



# **Social Impact Report**

**2024-2025**

**Contents**

- Introduction .....3
  - Introduction to the year .....3
  - Social impact in Thera .....5
- Good foundations .....7
  - Housing .....7
- Money .....9
  - Health .....12
- Learning .....14
- Good wellbeing and living the life you choose .....16
  - People are doing what they want: .....16
  - People are developing connections:.....18
  - People are doing something that is meaningful to them and making a contribution: .....21
- Impactful leadership by people with a learning disability.....23
  - People are leaders in Thera, influencing the company and Group.....23
  - People are leaders and have influence beyond Thera .....23
- More welcoming communities with more opportunities .....25



## Introduction

### Introduction to the year

We are pleased to present this year's Social Impact report, which celebrates the achievements that people are making, with support from Thera Group, across housing, financial advocacy, health, learning, employment, and community inclusion. Our teams and partners have delivered meaningful, measurable progress that strengthens both individual lives and the wider communities we serve.

2024-25 saw many successes:

- Unity Works Social Enterprises has continued to grow and support more people through new supported employment contracts, an increase in supported internships, and the launch of the Unity Futures programme, all of which have led to more people being supported into work.
- Dosh partnered with The University of Bristol to understand the relationship between people with lived experience and money.
- The work of many of our staff have been recognised as finalists by several award bodies.
- Service Quality Directors have been fierce advocates, speaking at several conferences and appearing on the radio to raise awareness of our vision

This year's report demonstrates not only the breadth of our work, but the depth of its impact. From supporting people to find the right homes and design their own support, to helping individuals gain

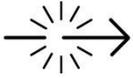
## **Thera Group | Social Impact Report 2024-25**

financial independence, build skills, secure employment, and lead within their communities, Our care and support companies, alongside our specialist companies, continue to innovate and adapt, ensuring that the people we support are empowered to live full, independent, and self-directed lives.

For full details on Thera's activities over the year, as well as financial performance, please refer to Thera Trust's Annual Report and Accounts, which can be viewed [here](#).

We are proud of what has been achieved this year and deeply grateful to our colleagues, partners, and the people we support, whose experiences and insights shape our direction. We look forward to building on this strong foundation as we continue to measure our impact.

