

# IMPACT REPORT 2024- 25

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INSPIRING CHANGE,  
CHANGING FUTURES



**The Us  
Charitable  
Trust**



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# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Us Charitable Trust team has achieved an incredible amount of innovative work each year, and 2025 saw the launch of our new programme Empower Her. Created in partnership with Alperton Community School and the Jason Roberts Foundation, this special initiative supports girls aged 11–12 and their families, helping to drive systemic change in Brent and opening up wider opportunities for them to see the full scope of their abilities.

Our Zenobia Scholars and Youth Ambassadors also continue to grow, with every new cohort showing even greater ambition, creativity, and talent. We remain committed to supporting young people during the holiday periods—something we have done since the very beginning of Us—because this is such a vulnerable time for them. Our holiday activities continue to provide not only entertainment but also learning, while keeping young people busy, safe and fed.

This year we are also launching The Phoenix Project, a new initiative for young people aged 18–25. It is designed to offer training, skills development, and career opportunities to bridge the gap between education and employment. We have been concerned for some time about how best to support our alumni once they leave school, especially those who do not go straight into university or good jobs, and this project is our response.

In addition, we are planning two exciting new developments. The first is to build a broader funding base by forming partnerships with companies and businesses whose goals match ours, with the hope of launching later this autumn. While we remain deeply thankful to John Lyons Charity and BBC Children in Need for their incredible support, we know it is now vital to strengthen our base through business links if we want to secure our future.

The second development is an international exchange with Tutume McConnell Community College in Botswana, originally founded by the McConnell Foundation 50 years ago. In 2026 we plan to take students from Brent to work on two environmental projects—installing solar panels and planting trees—as well as creating a new website for Tutume. At the end of the trip, there will be the unforgettable experience of a safari in the Okavango. The students chosen will raise half of their costs, which will be match-funded by the Marcus Rashford Foundation, while Us will cover the travel of two accompanying staff.



**Serena Balfour**

FOUNDER & CHAIRMAN

# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

1500

young people supported in the 2024-25 academic year

4

major programmes run throughout the year with plans to extend to a fifth one in the 2025-26 year

8

external workshops and trips run throughout the year

9

large-scale events run throughout the academic year

30

corporate interactions with young people

32

paid work experience and volunteer opportunities for young people



# CONTRIBUTIONS

## Volunteer Contributions

32 volunteers – all young people that the charity sees and supports weekly

100+ hours across all events

Notable events including Iftar, Summer and Holiday Camps, Industry Panels, Youth Ambassadors, and Zenobia Scholars

## Corporate Contributions

Charlie Bigham's participation in Industry events and donation to Youth Ambassadors programme

Donation from Bently Studio

Over £1000 worth of food donated by Roti King

Engagement from at least 45 businesses and organisations

Notable events including Iftar, Industry Panel, Careers Fair, Youth Ambassadors and Zenobia Scholars



# PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

## Future Voice

The Us Charity engaged with students from three partner schools, providing career advice, interactive workshops, and opportunities to give back to the community through work experience and shadowing placements. In one example, Year 12 and 13 students joined the charity's team to deliver career guidance sessions for Year 10 students preparing for their GCSEs and beginning to explore their future career paths.

## Empower Her

The 2024–25 academic year marked the launch of our new programme in collaboration with **Alperton Community School** and the **Jason Roberts Foundation**. Designed to support girls aged 11–12 and their families in a holistic way, the programme aims to drive systemic change within Brent and the wider community. It will run for an additional two years, welcoming a new cohort of girls from primary school each year, with the goal of supporting a total of 90 students and creating lasting, sustainable impact.

## Zenobia Scholars

Building on the overwhelmingly positive outcomes of the previous year, the programme has expanded to continue supporting our Year 13 Zenobia alumni while also welcoming and nurturing a new cohort of Year 12 participants. The alumni have played an active role in supporting programme leaders by planning and delivering workshops, organising trips, and mentoring the new group. At its core, the programme remains committed to empowering young women by providing opportunities and experiences that are not readily available within the school system.

*“As an external facilitator, it is a pleasure to work with the Zenobia Scholars programme. Alisha is incredibly organised, clear in her briefings, and passes on communication to the girls so that everyone is prepared for my sessions – a dream! Together Alisha and Tiff consistently create a space for these young women—within sometimes chaotic schools and challenging circumstances—where they can feel safe, be themselves and build supportive friendships, which means as an external facilitator covering sensitive topics (like healthy relationships, sex, contraception, and pleasure) I can do my best work.”*

– Tasha Mansley, Facilitator and Trainer, Full Circle Facilitations

## Youth Ambassadors

This programme has evolved to better meet the needs of our young people. Initially, it brought together Year 12 cohorts from three partner schools for monthly group sessions. However, this year, the format was adapted to provide fortnightly in-house support at each individual school, complemented by larger joint sessions held every other month. These wider gatherings featured events organised and led by the young participants themselves—students driven by a shared passion for creating positive change within their communities.

## Summer & Holiday Camps

There has always been a strong demand for after-school and holiday activities. In collaboration with our partner, the **Jason Roberts Foundation**, and additional funding through various grants, the charity has been able to organise and deliver its annual summer camp, along with additional holiday programmes to support students from Alperton Community School.

## Phoenix Project

The Us Charity is launching a new initiative for the 2025–26 academic year: the Phoenix Project. This programme is designed to provide training, skills development, and career opportunities for young people aged 18–25, helping them bridge the gap between education and employment. Rooted in the belief that young people are the changemakers of tomorrow, the project aims to empower the next generation to continue making a meaningful impact.

