7,000 at a fundraising event at the Waldorf Hotel, London
- Linda Bramley who organised a Zumbathon which raised £800
- Salsa and Flow for organising a Valentine's fundraising event
- Everyone who took part in a sponsored SkyWalk at Brighton's i360, raising more than £4,000
- Everyone who donated to our Winter Warmer Crowdfunding Campaign which raised £4,152
- The 17 runners who took part in the Brighton Half Marathon, raising £8,556

Community Action and Fundraising

Our corporate partnerships also made a significant contribution. The launch of the 25 Club brought together businesses committed to supporting Together Co and championing connection in Brighton and Hove.

Members included GuestHouse Hotels, DMH Stallard, Webtrends Optimize, Lawton & Dawe Properties, IT Document Solutions, Brighton Palace Pier, L&G, Galloways Accounting and Coole Bevis.

One of the year's most powerful examples of community action was our Winter Hampers campaign. Businesses, volunteers and supporters came together to deliver 250 personalised hampers to people experiencing loneliness and isolation.

The campaign was supported by sponsors including Webtrends Optimize, DMH Stallard, Hyde Housing, and Moda, with packing space donated by Leonardo Hotel and deliveries supported by volunteers from L&G, Bird & Blend and Lawton and Dawe Properties.

We would also like to thank Business Leaders Wine Club, Bison Brewery, Data Cove, Female Founders, BozBoz, and all of our Good Gift Guide partners who raised thousands of pounds between them to help us continue our vital work. We were very grateful to receive two generous legacy donations.

Looking Ahead

During the year, we developed our new three-year strategy for 2025–2028. This was shaped by trustees, staff, volunteers, partners and people who use our services. We also reviewed local need, service data, funding trends and wider health and social challenges.

Our strategy is built around four key areas:

- **Redefining volunteering as a powerful and inclusive force for change**
- **Making connections accessible for all**
- **Building an organisation that is resilient and fit for the future**
- **Championing social health locally, nationally and globally**

The strategy reflects our commitment to deepening our impact in Brighton and Hove while influencing wider understanding of social health as a vital part of wellbeing.

We continued to explore how artificial intelligence can support our mission safely and ethically. Our approach remains human-centred: using AI to support people and relationships, not replace them.
In December 2025, the previous CEO left the charity and the Deputy CEO was appointed as CEO. This internal succession supported continuity of leadership, governance and service delivery.

As we look ahead, we will continue to invest in our people and partnerships, and respond to emerging needs, reaching those facing the greatest barriers and championing the role of connection in creating healthier, happier communities.

Thank You

To our volunteers, staff, trustees, ambassadors, funders, donors, corporate partners, community supporters and everyone who uses our services.

Loneliness remains one of the most urgent social issues of our time. Your kindness, time, generosity and belief in the power of connection make this work possible.

> *"The best thing about volunteering with Together Co is how it benefits everyone. You receive so much more than you give. I've gained so much from watching people who are feeling isolated, or falling into depression, gradually come alive and finding the world around them interesting again. I love people, and I love doing this." -* ***Jackie, Together Co volunteer***

Together Co

www.togetherco.org.uk

If you want to be part of our impact for future years, volunteer with us

@HelloTogetherCo

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