



**Connect**  
in the North



# Annual Report 2024 - 2025





# Chair's Report



Hello, It's Vicky here again, the Chair of Connect in the North.

We have had another good year with loads of great stuff happening. We're still going strong.



A lot of our work this year builds on what we've been doing for many years. This means we have plenty of experience running training, members' events, campaigns and standing up for people with learning disabilities.



A really important part of our work is Through the Maze. It gives information to people with learning disabilities about what's going on in Leeds so they can join in.

I've helped by putting information from the Through the Maze newsletter on YouTube to make it accessible.



This year we have run Good Relationships courses for people with learning disabilities and staff. This helps people with learning disabilities to have healthy relationships and to stay safe.

We want to support people to have happy relationships and friendships and to enjoy life.

# Chair's Report



Our Great Seasonal Chats have continued. We started them in Covid so that people could stay in touch and to know what was happening. They have become even more popular. People can join online or in person for quizzes, bingo and information about what's happening in Leeds. They are fun!



Picture by Cheryl Ferris-Stewart

We had another Pride March in Learning Disability Week to let people know we are proud of who we are. More people joined with placards and banners. We hope this will continue to grow and get support. People we passed in town cheered and gave us thumbs-ups.



I want to say a massive thank you to all our brilliant staff, Sarah, Madeleine, Tania and Thomas. You are all doing a fantastic job! The Pass It On People - Courtney, Sapphire, Janet and George - who are doing a great job of sharing information. Thanks to all of them. Thank you to Rooots who are doing an amazing job, training and making a film about faith.



Finally, a big thank you to the other directors on the Connect in the North board, who have been fantastic in keeping Connect in the North going. Thanks very much to Robert, Kenny, Michael, Maisie.



I hope to see you all for another great year in 2025-26!

# Treasurer's Report



Here is my Treasurer's Report

Connect in the North have worked hard to keep close to their budget. This was not easy with the high increases in prices, especially the rent.

We have £103,999 in total resources. This is money in the bank, equipment and money we are owed.

It also covers what we have already paid for in the next year. It includes a deduction for things we owed money for at the year end.

We have £103,999 to carry forward but £3,908 is restricted. This means it must be used towards the carer's expenses for Good Lives Leaders and making of the Rooots film about faith.

We had £100,003 of free reserves on 31st March 2025. This excludes fixed assets because they cannot be spent.



The **co-operative** bank



# Treasurer's Report



In 2025/2026 we plan to spend the same amount of money from Leeds City Council in grants. We are hoping that there won't be any cuts to Making it and Happen and Through the Maze.



Madeleine will keep working on the budgets so that everyone can see how Connect in the North will perform over the next few years of uncertainty.

Robert Stephens - Treasurer

| 2024/2025           |          | Funds Carried forward to 2024/25           |          |
|---------------------|----------|--------------------------------------------|----------|
| Income              | £148,852 | Restricted                                 | £3,908   |
| Spent               | £165,579 | General (Free Reserves excl. fixed assets) | £100,003 |
| Overspent £(16,727) |          | Fixed Assets                               | £88      |
|                     |          | Total Funds                                | £100,091 |

The full details are in our independently examined accounts for 2024/25. You can get a copy of the accounts from the Connect in the North office.

# Connect in the North's Aim

We want people with learning disabilities to have control over their own lives.



Photo by Cheryl Ferris Stewart

All our members and board of directors are people with a learning disability.

The board of directors listens to its members.

We want to find out what would make our members live their best life. We work to make this happen.



We have now have **405** members with learning disabilities.

# Members Events



We held **4** Great Chats again this year. They were online and in person.

It's important we get to hear from our members

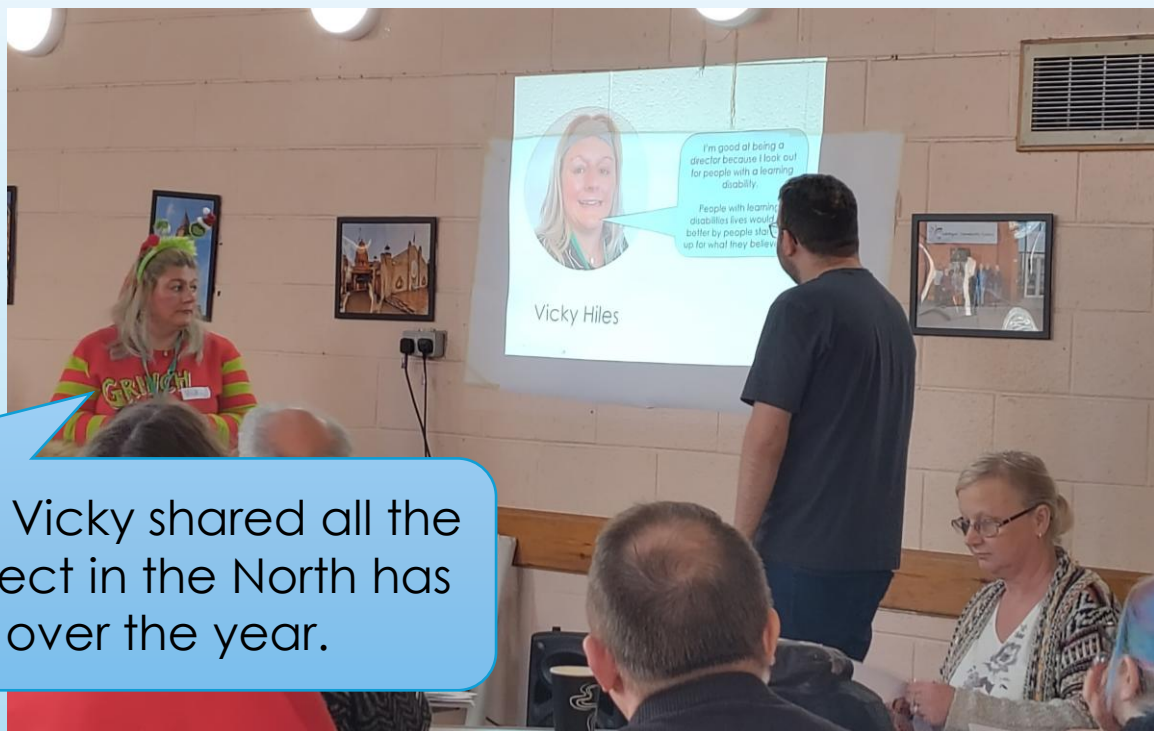


It's a chance to meet up and find out what's happening in Leeds.

# The Annual General Meeting



# The Annual General Meeting



Robert and Vicky shared all the work Connect in the North has done over the year.



The amazing Dramarama entertained everyone.



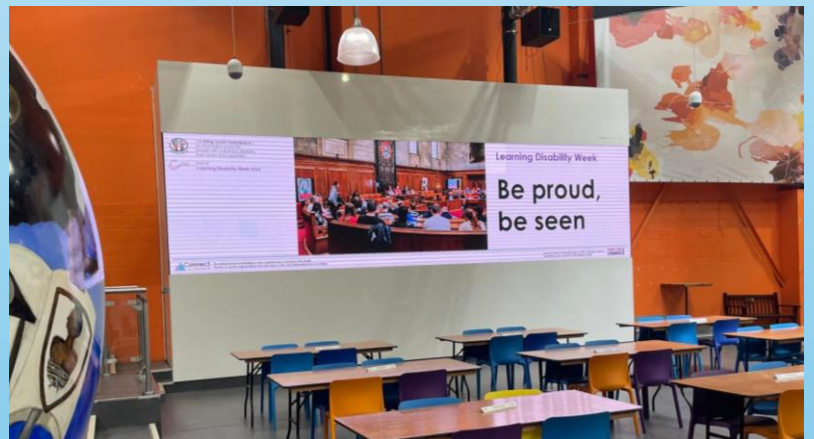


# Learning Disability Week



Before **Learning Disability Week**, we worked with Asking You to write questions for the Council Chamber Take Over.

Pass it on People got funding from Positive Changes to hire the screen in the market. We used it to share information at the Being Social Event we hosted.



The Pass it on People asked questions to local Councillors and people in the Council Chambers.

# Learning Disability Week

We held the 2nd Leeds Learning Disability Pride March in the City Centre. Over 100 people marched.



We had a stall at the Learning Disability Picnic.



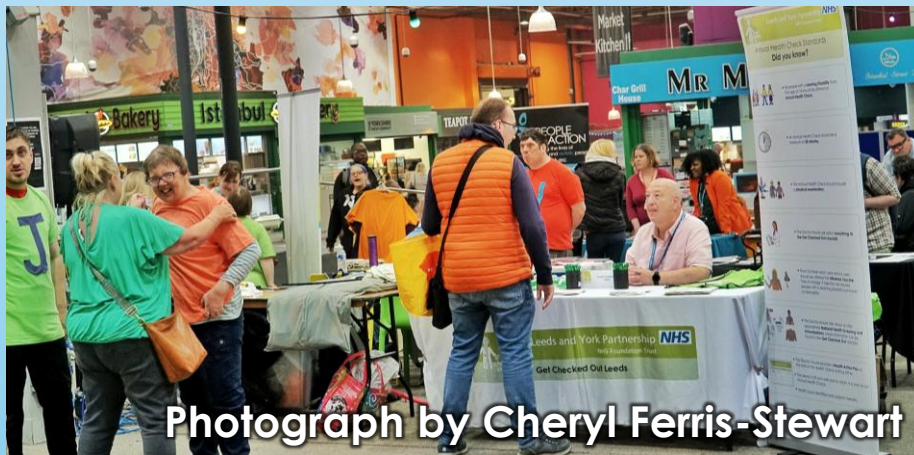
Tania gave out an award at Aspire's Customer Awards.

# Making it Happen

We host the **Being Social Task Group**. This is a group of people with learning disabilities, family carers and staff from different organisations.

We plan how we can improve the social lives of people with learning disabilities

It is part of **Being Me**. This is the Leeds Learning Disability Strategy. This is a plan to make life better for people with learning disabilities in Leeds.



Photograph by Cheryl Ferris-Stewart

Each year we organise the Being Social Information event in Kirkgate Market. It's for people with learning disabilities to find things to do in Leeds



This year we had 24 organisations sharing information about things to do. We spoke to 311 people. Dramarama performed a Flash Mob.

# Making it Happen

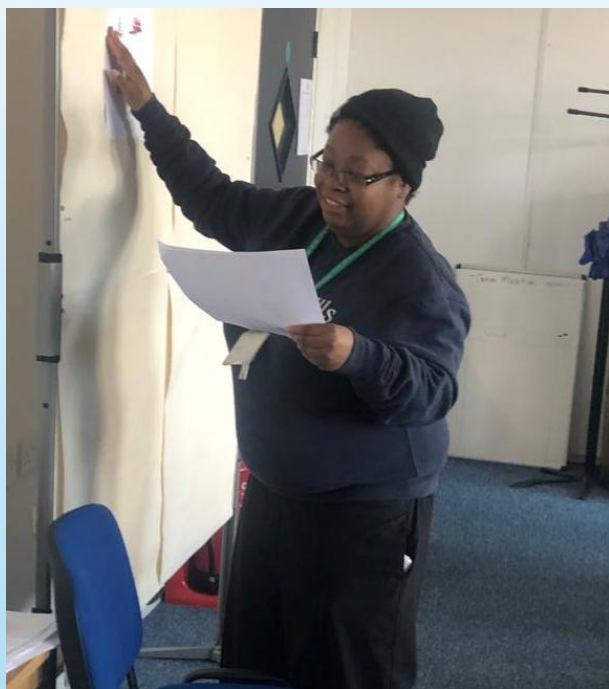
The **Rooots Team** invited the Race Equality Foundation to run an event about Annual Health Checks.



The team got money from the Wharfedale Foundation Trust to work with film maker Jan Wells. They are interviewing people with learning disabilities about what their religion means to them.



# Making it Happen



Training for people with learning disabilities

We ran training sessions for **169 people with learning disabilities.**

We ran –  
3 My Life My Way Courses.  
They were about being part of your local community, voting and how to be a trainer.