*“Starting a placement period with the Us Charitable Trust is one of the best decisions I have ever made. Throughout the few months I have been working with them, my confidence has improved dramatically. I have gained experience in helping to plan and carry out workshops, as well as further developing interpersonal skills such as leadership and working well in a team. Working with the Us Charitable Trust has helped me to realise my true potential, and given me the confidence to try new things in both my professional and personal life.”*

– Malikah Begum-Bailey, Phoenix Project Student and Volunteer

# EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

## Careers Fair

The Us Charitable Trust successfully organised and hosted two career fairs at **Newman Catholic College** and **The Crest Academy** on 25 February and 3 April 2025, respectively. Both events welcomed over 25 companies and universities, offering students from Year 7 to Year 13 the opportunity to engage directly with professionals from a wide range of industries. A key feature of the events was the use of interactive bingo cards, designed to help young people network confidently and effectively. This innovative approach proved highly successful, with both students and professionals praising the activity as an excellent icebreaker that encouraged meaningful conversations and connections.

## International Women's Day

To celebrate International Women's Day, we hosted three inspiring women's panels at **Newman Catholic College** and **The Crest Academy**. Held annually in March, International Women's Day provided the perfect backdrop to spotlight a remarkable group of women who reflect the diversity, strength, and aspirations of the young women we support. The panels were divided by gender, allowing for tailored discussions that addressed themes and issues most relevant to each group. This approach created a safe, meaningful space for students to engage in open dialogue, ask questions, and gain valuable insights from female role models across various industries.

## Iftar

To celebrate the holy month of Ramadan, we partnered with **Newman Catholic College's PTA** to organise and host a community iftar on 5 March 2025. The event brought together students from both of our core programmes—**Youth Ambassadors** and **Zenobia Scholars**—along with dedicated alumni who volunteered to support the evening. The event was a truly inclusive gathering that highlighted the power of community, reflection, and shared values. We were also deeply grateful to **Roti King**, who generously donated over £1,000 worth of food, helping ensure that every young person and their family had a warm, nourishing meal to enjoy as part of our commitment to accessible and welcoming community events.

## Apprenticeship and Industry Panels

To mark National Apprenticeship Week, we hosted a series of engaging panel discussions featuring both current apprentices and employers from a wide range of sectors. The panels aimed to raise awareness of alternative career pathways and provide students with real-life insights into the world of apprenticeships. Guests included law apprentices, to professionals from esteemed organisations such as the **Ministry of Defence**, who shared their personal journeys, challenges, and advice. The sessions offered students a unique opportunity to ask questions, hear first-hand experiences, and better understand the diverse routes available after school.

## Drop-down Days

The Us Charity facilitated five drop-down days at **Newman Catholic College**, centred around the themes of 'Careers and the Wider World' and 'Mental Health and Wellbeing'. Each session was thoughtfully designed for a specific year group, spanning Years 8 to 10, to ensure age-appropriate and engaging content. The days were delivered by a diverse mix of Us Charity staff, alumni, and corporate volunteers, offering students a range of perspectives and real-world insights. The events were warmly received, with students providing enthusiastic feedback about what they had learned and highlighting new interests and potential career paths they had not previously considered. These sessions created valuable space for students to explore both their personal wellbeing and future aspirations, all within a supportive and inspiring environment.

## Corporate Trips

Thanks to our long-standing relationships with corporate and government partners, we organised three enriching trips for our young people, offering unique insight into a range of professional environments. One highlight was an **Insight Day at the Ministry of Justice HQ**, where students worked in teams to pitch innovative ideas for prison reform directly to a government minister—a rare opportunity that encouraged critical thinking, collaboration, and public speaking. Another group visited **Charlie Bigham's**, where students were given a behind-the-scenes factory tour and heard personal career stories from chefs, engineers, and other professionals, providing a well-rounded view of the food industry. Finally, students attended an Insight Day at **Publicis Groupe**, gaining exposure to the world of media, advertising, and communications, and learning directly from industry experts.

# FUNDING SUMMARY

## 2024-25

John Lyons Charity | National Lottery | Children in Need | CAF | HAF  
Charlie Bigham's | Monkey Puzzle | St. James Place | Studio Bentley

## COO'S REPORT

Reflecting on this academic year, I am filled with immense pride in the resilience and achievements of our young people. Each milestone—whether it's a new partnership, a successful event, or a young person stepping confidently into their future—reminds us why we do what we do. Our team's dedication and the unwavering support from our community have enabled us to reach more young people than ever before, ensuring that our core values of community, inclusivity, and youth voice remain at the heart of every programme we deliver.

This year, we have strengthened our partnership with our funders, and as a result, the charity has truly thrived this academic year. We have expanded our reach, diversified our income streams, and deepened our impact through innovative programmes like Future Voice, Zenobia Scholars, and Youth Ambassadors—truly “inspiring change, shaping futures”. These initiatives are not just about skills development—they are about fostering belonging, ambition, and hope in every young person we serve. We have also launched our new project, The Phoenix Project, supporting 18–25 year olds as they navigate the world of work. Furthermore, our alumni network has not only grown but has seen more of our alumni eager to return as volunteers, helping younger people and amplifying youth voices.

Looking ahead, we are excited to build on this momentum. With new schools joining our network, a focus on sustainable growth, and a stronger bond with both the community and local companies, we are poised to empower even more young people to shape their own futures. Next academic year, we will focus on developing corporate partnerships and increasing corporate engagement. We are also now looking for a fourth member of staff, who will take on the role of Youth Coordinator for the start of the next academic year. Our journey is one of collaboration, adaptability, and unwavering belief in the potential of every young person. Together, we will continue to break down barriers, celebrate achievements, and create lasting change in our community.

**Tiffany Li**

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER