



THE
NEXT
STEP
TRUST

Continuing to meet individual Needs



Annual Report

2024-25



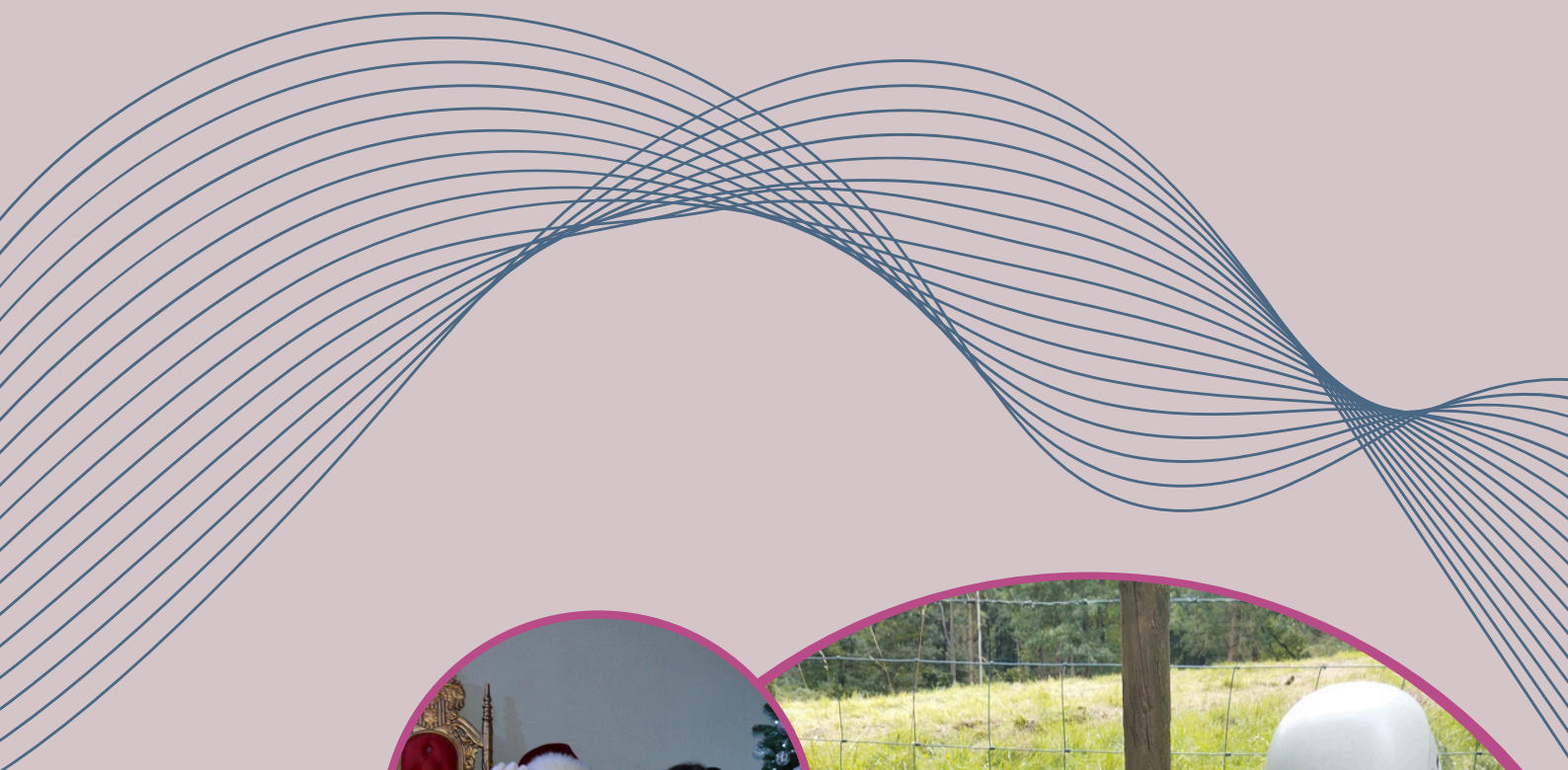
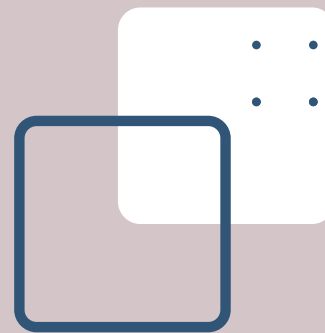


