



Share Strategy

2026-2029

Contents

Who we are, what we do	3
What we've achieved in the past three years	4
The context	5
The world we're working in	5
What we've been told	6
Our values	9
What we want to achieve	10
Our strategic objectives and how we'll achieve them	12
Inputs: money, people, places, processes	12
Outcomes: a person-centred service, with empowered students living healthier, happier and more independent lives	14
What does good look like in 2029	19

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Who we are, what we do

Share was established in 1972 by a group of physically disabled WWII veterans. At that time, being physically disabled was even more of a barrier to getting into work than it is now. So, they came up with their own solution – a printing shop that would employ disabled people – to show society what accessible employment looked like. Share stood for **Self-Help And Rehabilitation into Employment**.

Over the years, the state's financial support for disabled people has changed, and equalities legislation has reduced some of the barriers for physically disabled people to obtain and retain work. However, for adults with a learning disability, and autistic adults, major inequalities endure in employment, health and socio-economic opportunities. It is this group of people that Share works with today.

We provide a range of programmes and activities aimed at empowering our students to live happier, healthier and more independent lives. All of our programmes fall into one of three categories:

personal development, independent living skills, and employability.

We work from four South London sites, and our fabulous volunteers provide social opportunities at evenings and weekends both on a one-to-one basis (befriending) and to groups of students (Go Anywhere, Do Anything).

We're governed by another group of volunteers – our board of trustees – who have approved this strategy, and who will give the executive team the support, guidance, resources and critical friendship they require to deliver it.



What we've achieved in the past three years

In early 2023, we started delivering a new, three-year strategy. This strategy – which is intended to run from April 2026 to March 2029 – builds upon the growth and strong foundations delivered by the Share team from April 2023 to early 2026. In that time frame we have:

 <p>Increased our income from £1.3m to £2.4m p/a</p>	 <p>Worked with 235 students and their families</p>	
 <p>Supported those students to improve their Outcomes Star scores by 14% across the board, including a 38% jump in work readiness and 12% growth in physical health</p>	 <p>Opened a new site and social enterprise at a community café and sports hub</p>	 <p>Moved into a new building in our garden</p>
 <p>Introduced 12 new courses across our sites to respond to students' needs and wishes</p>	 <p>Secured Investors in People Gold and Investors in Volunteering</p>	

The context

The world we're working in

 <p>More demand for services</p>	 <p>Students presenting with more complex needs</p>	 <p>Local authorities under severe financial pressure</p>
 <p>Huge competition for grants from trusts and foundations</p>	 <p>Fewer people donating to charity – 50% compared to 58% in 2020</p>	 <p>Only 5% of people with a learning disability in London in employment</p>
 <p>20-year gap in life expectancy between people with a learning disability and those without</p>	 <p>High turnover of local authority social workers</p>	 <p>It costs a family with a disabled person an extra £1,000+ a month to maintain same standard of living as a family without a disabled person</p>

What we've been told

In putting together this strategy, we've asked for input from our students, their parents and carers, our staff, trustees and volunteers, and key stakeholders e.g. local authorities, Integrated Care Boards and funders.

We have asked people:

- What we do well and what we need to improve
- What we need to change
- What values should underpin our work
- What Share's overall aim should be
- What their priorities are for the next 12-36 months.



Our students told us:

They like the range of activities we provide, our supportive and non-judgemental staff, and the opportunities to make friends and meet new people. Students value feeling comfortable, helped with routines, and supported towards goals like independent travel and employment – Share helps make them feel happy.

However, the physical environment – particularly the noise and bright lighting – can be distressing and overwhelming, or else in need of better upkeep. Many found other students' behaviour difficult to deal with if it involved breaking Share's

rules around physical touch or phone use, or if other students were upset, angry or distressed. Our free-time sessions at the end of each day got a mixed response, and students also wanted more consultation / explanation of timetable changes.

They wanted more drama and creative activities, trips out, sport, and social and life skills support including relationship education. Their short-term goals (for the next year) clustered around three themes: building skills to help them into employment, health and wellbeing, and social experiences.



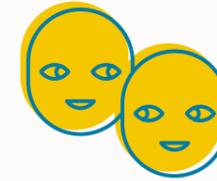
Respectful, friendly, sharing; use kind language, communicate clearly, respect people's opinions; be helpful, funny and nice; treat me and speak to me like an adult.

Share Catering students' thoughts on how we should treat each other



I love that students with all sorts of disabilities and abilities can come and be with each other. This is in an environment where students are all valued.

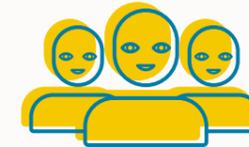
A Share volunteer



Students' parents and carers told us:

They were overwhelmingly positive about our service and the impact it was having on the person they care for. They highlighted Share's caring, supportive environment and the kindness and competence of staff. They value that their loved ones are happy, safe, and given freedom with appropriate support. Many appreciate the variety of activities offered, the structured routine, and the long opening hours (10am-4pm). They were keen for us to provide more physical activity, independent living skills, social opportunities and direct feedback from us on students' progress. They also asked us to facilitate more platforms and opportunities for them to communicate directly with, and support, each other.

Looking ahead, their priorities focused on enriching students' physical and mental health and wellbeing, investing in a more inclusive, equitable and person-centred service, and financial stability. They were keen for us to provide more physical activity and community-based programmes, increase opportunities for students to work both for and outside of Share, communicate more with parents and carers, and to deliver a new garden building.



Our trustees told us:

That supporting students to improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing was their top priority. They also highlighted the growth and diversification of income as areas they wanted the team to focus on to promote the expansion and improvement of sites and services.



Our staff told us:

They felt Share delivered a respectful and person-centred service that facilitated independence, choice and autonomy. They thought the vision and mission we'd worked towards since 2022 were compelling and fundamentally held true. They valued the positive and supportive culture, the benefits package and trust that was placed in them to make decisions. Like the students, they said that the physical environment needed to be improved and better maintained, and also that resourcing and support must reflect the increasingly complex needs and greater numbers of students that Share was working with.

When asked what they wanted Share to have achieved over the next three years, they consistently articulated desires for excellence in core operations i.e. staff feeling supported and wanting to stay, students flourishing in safe and empowering environments, and maintaining Share's reputation as a key player in the learning disability services sector. There was a strong emphasis on student-centred outcomes – students achieving their individual goals, having a meaningful voice in decisions, and genuinely experiencing belonging. Several mentioned wanting improved diversity among staff and volunteers to better reflect the student population, establishing a presence in additional London boroughs, and completing the new garden building.



Our volunteers told us:

That Share excels at creating a genuinely inclusive, welcoming, and supportive environment where students feel valued and safe. They highlighted Share's person-centred approach and our provision of diverse opportunities for learning and self-expression through varied activities like art, cooking, horticulture, and Go Anywhere, Do Anything trips.

They recognised our staff's compassion and dedication in supporting students to build confidence, develop life skills, and foster independence. And they valued the support given to the volunteers themselves through training, clear communication, and making volunteering accessible and well-organised. Several suggested improving physical spaces, sharing students' goals and learning plans with them, and increasing Share's partnerships with local organisations and campaigning presence on social media to facilitate students feeling more involved in, and valued by, their communities.

“
It was great to learn about how the voices of people with disabilities were included in programme development. It is always great to see lived expertise embedded in organisations.

A Share funder

“
Share gives – and has done – give G a wonderful feeling of freedom with support but not too over the top.

A Share parent



Our funders and statutory partners told us:

They valued Share's strengths as a deeply embedded, community-led organisation, with particular praise for how students participate in service design. There was strong recognition of Share's employment pathways, alongside its focus on skills, life skills and wellbeing. Several funders emphasised that they do not want Share to distort its mission to fit funder priorities, valuing instead the clarity of Share's strategy, impact reporting, and evidence-led approach. Share's ability to forge strong, flexible partnerships was repeatedly noted as a real strength.

Looking ahead to the next three years and beyond, stakeholders broadly aligned around priorities of employability, skills development, and reducing health inequalities. By 2029, funders and statutory stakeholders would like to see Share continuing to deliver high-quality provision, remaining a visible and trusted partner locally and system-wide, and supporting more people to access paid or voluntary work and live more independent, healthier lives.

Our values

In 2022, feedback centred about six principal values: ambition, inclusion, integrity, kindness, respect and support.

This time around, those same or similar values came up repeatedly when we asked our people how we should treat one another, and were mentioned more often than any other values. This tells us a few things:

- 1 Across the organisation we consistently model these values, and they genuinely underpin our work and interactions with each other. This point came through clearly when we secured Investors in People Gold in late 2023;
- 2 Share has grown significantly since the consultation for the 2023-2026 strategy was undertaken in the autumn of 2022. However, when we recruit staff, trustees, and volunteers we place a high value on their alignment with our values. Also, our employees' performance management processes explicitly consider their demonstration of values alongside the technical competencies of their roles – our proactive reinforcement of values throughout the organisation is really working;
- 3 Students value these behaviours as much as their parents and the staff and volunteers they work with. We expect everyone within Share to demonstrate them, and it is important that they are understood by everyone who comes through our doors.

Therefore, the values that will guide our work will remain the same over the next three years. Where necessary, we have updated the wording supporting and explaining them to reflect feedback and our current approach. We will:



Be ambitious

For what we can achieve, for the standards we set ourselves, and for the change we can create in society;



Be inclusive

We will value people as the individuals they are, creating an equitable and person-centred environment so we all feel like we belong at Share;



Act with integrity

When we say we are going to do something, we will do it so we build trust with each other, and we will take responsibility for our actions;



Be kind

We will look out for and after each other, and our wellbeing will be at the heart of all we do;



Be respectful to each other

We will listen to and value others and their opinions, even if we disagree with them, and we will treat each other as peers, who all have voices that should be heard;



Be supportive of each other

We will help each other out, give people the tools they need to succeed, and empower people to make choices.



What we want to achieve

Share exists to improve the lives of disabled people. This does not just mean working with disabled people at our sites; it means actively shaping and educating our society to make it less disabling, more inclusive, and better at valuing the contribution made by people with a learning disability and autistic people.



Our vision sets out the big picture – the world we would like to exist.

For us, it is a society where every disabled and autistic adult is valued, feels like they belong, and has the freedom to achieve their ambitions.

We need to have a clear idea of what is within our control, to contribute to make this society a reality – or, at least more of a reality than it is currently. That’s our mission.

Our mission shapes our strategy, and our strategy gives us a plan to follow to take steps each year towards realising our vision.



Share’s mission is to work with our students to create a kind, progressive environment where they are empowered and enabled to live happier, healthier, and more independent lives.

We will break down our mission into three key areas:

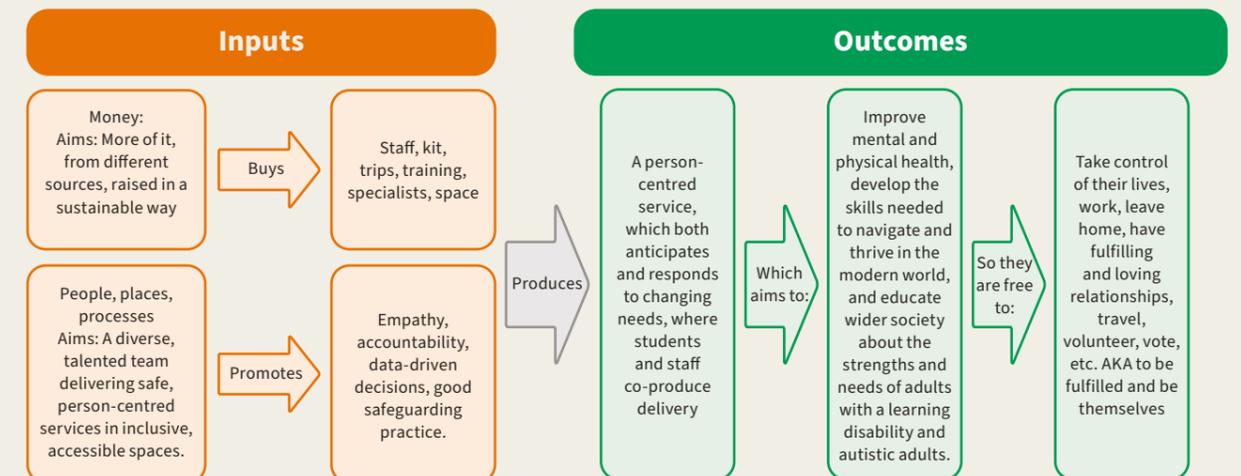
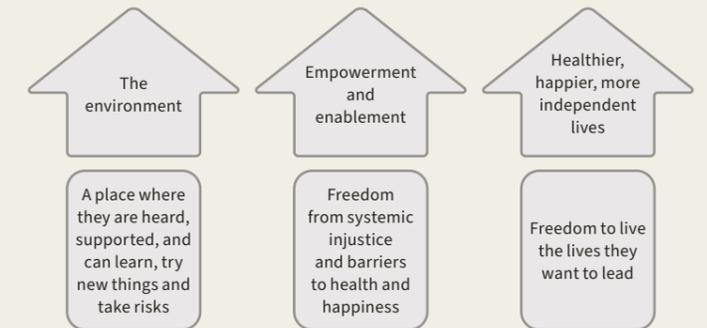
- 1 The environment we will create with our students;**
- 2 How that environment will empower and enable them to overcome barriers to health and happiness;**
- 3 The benefits they will experience – being happier, healthier, and more independent.**

Fundamentally, we will aim to support and enable our students to fulfil their ambitions and live the lives they want to live.

To make this happen we need money, people, places and processes. These inputs will produce the outcomes we want to see:

- 1 A person-centred service, which both anticipates and responds to changing needs, where students and staff co-produce delivery;**
- 2 Adults with a learning disability and autistic adults with improved mental and physical health, the skills needed to navigate and thrive in the modern world, and a society educated about and appreciative of their strengths and needs;**
- 3 Choice and control for adults with a learning disability and autistic adults so they can be fulfilled and be themselves.**

For some people, pictures are better than words, so this summarises our strategy over the next three years:



Our strategic objectives – and how we'll achieve them:



Inputs: money, people, places, processes

The money

Without money, there is no service. And without a service, there are no students. So it's imperative we have multiple and resilient income streams that actually reflect the cost of providing a high-quality, safe and person-centred service. Fundamentally we want to grow and diversify sustainable income streams.

Most of Share's income comes from students being referred to Share, mainly by local authorities but sometimes by students' families or the students themselves. The London Boroughs (LBs) of Wandsworth and Lambeth refer the majority of our students. Share provides a statutory service to people deemed to have needs under the 2014 Care Act, yet there is a shortfall between what we're paid for our service and what it costs. This shortfall needs to reduce, or, ideally, disappear.

The external fundraising environment is so challenging that we cannot rely on trusts and foundations, or individual donors, to keep on providing hundreds of thousands of pounds each year for services that are essentially business as usual. In April 2023, the daily rate we received from local authorities covered 80% of the cost of the service, now it represents 90% - so we're on the right track.

We will continue to invest resources in fundraising, but it will be proportionate to the likely return compared to statutory income.

We will also involve our students more in fundraising and income generation. First because they are best placed to explain the difference Share makes to their lives, second because their lived experience has a value, and third because it can develop useful employability skills.

In the next three years, we will:

- Work with, and advocate to, local authorities to secure financial agreements which better reflect the cost of the statutory service we're providing. In particular we will aim to secure a similar type of framework agreement with LB Lambeth as we have with LBs Wandsworth and Merton;
- Establish and/or deepen relationships with boroughs other than Wandsworth and Lambeth to increase referrals from other boroughs and make our local authority income more resilient;
- Increase capacity through the construction of a new, purpose-built building in our garden in Tooting and, if necessary / beneficial, expand to other sites;
- Continue to strengthen our impact measurement frameworks and develop more student-led content to allow us to tell compelling and evidence-based stories to funders to attract support;
- Grow our income from our café and garden centre social enterprises.



Our people, places and processes

Share spends the majority of its money on its staff, and on the buildings in which they work.

There is no greater investment Share can make if we want to achieve our mission than in nurturing, developing and challenging our incredible staff team who demonstrate their commitment to our students every day.

Alongside our staff we have a passionate, talented and growing team of volunteers who enhance our service by providing students with social opportunities at evenings and weekends, and supporting tutors and students in our classrooms. We also benefit from an engaged board of trustees who provide good governance, ask rigorous questions and are critical friends to the executive team. An Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy has been developed at the beginning of 2026, and delivering on that will be a priority.

Share currently works out of four buildings with varying degrees of control about how much we can adapt the physical environment to suit our students' needs. When we open a new building in our garden, it will be the first time Share has worked out of a building purpose-built for adults with a learning disability and autistic adults. Currently, what we do have total control over are the people we recruit and the processes we put in place for them to follow, which promote person-centred positive behaviour support, positive risk taking, and good wellbeing and safeguarding practice.

In combination, our people, places and processes should create the kind and progressive environment in which our students can thrive.

In the next three years, we will:

- Take proactive steps to increase the proportion and promotion of staff and trustees from minoritised ethnic backgrounds, and with lived experience of a learning disability and/or autism so our team better reflects local communities and the student body to provide an even better and more empathetic service;
- Develop our measurement of the positive impact our volunteers make to our students' lives to drive funding of volunteering resource and volunteer-led activities;
- Aim to secure both planning permission and funding for a new, purpose-built building in our garden in Tooting, and start to deliver a range of programmes and activities from it;
- Develop a sensory garden that will allow us to deliver more therapeutic gardening activities, both for our students and local partners;
- Invest in our buildings to better cater for students' needs and sensory preferences e.g. around lighting, heat, and sound;
- Explore the options to integrate AI analytics with our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system;
- Annually audit our key student-facing processes to ensure they are being followed and, where necessary, improved.

Outcomes: a person-centred service, with empowered students living healthier, happier, and more independent lives



An outstanding person-centred service

Share works with just over 200 students – and their parents and carers – each year, and that number is projected to grow over the course of this strategy. Our students are individuals with different hopes and needs. Each has a bespoke plan that informs what they learn, how they're communicated with, and their support needs, and it is incumbent on our staff and volunteers to work with students in ways that play to their strengths and accommodate their needs.

When students join Share, they tell us what they want to achieve, and they agree objectives with each of their tutors at the start of each six-month term. These objectives – which take the form of statements beginning “I can” – can be tailored so that two students with different strengths and competencies can do the same course and aim to achieve different outcomes, e.g. one student might be aiming to follow a warm-up in Sport, whilst another might be aiming to lead it.

Alongside this data, which is analysed every six months to monitor student progress and the effectiveness of our teaching, we aim to complete an annual Outcomes Star assessment for every student who attends Share for at least three days

a week. This is completed in conjunction with the student, their network of support, and our staff to create a holistic picture of a student's presentation in nine areas, e.g. physical health, wellbeing, work readiness. For some students, we have Outcomes Star data going back 10 years, so it helps us track what's worked (or not) over time as well as how someone is doing today.

Our teaching staff also generate huge amounts of qualitative data on each student through the session updates they provide each day. And all staff are trained to log any wellbeing or safeguarding concerns, celebrations, incidents and notable behaviours on our CRM system, so our Wellbeing Team has an audit trail to help them understand and cater for any issues likely to affect a student.

Our Enrolment Team also monitors trends among prospective students to inform the Senior Leadership Team of changes that might be needed to the service to respond to changing needs. For example, at the beginning of 2026 more than 70% of the prospective students in our pipeline were under the age of 30. With the trend looking like it will continue, we will introduce a new programme focused on under-30s in 2026.



In the next three years, we will:

- Strengthen our relationships with referral partners e.g. local authorities and Special Educational Needs colleges to understand the needs of incoming students so we can provide the best possible transition into a service that provides them with the skills they need for the world we're living in now;
- Increase our careful and thoughtful use of AI to analyse our student data and map student journeys against their stated goals, and highlight demographic trends / anomalies, so where necessary, we can adapt our service to ensure it's equitable;
- Provide forums for students to contribute their thoughts directly to our senior leadership team – and then to the board – so we can prove how they inform decision-making, embed a culture of accountability through transparent feedback to them;
- Use insight collected from students throughout the year – from informal chats with Wellbeing, to surveys, to the input they give to tutors about what they want to learn each term – to inform the programmes and activities we run and their content;
- Establish consistent and sustainable platforms to provide parents and carers with feedback on students' progress at Share, and to enable them to communicate with and support each other independently.





The reduction and removal of barriers to health and happiness

People with a learning disability and autistic people continue to face structural inequalities in health, employment, and access to public services. Misconceptions and lack of understanding in wider society create additional barriers, often leading to stigma, exclusion and discrimination.

The *LeDeR: Learning from Lives and Deaths: People with a Learning Disability and Autistic People* report, published in November 2023, shows that people with a learning disability die on average 19.5 years younger than people without a learning disability. It gets worse for people from minoritised ethnic backgrounds. According to the *2023 NHS Race and Health Observatory Report*, people with a learning disability from minoritised ethnic groups have an average age of death of 34 years, compared with 62 years for those from white ethnic groups.

Research by the National Autistic Society and mental health charity Mind in 2020 showed that almost two in three autistic adults have a clinical diagnosis of anxiety and 83% have experienced depression. This can happen because of a mix of factors: facing more difficult life experiences, dealing with stigma and discrimination, and struggling to access the right support.

Also, life costs more for disabled people – and, to complete the double whammy, they have fewer opportunities to earn. In 2025, Scope found that households with a disabled person needed an extra £1,095 each month on average just to have the same standard of living as non-disabled households. They estimate the extra cost of disability is likely to reach £1,224/month by 2029/30. The average Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is just £465/month, so still leaves a significant shortfall.



Without a decent level of physical health and mental wellbeing, and the skills and understanding required to keep themselves safe and make good choices, our students are not going to be free to live the lives they want to live. And even if they do have all those tools at their disposal, what they need and want will fall on deaf ears without wider society changing and improving to become more kind, accessible and inclusive so they genuinely feel like they belong in it.

In the next three years, we will:

- Co-create and deliver programmes and activities with our students aimed at:
 - Improving their physical health, mental wellbeing and ability to make healthy choices about food, drink and physical activity;
 - Developing the skills and confidence they need to navigate digital services, social media and the internet safely, efficiently and enjoyably;
 - Providing safe and inclusive spaces for them to explore, understand and communicate their feelings and identities, e.g. around sex and relationships, cultural heritage, and their rights and wishes.

- Work with parents and carers to support them in reinforcing the skills and behaviours developed and demonstrated at Share in our students' home environments;
- Deliver more accredited qualifications to support students into employment;
- Work with carefully-chosen strategic partners to develop consultancy services whereby our students provide insight about how to better cater for their needs and maximise their strengths so their experience of work, volunteering, healthcare, the built environment etc. is improved;
- Use more student-led / created content and campaigns to educate wider society about their strengths, needs and wants.





Happier, healthier, and more independent adults, free to live the lives they choose

All the work we do is fundamentally aimed at creating and contributing to an eco-system where our students are free and able to be fulfilled and be themselves. This means them having genuine choice, control and agency, or where that's not possible e.g. due to capacity or safety, having their voices heard to the greatest extent possible. Only 5% of adults with a learning disability known to their local authority in London (ONS), and only 30% of autistic adults (*Buckland Review of Autism Employment 2024*), are in paid work. This is compared to around 80% of non-disabled people. We see at first hand how many of our students would love to work, and also how few employers are genuinely willing and able to accommodate their needs.

There are around 1.5 million people with a learning disability in the UK, but campaign groups estimate that only about 30% of people with a learning disability vote in elections – half the turnout for the 2024 general election – despite around 70% wishing to. The requirement to provide ID, inaccessible information and hostility at polling stations are all barriers to disabled people being able to exercise their rights.

Mencap research found that, whilst 70% of the adult population in the UK live as part of a couple, just 3% of adults with a learning disability do. Many of our students either lack the opportunities – both in terms of meeting people or having privacy – or haven't been allowed to develop the emotional maturity required to pursue safe and fulfilling sexual relationships.

Some students are further along on their journey than others, which is why we need to deliver both foundational skills and personal development, as well as programmes for those with more confidence / external support and opportunities / capacity, within the same service.

In the next three years, we will:

- Work with carefully selected partners who align with our values and are committed to learning from our students to support students into work, placements and volunteering;
- Provide more opportunities to students to gain paid work experience at Share e.g. through catering at out-of-hours events, and providing consultancy services around good practice around disability and autism accessibility and inclusivity;
- Partner with, and signpost to, more specialist providers of services such as supported housing, sex and relationships advice, and online safety, so students feel confident in having the information and understanding they need to make choices;
- Establish platforms for students to vote for and represent others within Share's decision-making processes, and support them to understand and assert their legal and civic rights;
- Provide more opportunities for students to build friendships and relationships outside of Share – their desire for meaningful social interaction is consistently the thing they (and their parents and carers) value most about our service.

What does good look like in 2029

By the spring of 2029, we're aiming to have:



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