Thera's Group Executive team



impact

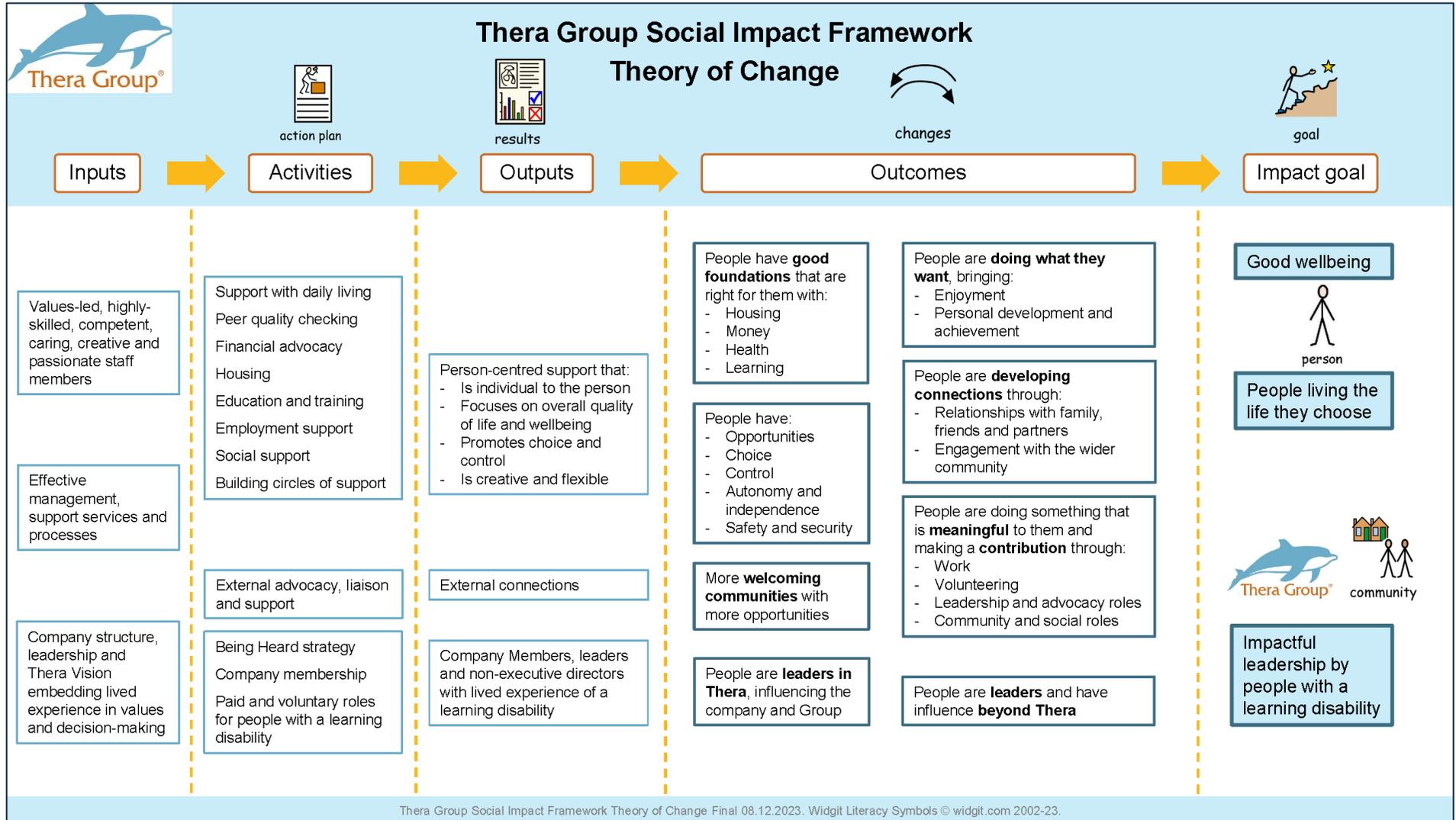
### Social impact in Thera

Our social impact framework focuses on outcomes for people across a number of key areas:

- Choice and control for people in all areas of their lives.
- Laying good foundations around housing, money, learning and health.
- Promoting wellbeing, in line with the PERMA(H) model and 5 ways to wellbeing. Within Thera's Positive Behaviour Team, we incorporate the PERMA(H) model into people's support planning to ensure their psychological and emotional well-being needs are met alongside their physical health needs. PERMA(H) is based on scientific Well-Being Theory (WBT) with research showing that each component within the model can contribute not only to elements of well-being, but also in lowering psychological distress, building resilience, and increasing life satisfaction and positive outcomes for people supported.
- Promoting leadership by people with a learning disability in their lives, their Thera companies, their local communities and society more broadly.

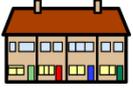
We look forward to continually reviewing our impact framework to ensure it stays aligned with our vision, mission, values and strategic priorities, while also creating more opportunities to share and celebrate our impact on a more regular basis.

Social Impact Framework – Theory of Change



### Good foundations

People have **good foundations** that are right for them



housing

### Housing

Having the right housing ensures that people with a learning disability have a stable home with the access and support they need, as well as promoting their wellbeing with a comfortable home environment. It gives people opportunities to connect with their local community, access local jobs and leisure activities, stay connected with family and friends and build new relationships. Most importantly, having control over where you live is a cornerstone of having control over your life and your support.

During 2024-25, Forward Housing Developed 3 new properties providing homes for 5 people. This increases the total of people living in properties owned or leased by Forward Housing to 193 people. One of these individuals, who has moved out of long-term institutional care, is finally enjoying the freedom of independence in their own home – something they have been seeking for a long time! The other two properties have been developed to suit the personalised needs of the individuals that now live there and will ensure they are able to live independently in their new home for many years to come.