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Letter from our Co-Chair Trustees

I am grateful to be able to look back on the last 12 months and say to myself that I think we have done the best that we could for Next Steppers and staff. At our first development day we asked ourselves what we wanted the Next Step Trust to be when it 'grows up'. Chris ran out of paper listing her hopes and dreams for everything that she would like for her son, Matthew, and I did not write a single word. I drew a happy emoji. We wanted our Next Steppers to live happier lives and for staff to enjoy their work with Next Steppers. I cannot remember whether it was at that first meeting or the one that followed where we created a HUGE mural on the temporary partition wall at King Cross that kept the draughts out while the conservatory was being built. (Thankyou Jon Booth for your help.)

After 19 years, I think we have achieved nearly all of our dreams! There were a couple of wild cards that I particularly remember because they were crazy dreams that I thought would be beyond our dreams.

- We now have our own hydro pool that all Next Steppers can access.
- We don't have our own horses but a small number of Next Steppers enjoy the facilities at the local Riding for the Disabled Association stables.
- This year after a couple of false starts we have opened a new, bigger respite centre at Marsh Meadows.
- Residential accommodation for Next Steppers is still beyond our reach as there are more obstacles to overcome than any person should have to endure but we are hopeful that some day they can be overcome.

At Next Step we focus on the positive hopes and dreams but over the last two years we have had to open our eyes to the frailty of life with the loss of Next Steppers and colleagues.

So this year we have two ambitions; To create a memory garden as a place of peace where we can remember those who have left us and to create our own rebound facility because there are not enough facilities locally to allow Next Steppers regular access to this therapeutic activity.

Thank you to every parent/carer for your faith in us and a bigger thank you to our staff who make these dreams come true for Next Steppers every day- we think you're great!



From our Chief Executive

It doesn't seem very long since we introduced our first annual report, we are now on the second! The last year has been a roller coaster of events and emotions. It has been a time of reflection and support for the NST family.

The key focus has been a deep dive into the quality of our support services. A thorough internal audit has helped redefine roles and ensure that we have a clearer focus.

Our Senior Management Team has met regularly to share ideas and good practice, supporting the development of new opportunities for the next steppers and staff. The staff development day reinforced the values, objectives and dreams we have for our future. After successfully fundraising for the hydrotherapy pool, we now look to raise funds for an indoor rebound facility as well as a garden of memories, celebrating all the Next Steppers and staff we have had the privilege to have in our lives but who are no longer with us. An accessible swing and outdoor space would be a fitting tribute.

Our Next Stepper and staff team continues to grow, it gives us the opportunity to learn and develop, constantly challenging to adapt to new and changing needs. The activity offer has also been diverse-from ice skating in December to badminton, rounders and a bhangra party to beat all parties in the summer.

How can I forget one of the highlights of the year, our move to Marsh Meadows to offer an amazing respite holiday break to our next steppers!

Having started our 20th year, I look forward to the celebrations we have planned and the dreams we hope to make real through the course of this momentous year.



Who we are

The Next Step Trust (TNST) is a charity established in 2006. Established by parents who were in search of a person-centred and stimulating environment for their sons and daughters. TNST has developed into a bespoke provision developing in response to the changing needs of its users.

We support adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities, complex health needs and autism. Providing community-based day opportunities to support our Next Steppers to embrace the wider world. We offer both in-house and community activities while meeting personal care and medication needs. We also offer a 'home away from home' respite provision, which was developed in 2016.

Vision

To continue to be the best bespoke provider and recognised specialist for adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities providing day opportunities, outreach and respite.

Social Mission

Our Social Mission is an enduring mission that we will always be striving to achieve. To achieve it is something more than important – it is worthwhile.

This leads to a series of positioning statements for the Trust:

- The Next Step Trust is a charity and a not for profit organisation that works in a caring, professional and enterprising way to provide the highest levels of support services possible for people with learning and physical disabilities, complex health needs and autism.
- Through recognising individuality, we work in a flexible and responsive way to meet the needs of each person who uses our services.
- People with learning and physical disabilities, complex health needs and autism needs deserve to have the same opportunities and choices in life as other people – the Trust works with parents, carers, professionals and other support organisations to make this happen.
- Our services are provided in a safe, healthy, happy and stimulating environment to support the development of a person's independence, responsibility and potential.