We ran courses about online safety and having good relationships.



We ran training for organisations including -

- People in Action
- Asking You
- People Matters

# Making it Happen

Training for staff and family carers

We ran training sessions for **252 members of staff and family carers**.

We ran Managers Making it Happen over 6 months. We did this twice. This was for managers supporting people in Leeds.

We ran 4 programs of person centred thinking training which included -

- 1 Page Profile and Person Centred Review Training
- Person Centred Active Support
- Person Centred Approaches to Difficult Behaviour
- Person Centred Awareness Training
- Supporting Decision Making
- Writing Good Outcomes
- Supporting People to Find Love
- Let's Talk About Loss



We ran training for teams –

- Leeds City Council
- Swarthmore
- Forum Central



**Through the Maze** is an information and signposting service for people with learning disabilities, families and staff.



People can phone Through the Maze 0113 270 32 33 or email [ttm@citn.org.uk](mailto:ttm@citn.org.uk) to find out information

People can arrange to see us. We will find you the information you need.



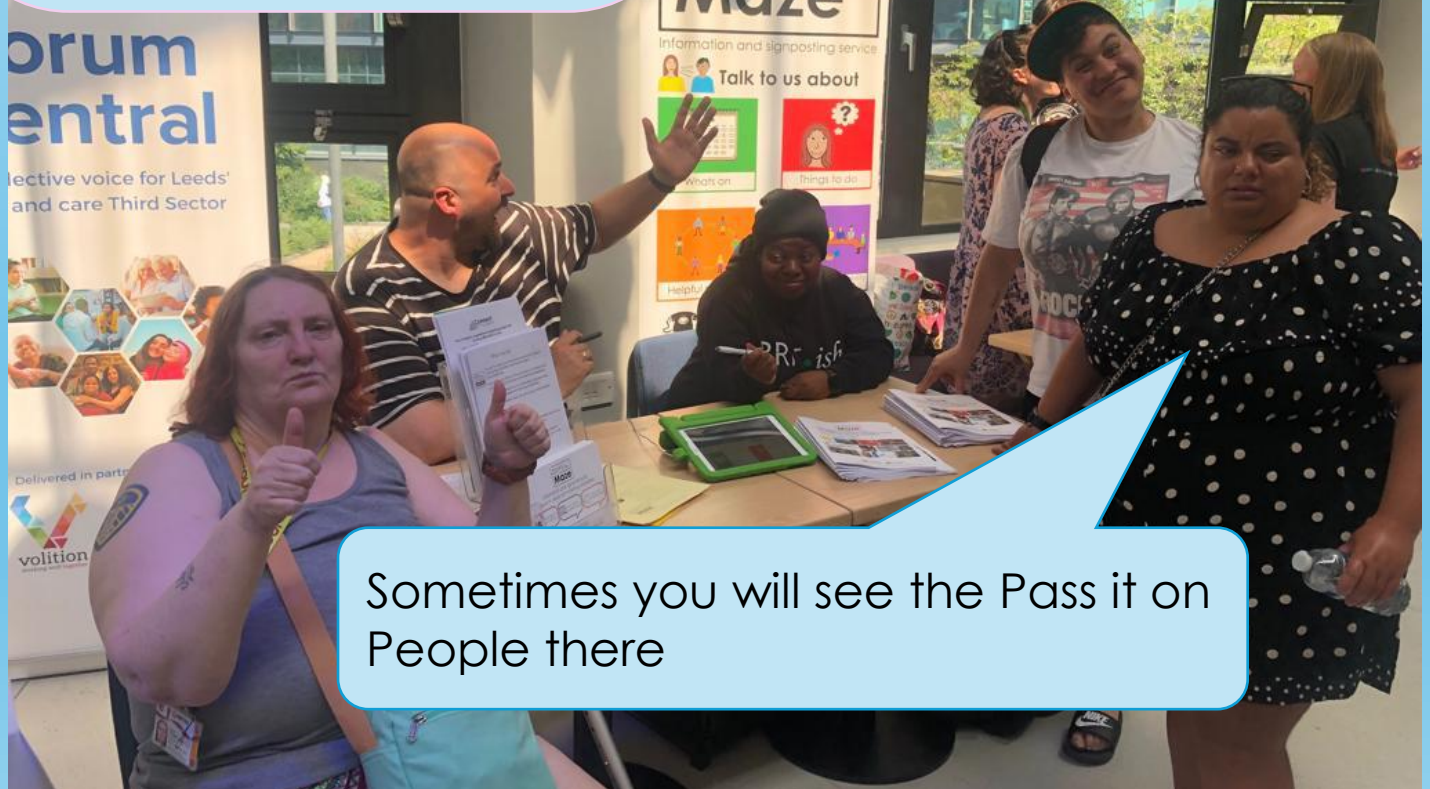
This year we met with **2,443** People



You can often find Through the Maze at events.

This year we went to:

- Autism Acceptance Stall
- SEND - Creative Careers
- SEND – Next Choices Employment Event
- Being Social
- Picnic in the Park
- International Day of Disabled People
- Leeds Local Live Event



Sometimes you will see the Pass it on People there

# The Pass it on People Team



The Pass it on People are employed to find out information about what is happening in Leeds. They share what they learn across the city.



We visit lots of places. We write about them in the Through the Maze Newsletter

# The Pass it on People Team



These are some of the things we did -

- People's Parliament
- Met Lynn Bailey from BAFF to find out about Small Sparks funding.
- Forum Central social media takeover.
- Wrote an article for Leeds Living website
- Council Chambers Takeover
- Learning Disability Pride March
- Being Social marketplace
- St Vincent's Community Centre
- We met with a team that is making Leeds train station better.
- Holbeck Together
- Courtney interviewed a member of Leep1
- BAFF AGM.
- Elland Road Police HQ event.
- Woodhouse Community Centre
- Scope Community Hub

# Through the Maze

We send out **984** newsletters  
4 times a year



We have an advisory group. They meet to share ideas about Through the Maze and make changes to the newsletter.

The Through the Maze website had **41,000** visits last year.