### IMPACT Housing Project

In November 2024, Thera began a project in partnership with [IMPACT \(Improving Adult Care Together\)](#) to better understand the impact of the right of local housing on people with a learning disability. The early stages of this project focused on fact finding and

## Thera Group | Social Impact Report 2024-25

included discussions with internal and external stakeholders such as people supported, support staff, operations managers, and housing providers. We are looking forward to seeing the outputs of this project in the financial year 2025/26.



story

### **Kieran\* is enjoying his new home**

Kieran (name changed) has recently moved into his new home, supported by Aspire Living and has already built strong relationships with the people he lives with and his support staff.

Community Support Leader Neal Williams said: “From the start, Kieran engaged with people well and has built bonds with staff members as well as the people he lives with.”

One of the support staff shares Kieran’s Indian heritage, and has been helping him to learn about and celebrate his culture.

Kieran said: “I’m lucky I have someone here like him. I get to explore my culture, he’s been introducing me to Indian dishes. He’s a great support worker and really passionate about his job.”

Kieran is building strong relationships with the people he lives with. He joined Community Support Leader Neal for their Friday swim club, planned a meal and went shopping with someone he shares his house with, who then taught him to cook it, and is attending a comic con with some of his housemates in the near future.

Neal feels that the move has been a positive one, saying: “The house dynamic works really well. There’s a mutual respect amongst everyone who lives there which is really good.”

Kieran agrees: “I’m settling in and I’m enjoying it.”



money

### Money

Having access to money when you need it, enables you to live well at home, as well as get out and do the things you enjoy. For people that need additional support with money, Dosh Financial Advocacy helps them to manage benefits, bills and budgeting, with a focus on giving people choice and control.

At the end of 2024-25, Dosh had grown to support a total of 1652 people with a learning disability to manage their money, building relationships with each person to help them use their money to lead their lives in the way they want. When beginning to support people, Dosh Financial Advocates often find incorrect benefit claims, bill payments and other financial assessments and work closely with the individual and their circle of support to get these right, so that the person has the money they need and are entitled to.

Dosh's annual review survey of people supported (441 responses) for 2024-25 showed that:

- 88% of people were happy with Dosh's support
- 83% say that Dosh sends them their money and pays their bills on time
- 81% agreed or strongly agreed that they are well supported to make decisions about their money



story

### Abi's story

Dosh has supported Abi for a while, and Abi calls her advocate her "money man." Through Dosh's support, she has been able to use her money to reach her goals.

In December 2024, Abi chose to book two tickets to see her favourite football team, Arsenal, play in the Women's Super League! Abi's support team helped her book the tickets, and her Dosh 'money man' supported her to budget for them using her money plan.

Abi got the train to the stadium and met lots of Arsenal fans on her journey. To top the day off, Arsenal Women's won the match 4-0!

*"She has really enjoyed the day out and would love to go again, it was amazing!"*

Abi's support staff commented how supportive and approachable Dosh are to Abi. They feel like they can contact Dosh with any queries to ensure Abi achieves her dreams. Without the support from Dosh to help Abi manage her finances, these trips could not be possible. Abi sends a huge thank you to her 'money man'!

### Financial Inclusion Project

Throughout 2024, Dosh partnered with The University of Bristol to talk to people with a learning disability about their money and finances. Sam Holman, who has a lived experience of learning disability, supported by Gerard Starling from Thera Trust, led the work. They were supported by a project steering group from the University of Bristol, Thera Trust and Dosh Financial Advocacy.

With the help of Thera support staff, Sam and Gerard talked to 16 people with a learning disability at workshops or interviews. Many of their support workers came as well.

After talking to people with a learning disability about their money and finances, they reviewed what everyone said about their money and what they think could be done with this learning.