Values

We have five interlocking and overlapping values that provide the foundation for the services that we provide and for the culture that we have created.

Commitment

The people who use our services need to know that we are here for the long-term – that we will be walking the next steps with them. Our partners and suppliers need to recognise our commitment too, so that we can all work together to support more fulfilling lives for people with complex needs. We will be consistent, determined and embrace the challenges in our work, and always be focussed on being the best we can be for the people we are here to support.

Respect

We see people as people, and respect them for their differences. There are boundaries within which we expect people to act, and these are based on putting the people we support at the heart of all we do. The respect we have for our work will never allow those boundaries to be compromised.

Friendship

The Trust will extend the hand of friendship to the people who use our services but also to their families too. By being here, we will create a place where people can come together, have a sense of belonging, and feel welcome. We will demonstrate loyalty and honesty to our partners and suppliers, and ask for this in return. Friendship will help overcome challenges in a way that conflict cannot, and through this we will be able to do the best we can for the people we support.

Adaptability

It is important to our Next Steppers and their families that we are able to respond to their developing health and social needs. We are confident in working together in a flexible manner to respond and be resilient towards changes in the world around us.

Kindness

To make everyone feel included and happy we are kind to each other. We will listen, show compassion and be considerate to others. We will make time to learn and respect others thoughts and feelings.



Objectives



To have happier Next Steppers

It's all about the next steppers!

We originally provided services to young people between the ages of 19-25 years but now it's about providing young people (including the young at heart if not young in years) with the services that they need to live happier lives both now and in the future. Because of this, we'll make sure that our services are always of the highest standards possible.

Inspire and embrace the wider world

It's a big world out there and we want to say "Hi"!

There are people beyond our own community that need the services we provide so they need to know about us. There are people who are working for the same reasons that we do so we need to know about them and learn from each other. And there are people who decide how things are going to be in the future – we're so close to the real issues affecting people with complex needs that we need to ensure that our voice is heard.

Be a financially healthy organisation

Without money we will not be able to fulfil our mission! We know that we are helping to improve the lives of people with complex needs and we can't allow ourselves to be in a position where we may not be able to continue providing our services. We will focus on having a good balance between contracted, traded and funding income and also on making sure that we remain financially viable by managing and controlling our costs. By developing new trading services we are ensuring that we can look to the future too.

Demonstrate commitment to our mission through operational excellence

Getting the detail right matters!

We need to govern responsibly and operate effectively in order to give the best possible service to our Next Steppers. From how we recruit staff to how we manage our finances and from how we act safely to how we deliver excellent customer service – all this and much more has a key part to play in the development of our organisation.



Our Specialisms

Profound and Multiple Learning disabilities

Here at TNST we do what we can to meet our objective of happier Next Steppers. To do this, we access several in house and community based activities. These activities are always tailored around the individual needs of our Next Steppers. A big part of what we do is to provide interesting and engaging sensory based sessions which enable us to meet all sensory needs.

These activities engage the senses to create therapeutic environments, stress relief, focus and improved well-being.

For those individuals with sensory loss it is important for us to help them explore the world through other ways such as touch, taste and smell.

Our team are committed to ensuring that all activities are adapted accordingly to ensure that everyone can take part, whether that be by use of switches, working hand over hand or visiting activity providers with adapted facilities. Most of all, we strive to ensure that all activities and sessions are as fun and engaging as possible.



Complex health needs

Our staff are specially trained to support individuals with complex health needs. We work closely with the Calderdale adult learning disability health team and NHS to ensure all needs are met to the highest possible standard. Our support staff are confident to follow individual behaviour support plans, speech and language assessments and specialist diet plans. All staff receive moving and handling training, enabling them to support individuals with hoisting and assisted walking, as well as supporting the Next Steppers to complete their passive stretches and use their standing frames and walkers as requested by the physiotherapist. Next Step staff are fully trained to administer medication both orally and through PEG and work closely with Nutricia for training and support around PEG care and feed administration. Our team are confident and knowledgeable supporting individuals with oxygen and epilepsy, working in close contact with the nursing teams at neurology to ensure we have up to date and clear epilepsy support plans for all to follow.