We got **126** people signed up to WhatsApp



We have **710** Facebook likes

# Other Work



We took part in 2 Webinars for Skills for Care

We ran training for Forum Central



We continued to host and update the **Being Employed Leeds Website**



**Thank you to**

Gill Crawshaw for supporting me as the chair.

Katy Sargeant from WYCAS for supporting us with our money.

We also want to thank all our members and the people who support and fund us.



| <b>Funder</b>                                                                                                              | <b>Project or activity funded</b>                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Leeds Joint Commissioning Service<br><br> | Making it Happen in Leeds - Person Centred Planning and Thinking |
| Leeds Joint Commissioning Service<br><br> | Through the Maze – information and signposting service           |
| Forum Central<br><br>                     | Staff Training                                                   |
| Skills for Care<br><br>                   | Webinars about being a user led organisation                     |
| The Wharfedale Foundation<br><br>       | Let's Talk About Faith                                           |

|                                                                                                                           |                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Registered office:<br>Connect in the North<br>Office 45 Sugar Mill<br>Oakhurst Road<br>Leeds<br>LS11 7HL                  | Bankers:<br>Co-operative Bank Plc<br>19/20 Commercial Street<br>Leeds<br>LS1 6AL |
| 0113 270 3233                                                                                                             | Independent Examiners:<br>WYCAS                                                  |
| <a href="mailto:info@citn.org.uk">info@citn.org.uk</a><br>Website<br><a href="http://www.citn.org.uk">www.citn.org.uk</a> | Stringer House<br>34 Lupton Street<br>Leeds<br>LS10 2QW                          |
| Charity number 1078829                                                                                                    | 0113 270 6291                                                                    |
| Company number 3127540                                                                                                    |                                                                                  |



By phone

0113 270 3233



Write to

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By email

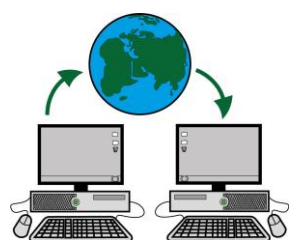
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