Read the easy read report of the study's findings and their reflections at: [How people with a learning disability feel about money and finances](#)



health

### Health

People with a learning disability are known to experience much worse health outcomes compared to the general population, with [Learning from Lives and Deaths - People with a learning disability and autistic people \(LeDeR\) report](#) for 2023 finding higher rates of avoidable deaths (40.2%) and lower life expectancy (63 years), which is 19.5 years younger than the general population<sup>1</sup>. Thera's care and support teams advocate for the people they support every day and work alongside health professionals to support people to get access to the treatment they need and to maintain good health.

A Healthcare Initiatives Group made up of Aspire Living staff and led by Service Quality Director Ian Harper, has worked to improve these health inequalities. Ian compiled several case studies of people supported by Aspire, documenting their journeys and detailing where the experiences have been unacceptable. The findings and recommendations of this report have been presented to the local Integrated Care Board which led to Ian meeting with the Program Lead and Clinical Lead for Learning Disability and Autism.

This meeting led to Aspire being invited to join the LeDeR Learning into Action Group as a Provider Representative. The conversation with the Clinical Lead led to discussions about how we can try and influence the way nurses are trained in how best to support people with a lived experience of a learning disability whilst in hospital and discussions with the Head of Nursing have begun.

---

<sup>1</sup> White, A; Sheehan, R; Ditzel, N; Ding, J; Roberts, C; Magill, N; Yu, MKL; Keagan-Bull, R; Chauhan, U; Tuffrey-Wijne, I; Strydom, A (2026). Learning from Lives and Deaths - People with a learning disability and autistic people (LeDeR) report for 2023. LeDeR Autism and Learning Disability partnership, King's College London



story

### Mike leads the way in his own stoma care

We believe that true person-centred support begins with listening and acting on what matters most to the people we support. That belief comes to life in stories like Mike's, where advocacy, empowerment, and education all come together to make a real difference.

Mike, who is supported by Aspire Living, experienced a change in his stoma bag that required adjustments in how his support team assisted him. Rather than waiting for others to determine the next steps, Mike took the lead. He advocated for the kind of support he wanted and worked alongside his stoma nurse to organise and deliver a bespoke training session for his staff team.

This was not just any training. Mike actively participated, standing confidently in front of his team to show exactly how he manages his stoma care and how he wants to be supported when needed. His clear, hands-on approach helped break down barriers and build understanding. The session proved incredibly valuable, especially for team members who hadn't previously supported Mike and were unfamiliar with stoma care. Thanks to Mike's guidance and his nurse's expertise, they walked away feeling far more confident and prepared.

This is healthcare advocacy in action – led by the individual, supported by professionals, and embraced by the wider team. Mike's story is a powerful reminder that when people are supported to use their voice and shape their support, they not only thrive, but also inspire others to do the same.



### Learning

All Thera Group companies support people to learn in different ways, from using person-centred active support approaches in care and support companies to help people build their daily living skills, to using the [money plan game in Dosh](#) to help people better understand their budget and learn about money.

Unity Works Social Enterprise is a company that specialises in employment and training for people with a learning disability. They support trainees to gain skills and qualifications, as well as running adult community learning courses for a range of employment and broader wellbeing and life skills. In 2024/25, just 4.6%<sup>2</sup> of people with a learning disability aged 18-64 were in employment.

At the end of March 2025, Unity Works Social Enterprises had 659 people enrolled on its various programs. This is made up of:

- **91** trainees
- **413** job seekers (supported employment)
- **43** adult learners
- **112** young people on Unity Futures

There are also **4** people currently undertaking an NVQ through Unity Works Social Enterprises, **43** people on their adult learning courses.

---

<sup>2</sup> [Adult social care activity report, England: 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

## Thera Group | Social Impact Report 2024-25

Unity Works Social Enterprise were successful in supporting 15 young people to securing a training outcome and 2 young people in securing an education outcome.

The adult learning programme was also “highly commended” at the Mayor of London’s Adult Learning Awards.



story

### **James’ story: gaining skills and confidence at Jackson’s Café**

A young man called James is a trainee at Jackson’s Café, a social enterprise café run by Unity Works. James joined Jacksons café to reinforce existing skills learnt in college and develop new skills with the aim of securing work experience and/or paid work in catering.

James developed skills and confidence in areas including front of house, handling money, and making drinks. His confidence in these areas encouraged him to begin an NVQ Level 1 in Hospitality and Catering.

When asked what he thinks of this, James said: *“It’s really good, and a great a skill to master. It helps me to give me more skills.”*



## Good wellbeing and living the life you choose

### People are doing what they want:

- Enjoyment
- Personal development and achievement

It seems simple enough, but for many people with a learning disability, just getting to choose what you do, and having the option to do the things you enjoy, is often easier said than done. Our care and support companies support people every day to access and enjoy a whole range of activities and do the things they enjoy. Our specialist companies also support creating these options for people, for example through Dosh, ensuring people have the money they need.

Below, we share the stories of Will and Liam, and how they have been supported to pursue their hobbies and interests to open further opportunities for increased wellbeing and personal development.



story

### Will's Story

Will is a young man who has always been passionate about sports. Using his own equipment, Will has successfully filmed over forty episodes so far, where he discusses Premier League Football, Rugby, Cricket, and Formula 1. The videos are uploaded to Thera East Anglia's Facebook page and are a celebrated staple!

On top of this, with support from his staff he has also secured opportunities to appear on Peterborough Community Radio, who agreed to host his sportscast on their website.



story

### Liam's story

Liam is a young man who is supported to live independently in his own home by Thera South West.

When we started supporting him, he didn't have many opportunities to socialise with peers his own age so Debbie, Liam's Community Support Leader, supported him in meeting two other individuals also supported by Thera South West, including a gentleman named Dean.

They started playing [Boccia](#) together on a Monday and play football and basketball on Thursdays. Since they began attending, the three men have bonded and become good friends. Liam regularly goes to Dean's house on Sunday for a roast dinner and a walk, and they also meet up every Tuesday at Liam's request.

The three young men have decided that they want to go on holiday together and have started to plan a trip to Butlins, which they are all very excited for.

Accessing activities in the community, building relationships, and getting regular physical exercise has had a phenomenally positive effect on Liam's life and he is much happier.



relationships

### People are developing connections:

- Relationships with family, friends and partners
- Engagement with the wider community

Enabling people to develop connections with loved ones and wider communities is something all Thera Group companies support, and is a particular specialism of the Gig Buddies and Equal Futures projects. Both projects take place in Scotland to enable those that often don't qualify for much, if any, formal social care support to have opportunities to get out socially, build relationships and create circles of support.

Equal Futures continued to deliver befriending support and social events, including the facilitation of workshops to give people the tools to set up their own circles. In the 24/25 year the Equal Futures project supported 77 people, including:

- **16 active circles of support**
- **14 waiting for match**
- **14 interested in parent carer networks**
- **33 information and guidance**

Gig Buddies has had another exceptional year. They continued to help people access events in their local communities and build confidence. They ran 129 socials with a total attendance of over one thousand people. They ran a feedback survey of members to discover what was working and how they could improve.

## Thera Group | Social Impact Report 2024-25

Their feedback survey showed<sup>3</sup>:

- **100%** of respondents feel their Gig Buddy is a friend
- **75%** feel their social life has improved since they joined Gig Buddies
- **86%** believe that Gig Buddies gives them the opportunity to get out more to different places
- **87%** have been to new places
- **83%** have made new friends through Gig Buddies
- **85%** believe they have a say in what Gig Buddies does

Quotes collected from Gig Buddies members include:

“Gig Buddies gets it. From the staff to volunteers to members. Gig Buddies makes a difference to people's lives.”

“I feel less lonely, I'm getting out more and seeing new things.”

“Gig Buddies is fantastic and it's completely changed my life. When I'm on my own I can feel quite vulnerable, and having someone with me gives me a lot of confidence.”

---

<sup>3</sup> Survey conducted by Gig Buddies in December 2024.

2024 impact:

**GIG BUDDIES THERA TRUST 2024 IN NUMBERS**

It's been a year of records for us. We've run more socials than ever, given away more Edinburgh Festival tickets than ever, had more public donations than ever, and even won our first award. Thanks to all the venues, organisations and artists that made the year what it was. This is our 2024 in numbers...

