



Impact

• 2025-26



The Pod

Our Vision

A Community where people with additional needs feel valued and belong

Our Mission

To provide safe, supportive and enterprising activities for children, adults, young carers and families to thrive



Welcome

This year has seen continued growth across Pod projects, our activities, and our wider community offer. We've stayed true to our values, listening to our members and community to understand what matters most and where we can make the biggest difference.

This is our first dedicated Impact Report. Working with limited resources, we're incredibly proud to share it with you. It reflects months of small improvements, better systems, and the dedication of the people who make The Pod what it is; our members, families, volunteers, partners, supporters, and a dedicated team whose passion and commitment make everything we do possible!

Alongside our data, we share the stories and "gems" captured through our sessions. These small moments often show the biggest impact - building confidence, creating connections, and opening up new opportunities for the people we support.

Looking ahead, we're not focused on doing more, but on doing things well: supporting our team, improving how we work, and creating strong foundations for the future so even more people can flourish with support from Pod in the years to come.

Thank you to everyone who has been part of our journey over the last year, your support and belief in what we do, make this work possible.

Sue Paxton
Founder/Charity Manager



@thepodcharity



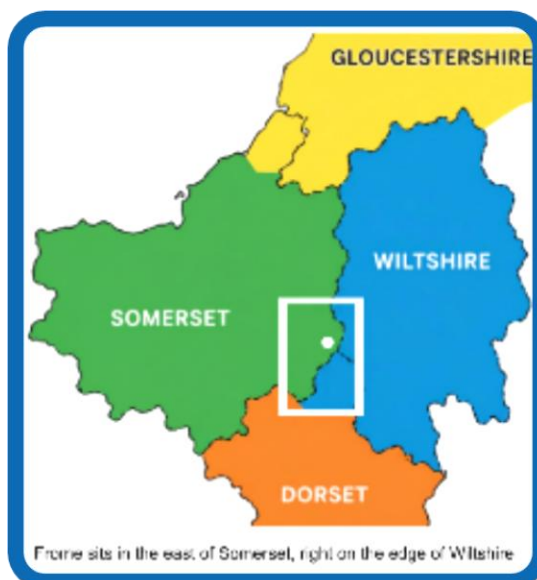
@thepod

Creating safe inclusive spaces
Opportunities for fun, friendship and community involvement.
A sense of belonging.



The Pod is positioned on the Somerset–Wiltshire border, with many of the people we support travelling from communities across both counties. Established in 2013 by parent carers who recognised a lack of inclusive opportunities locally.

The charity continues to evolve in response to the needs of families. Our rural location presents challenges, particularly around transport and access to services, but it has also shaped a resilient charity that is built on strong community partnerships and a commitment to finding local solutions. Today, we continue to respond to local need, ensuring people can access opportunities, connection and support, regardless of where they live.



Our year in numbers...

**Total number of
volunteer hours 1819**

**61 volunteers including 20 with
additional needs supported to
volunteer**

**69% of parent carers reported
– new friends/connections
through Pod**

917 direct beneficiaries

**147 pre-registered
activity sessions**

**92 open access activity sessions
for the wider community**

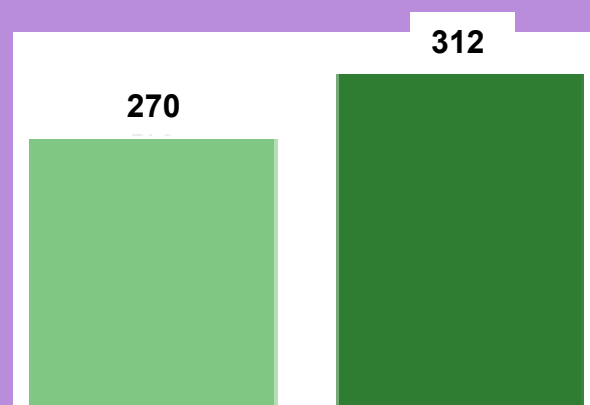
**Pathways Project = 600 hours
of meaningful learning and
development for learners**

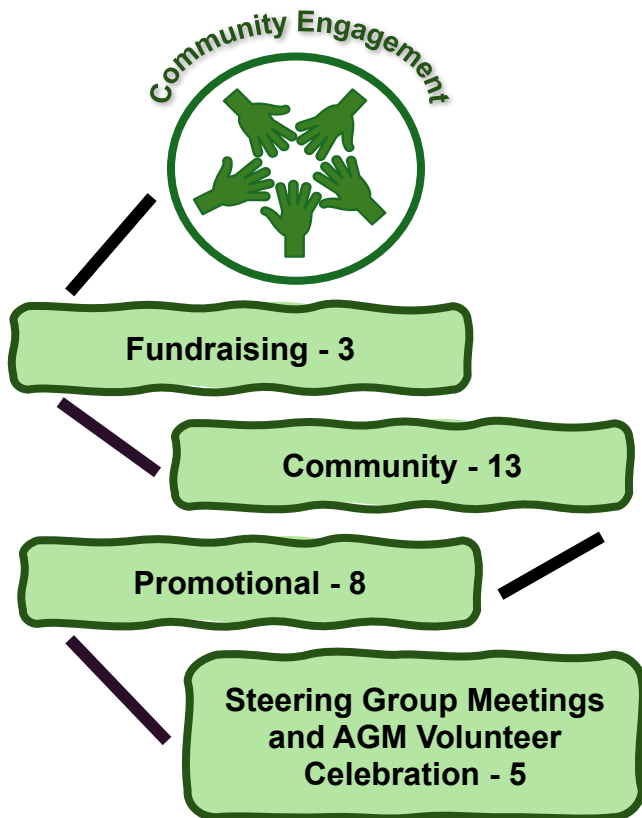
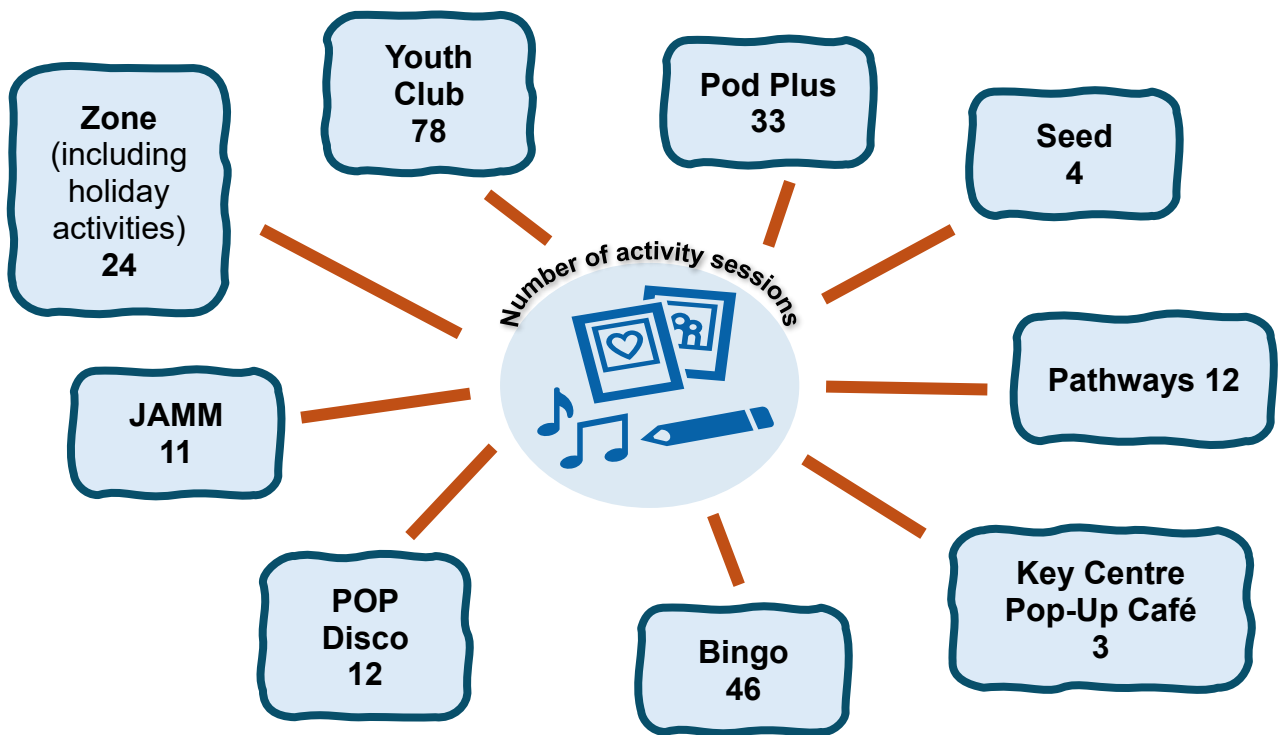
696 hours of Disco fun!

674 Scrapstore sales

**115 affordable trading activities
serving the community**

**15.6% Increase on
activities in 2025-26**





Respite Hours 	
Pod Youth Club	2172
Zone	1612
Pod Plus	1832
Pathways	460

Pod Beneficiaries	
Pod Youth Club	34
Zone	15
Pod Plus	24
JAMM	6
SEED	5
POP Disco	68
Pathways	13
Bingo	140
Community Activities	518

How we measure our impact...

We gather feedback in a several different ways so we can understand what's working well and where we can improve. This includes recording 'gems' and informal feedback from conversations across our projects, where people share comments, reflections or creative responses.

We also run an annual survey for beneficiaries and collect feedback after open-access community activities. This feedback is used to shape and improve our sessions, respond to what people tell us they need and make sure our offer stays relevant and meaningful.



Pod Youth Club: 95% of children say they have enjoyed new experiences and learned new things

**77% of children surveyed reported
that they've made friends in
youth club**



93% of attendees reported that they feel more confident chatting in the group with their peers, sharing their news



A fun way to capture young carers' views – describe Zone in a word and then pass the string on to create a cobweb!



Headlines from 2025/2026...



Pod Youth Club has expanded, marking an important milestone for this flagship project, which was the original foundation of The Pod. Waiting lists have now been reduced significantly following the introduction of two clubs running on the same night.

Pod joined a new Somerset Council facilitated consortium with fellow young carer service providers, including YMCA's across Somerset and Minehead EYE. The partnership is exploring how young carers' services can be delivered sustainably in the future, while securing funding to ensure continued support for our **Zone Young Carers** group during the 12-month review period.



Following a winter refurbishment, **Little Scrapstore** reopened in March with improved accessibility, a safer more welcoming environment, and a better customer experience. These changes create a stronger foundation for a new trainee development programme. The Mayor of Frome officially reopened the space on 24 February.

Following a request from Frome Town Council, The Pod launched a **Pop-up Community Café at the Key Centre**. The café offers a welcoming and inclusive space where people can connect and access affordable refreshments and snacks, with free options available to ensure everyone can benefit.



Pod's brand-new **education programme** designed to help learners build confidence, make connections and develop new life skills through supportive, practical learning opportunities.

Not forgetting our **Bingo** we're incredibly grateful for our weekly bingo and the wonderful community of 18 volunteers who make it happen every week. Their efforts helped raise £10,782 for Pod in 2025–26.



What our community say...

Warm Connection New friends
Thumbs up Sociable
Okay Great Fun Engaging
Cool Inclusive Exciting Happy
Amazing Amazing Fun Very good
Creative Good Interesting

Participant quotes:

"I feel I have improved my confidence and made friends."
(Merrie).

"I'm happier to talk in a group and listen to others." (Emmie).

"I like cooking."

Young Carer quotes:

"I feel happy because I get to meet new friends."

"When I get my worries out, I feel good."

"I feel safe because Zone is nice."

"I have new friends."

"I feel safe because I know nobody is going to be rude."

"I've never done anything like this and it's enjoyable."

Volunteer quote:

"I was new to the area and reaching out to The Pod and becoming involved in their vast array of projects has given me lots of scope to meet new people and immerse myself in the community. The members are delightful and everyone has been so welcoming." (Aileen)

"The Pod feels more like home than anywhere else."

"I like celebrating Christmas in the summer!"

"Bingo is a lifeline for my mum and lots of people I know who come."

"I like chilling out with my friends."

"I like trying out different country's food."

Parent Carer quotes:

"The Pod is simply amazing, they offer my daughter an opportunity to make friends, have friends and have fun. She feels like she belongs and so many links have come from being part of the Pod, going to the theatre, dancing the night away at the discos and meeting friends in town. She has a life I thought she would never have, happiness, laughs and friends, thank you to the Pod." (Gill)

"Being able to visit all together in an environment that made us feel comfortable and being together, which we rarely manage. The time was perfect for us all and it was such an amazing experience. We came away very happy and relaxed and just glad we had an enjoyable evening, which we don't manage often." (Carer quote)

"I just wanted to pass on how invaluable the Zone has been for my girls who are young carers within our family. It has given them hours of fun, new friendships and, probably most valuable, time away from home that they may not have had otherwise. The whole team are so supportive of them, an open ear and also supportive to us as parents as well." (Becky)

"This evening at the slip n slide was so much fun. Thank you for organising it. A big thank you to the two ladies from Pod who helped my son to overcome his fear of heights and actually doing the slide. He managed to do it with 5 minutes to spare, and he hasn't stopped talking about it since we got home!!" (Mel)

"Staff are approachable and non-judgemental." (Carer Quote)

Our Local Supporters...

We're incredibly grateful to the local community groups and organisations who help us offer a varied programme. Through their generosity, whether by providing free tickets, welcoming us into their projects, donating resources, making venues available, or supporting us in a multitude of other ways - they help create opportunities for fun, learning and growth for the people we support.



Funders....

Last, but certainly not least, we'd like to thank our wonderful funders. Their generosity enables us to make everything we do possible, we're incredibly grateful for their continued support.

You can find a full list of our funders in our end of year report.