Autism

At TNST we pride ourselves on our specialism in supporting people with autism. We now have 13 Next Steppers who are on the autism spectrum, each with their own unique personalities, interests and needs. We provide a structured routine, appropriate activities such as swimming and adapted bikes and make use of suitable communication methods, such as PECs and objects of reference; all based on that individuals requirements to give them the best support possible. All members of our team complete autism training, providing a level of understanding and knowledge to help them support effectively. Staff are given time to shadow and to get to know those with autism, to build trust and understanding and to give that individual the support that they need. Looking ahead, we are hoping to expand this area of the service. We have already had interest from a number of families whose young people will be leaving school over the next few years and are looking for a service that can meet their needs.

Where we do this

Day Service

Our Day Service provision is designed to support our Next Steppers in embracing the wider world through a blend of in-house and community-based activities, all while meeting personal care and medication needs. We currently operate three day service centres across Halifax, all of which offer 5* catering, with our largest being the Hoover Building. This spacious facility offers a variety of dedicated areas for different activities along with housing all of our offices.

What you will find at the Hoover Building: soft matting, swing, projector, reading corner, cosy corner, arts and crafts area, a large multipurpose space used for activities that require extra room, as well as for our in-house training sessions.

Our King Cross Centre is the heart of our hydrotherapy services. It features a state-of-the-art hydrotherapy pool and a high spec, fully equipped sensory room and ball pool, providing a calming and stimulating environment.

Finally, introducing 'Zen Road' at Clare Road, our smallest centre which has recently been renovated into a peaceful, tranquil space, primarily used for aromatherapy sessions where Next Steppers can receive massages, facials and other beauty treatments- sorry we are not taking bookings!



Respite



Our Respite Bungalow operates primarily during evenings and weekends, providing a welcoming space that upholds the high level of support we already deliver through our community-based day services. This facility extends that same quality of care into a homely environment, where familiar staff ensure that each individual's needs are consistently met. It offers our Next Steppers a true "home away from home"- a place to relax and unwind, while giving their parents the chance to rest and recharge, too. The house is a specifically adapted five-bedroom detached bungalow with full wheelchair access, ceiling track hoists and facilities tailored to individuals' needs. The surrounding gardens provide a sensory experience, enhancing the well-being of those that we support with the opportunity for them to test out their horticultural skills, soak up the rays and enjoy the beauty that Southowram has to offer.



Our Trustees



Christine Naylor



John Mooney



Maureen Cawthorn



Emily Pearson



Leigh-Anne Stradeski



Julie Walsh

Our Team

Preet Sandhu
Chief Executive



Helen Lane
Operations Manager



Verity Moody
Deputy Operations
Manager



Tracy Francis
HR & People
Development Manager



Vicky Weatherhead
Day Service
Coordinator



Harriet Daniel
Deputy Day Service
Coordinator



Nicola Weaver
Respite Lead



Helen Collett
Deputy Respite Lead



Highlights of our year



Our move to Marsh Meadows



New bus



Clare Road renovation



Girls holiday

Calvert Trust



Our first Annual General Meeting



Impact Report



4
next
steppers
joined



19
employees recruited



6
new activities

on average
78%
of next
steppers/families
/carers rated our
Respite Service



‘very good or excellent’



on average
90%
of next
steppers/families/carers
rated our Day Service
‘very good or
excellent’



6
facility re- developments

5

job roles
created



Financial Review

Principal funding sources

Funding has been secured for many key areas of the Charity. The majority of income comes from publicly funded centre user's fees. The Charity has a surplus for the year of £201,843 (2024: £207,583). We are now back to the level of surplus that we would expect to have and though we continue not to meet our cash reserves we have assets in excess of £2 million which could be used to secure short term finance if needed. Councils continue to be at risk with adult social care funding cuts. Adult day service contracts are ending in March 2026, the local authority is currently holding consultation events to assess the future of day service provision. We negotiated with the council for an enhanced uplift to be equitable as they had made a lower offer to learning disability services. There has been a change in government, we will keep our eye on what this may mean for funding.