- WE GAVE AWAY 256 TICKETS TO THE EDINBURGH FESTIVALS**
- 29 GROUP SOCIALS IN AUGUST**
- 81% OF MEMBERS ARE MORE CONFIDENT TO GO BACK**
- 73% SAW MORE SHOWS THAN LAST YEAR**
- 4 DAYS AND NIGHTS AT KELBURN GARDEN PARTY**
- 1 EDINBURGH FESTIVAL ACCESS AWARD**
- £3120 IN PUBLIC DONATIONS**
- 153 EVENT STAFF TRAINED IN DISABILITY ACCESS + AWARENESS**
- 15 GIG BUDDIES FUNDRAISED WITH KILT WALK**
- 159 GIG BUDDIES PAIRINGS SINCE 2016**
- OVER £1000 FROM PILOT BEER'S DRINKKLUSION FUND ...AND MANY CANS**
- WE RAN A TOTAL OF 129 SOCIALS! TOTAL ATTENDANCE OF: 1025**
- ACROSS 3 AREAS: GIG BUDDIES EDINBURGH, GIG BUDDIES WESTLOTHIAN, GIG BUDDIES GLASGOW**

**THANK YOU!**

**“IT'S FANTASTIC THAT THE BARRIERS OF AUTISTIC PEOPLE, AND PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY ARE BEING RECOGNISED.”**  
JOSEPH, GIG BUDDIES ACCESS COACH

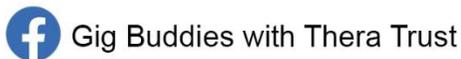
**“REALLY GREAT SESSION! GIVING EVERYONE A SEAT IS SUPER IMPORTANT.”**  
TRAINING FEEDBACK

**“A GOOD VIBE AND GREAT MUSIC. GETTING INVOLVED WITH GIG BUDDIES HAS BEEN BRILLIANT.”**  
SCOTT, GIG BUDDIES MEMBER

**“WITHOUT GIG BUDDIES, I'D BE STUCK IN THE HOUSE. IT GIVES ME THE REASSURANCE I NEED TO GET OUT.”**  
KEV, GIG BUDDIES MEMBER

**“THAT WAS THE BEST YEAR OF MY LIFE. SEEING 3 OF MY FAVOURITE BANDS.”**  
GIG BUDDIES MEMBER

**“THE FANTASTIC WORK THAT GIG BUDDIES DOES PERFECTLY EMBODIES THE SPIRIT OF WHY WE SET DRINKKLUSION UP. BRINING PEOPLE TOGETHER.”**  
MATT, PILOT BEER



Top left photo credit: Eoin Carey



meaningful

### People are doing something that is meaningful to them and making a contribution:

- Work
- Volunteering
- Leadership and advocacy roles
- Community and social roles

Thera supports people to contribute in a way that is meaningful for them, whether that is paid or voluntary roles, or community and social activity.

Helping people to identify their passions and opportunities to contribute to their communities is an integral part of our support offer. Below, we share the story of Diana, who was keen to build her skills and confidence to support her independence.



story

### Diana's story

Diana is supported by Thera East Anglia at the Meeting Place. When Diana joined us, she wanted support with confidence building and learning new skills for when she moved into supported living.

After spending time with her, the team discovered her passion for hair and makeup. Andy, her Support Worker, researched possible work placements for Diana and found a local hair salon. With Andy's support, Diana met the owner, who offered her a placement!

Soon after, Diana wanted to improve her cooking skills. With more support from Andy, Diana secured a second work placement at a local coffee shop. Now, Diana does one workday at each placement.

Diana said: “I enjoy the baking at the coffee shop, at the hair salon I really like using the blockhead and joining in with staff, I feel like part of the team.”



### Building skills for voluntary and paid work

Unity Works specialises in employment support, including supporting people to build skills ready for voluntary and paid work. In 2024-25 they:

- Supported **105** people into paid employment
- Helped **129** people to begin unpaid positions as a step towards paid employment
- Supported **66** people to sustain employment for 26 weeks
- Supported **25** people to sustain employment for 52 weeks

Within their supported employment scheme (not including Unity Futures/Young People), they achieved the following.

- **180** people attending interviews
- **96** people achieving jobs
- **123** volunteering/work placements

In total there are **659** people enrolled in Unity Works programmes and their success in supporting people into training.



### **Impactful leadership by people with a learning disability**

#### **People are leaders in Thera, influencing the company and Group**

#### **People are leaders and have influence beyond Thera**

It is a core part of Thera's Vision that people with a learning disability can be leaders in society – and this can look like many different things, including leadership roles and actions within and beyond Thera. In terms of senior roles in Thera Group companies, at the end of 24-25, we had:

- 11 paid senior level roles for people bringing their lived experience of a learning disability, some of these are co working roles both within boards and also with a focus on Quality and Involvement
- 77% of Thera Group boards included someone with lived experience of a learning disability
- 7 companies had active Company Membership schemes, involving 54 people with a learning disability as supported company members speaking up about their company
- 95 company members in total (including people supported, staff, and family/carers)

This leadership included 8 Service Quality Directors, who use their lived and professional experience to lead their care and support companies alongside the Managing Director, and Thera Trust's Co-Chair role. We welcomed Ben McCay in 2024 as Service Quality

## **Thera Group | Social Impact Report 2024-25**

Director for The Camden Society, who brings lots of experience from former roles and has immediately made an impact advocating for people with lived experience.

This year has seen a focus on outreach and profile building by multiple Service Quality Directors. Sam Avery, Service Quality Director for Thera South West, has attended and spoken at several events and conferences including the Wiltshire Parent and Carers Council's information event, and HomeGroup's safeguarding conference.

Jordan Allan, Service Quality Director for Thera (Scotland) attended the West Lothian Disability Access Committee and the Midlothian Learning Disability Strategy Group. There, he introduced Thera (Scotland) and explained our approach to supporting people with a learning disability.

Elena Frewin, Service Quality Director for Thera East Midlands, continued with the Being Heard strategy launched in 2023. Elena ran numerous events throughout the year the most successful of which was attended by 51 people. These events provide the people we support with opportunities to discuss any concerns they have, as well as tailored information sessions to benefit themselves.



### More welcoming communities with more opportunities

Thera companies are looking at how they not only support individuals, but influence the wider communities they work in to overcome barriers and create more opportunities for people with a learning disability. In this year this has included:

- Dosh Financial Advocacy providing a budgeting workshop attended by **20** support staff
- Dosh Financial Advocacy providing a money management workshop to support staff and management attended by **32** staff
- Gig Buddies partnering with **21** organisations and venues
- Unity Works working with **48** employers in their employer engagement programme

Gig Buddies have expanded their model to offer training and advice to venues and create more accessible, inclusive communities. By December 2024 they had trained **153** event staff in disability access and awareness promoting inclusivity within their local communities and creating spaces that people with lived experience can more easily access.

Gig Buddies with Thera Trust were also delighted to be presented with the Skinny and Fest Magazine's Edinburgh Festival Award for Accessibility in August 2024. The project was recognised for 'operating in the city year-round, working with local arts organisations and venues to make cultural events as accessible as possible.'

**Thera Group | Social Impact Report 2024-25**

Joseph Cox, Gig Buddies Accessibility Coach said: “It’s fantastic that the barriers of autistic audience members, and people with a learning disability are being recognised.”



*Sam and Joseph receiving the Skinny and Fest Magazine’s Edinburgh Festival Award for Accessibility on behalf of Gig Buddies with Thera Trust*

For any query on the content of the report, please contact  
**[investors@thera.co.uk](mailto:investors@thera.co.uk)**

Thera Trust registered charity number - 1090163

Widgit Symbols © Widgit Software 2002-2026 **[www.widgit.com](http://www.widgit.com)**

Published February 2026