Reserves policy

The Charity aims to maintain a level of reserves to ensure that uninterrupted services may continue in the event of short-term funding problems and also to maintain a level of reserves such that if the long-term survival of the Charity could not be sustained, staff redundancy payments and outstanding creditors could be met. With over £2m in assets (buildings) we are confident that we could raise additional funds if needed.



Summary statement of Financial Activities

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Designated £	Restricted funds £	2025 Total funds £	2024 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM						
Donations and legacies	2	6,747	-	-	6,747	13,958
Charitable activities	5					
Charitable activities		2,808,248	67,185	17,255	2,892,688	2,602,148
Other trading activities	3	1,111	-	-	1,111	124
Investment income	4	15,586	-	-	15,586	19,354
Other income		4,049	-	-	4,049	-
Total		<u>2,835,741</u>	<u>67,185</u>	<u>17,255</u>	<u>2,920,181</u>	<u>2,635,584</u>
EXPENDITURE ON						
Raising funds	6	47,444	-	13,899	61,343	142,006
Charitable activities	7					
Support fees		282,568	-	-	282,568	427,108
Charitable activities		2,293,815	7,923	5,235	2,306,973	1,807,955
Other		56,912	5,853	4,689	67,454	50,932
Total		<u>2,680,739</u>	<u>13,776</u>	<u>23,823</u>	<u>2,718,338</u>	<u>2,428,001</u>
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)						
Transfers between funds	18	155,002 (1,578)	53,409 -	(6,568) 1,578	201,843 -	207,583 -
Net movement in funds		153,424	53,409	(4,990)	201,843	207,583
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS						
Total funds brought forward		2,181,478	354,265	117,225	2,652,968	2,445,385
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u>2,334,902</u>	<u>407,674</u>	<u>112,235</u>	<u>2,854,811</u>	<u>2,652,968</u>

+ + +
 + + +



Current and future periods

TNST continues to be more successful than was originally imagined, over the last year, we have continued to focus on the quality of the provision.

The Activity Lead has increased the activities on offer to include; iceskating, badminton, rounders, wheelchair rambling, special Olympics, Ready Steady Cook (endorsed by Ainsley Harriot!), story massages and find your voice.

The Communication Lead has led sessions on accessible equipment including switches, PECs and eye gazers.

The medication requirements have increased significantly with the Medication Lead supporting the safe administration of medication and overseeing staff competency.

The Deputy Day Service Co-ordinator (part time) continues to support the day to day running of the Day Service.

The Moving and Handling Lead role has developed, influencing the mobility of the Next Steppers, passive stretches are reviewed regularly and training is provided on how to support in the hydrotherapy pool.

The Board of Trustees TNST strategy remains; ensuring robust Governance - we continue to have a gap for another parent trustee and preferably someone with a finance background, we are also interested in recruiting another Trustee who may have broader experience within the charitable sector. We have been fortunate to have a parent involved with the Service Development Group.

The resilience built into the senior leadership team which now includes the Deputy Operations Manager has been an excellent development. Monthly senior leadership team meetings ensure good communication between the various departments and give us the opportunity to consider new developments. This has also given more confidence to the team to support their decision making.

We have revisited the transition timeline to welcome new Next Steppers into the service. To ensure we can recruit staff and train them, we now stagger the transition over the summer aiming to be completed in September.

Another important concern was TNST being appropriate as a service for older Next Steppers. It was agreed that rather than age, it was the interests and health of the Next Steppers that should determine the appropriateness of the service for them.

Therefore, Person Centred Plan reviews will be used to determine any changing needs and how TNST can respond to these. The Eligibility Policy has been a good guide to use during transition and lends itself to an open and transparent conversation with parents and carers who are advocating for their child. The welcome pack that is given to new Next Steppers has been reviewed and is more in line with what we want individuals to know about us when they join, including key policies.

The investment in the IT system has been a success. It has made information more accessible, reliable and easier to update. It is also a step closer to becoming paperless. Staff are able to use their time better and are also able to communicate changes across sites more effectively. We will continue to explore the opportunities this system offers. We continue to consider the possibility of development of Respite to not only offer short breaks for the Next Steppers but possibly offer the option of transition to Supported Living. As we have been authorised the use of a fourth bed at Marsh Meadows, we are now in an excellent position to consider its possibilities.

Projects in the pipeline

At Next Step, we've always believed that meaningful goals are worth striving for. One of our earliest aspirations was to build our own Hydrotherapy Pool— a goal we proudly achieved during the challenges of the COVID pandemic, no mean feat! It wasn't easy, but with persistence and purpose, we made it happen. Now, with that milestone behind us, we're ready to set our sights on achieving our next dream.

We are now looking at two important initiatives that are close to our hearts and have a profound impact on the individuals that we support; a Rebound Facility and a Garden of Memories. We are seeking funding to bring these projects to life, each with its own unique purpose and meaningful impact on the lives of those we support.

The Rebound Facility will offer specialised therapy through the use of rebound trampolines in providing therapeutic exercise offering multiple benefits for those that we support. Rebound Therapy helps improve flexibility, coordination, and core stability, while also enhancing balance, posture and muscle tone. It promotes independence, builds confidence with movement, and also encourages communication and concentration skills. Additionally, it offers a fun and engaging way to improve cardiovascular health, increase stamina and alleviate tension. It can also have additional physiological benefits, such as stimulating the digestive system and improving bowel function. This facility will create a space for individuals to achieve greater physical and emotional well-being, while fostering a sense of achievement and joy through movement.



The Garden of Memories is an equally important project, designed to offer a peaceful, sensory-rich outdoor space for reflection and connection. This garden will not only serve as a tranquil environment for our Next Steppers but will also provide a special place to honour those that we have had to say goodbye to. It will feature a swing, which will offer a calming, therapeutic and fun experience for those who use it, helping to foster relaxation and emotional well-being. The Garden of Memories will be a space for healing, remembrance, and serenity, providing comfort to those who need it most.

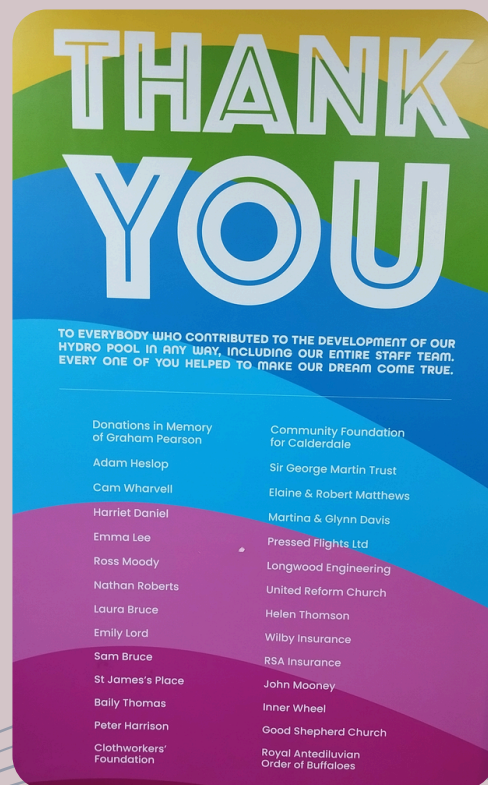


Thank you

We'd like to thank our regular donors for their continued support. Your contributions help us move forward with new developments and fundraising projects, and we really appreciate it.

If you'd like to get involved or support future initiatives, feel free to get in touch.

Thank you again for being part of what we do.



Remembering our dear friends

Olivia

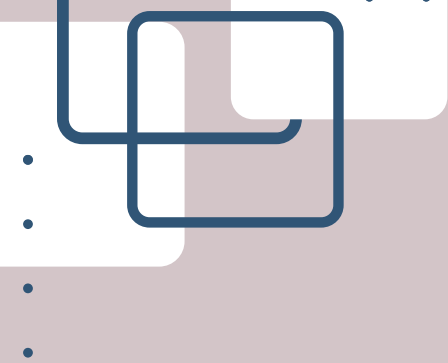
'I'll get ya' and wiggly fingers always ready for a tickle. Olivia always made us aware of her presence in a room. The cheekiest smile and a whirl wind of chaos. Olivia loved to swim and 'kick kick kick' her legs that much, it always was a battle to get out! If we asked Olivia how she was going to swim, she would always say 'like a mermaid'. The biggest heart and the warmest smile.



Cameron

Ginger mullet and always smelling great. Loved the chaos and being the centre of it. This young man could brighten up any room as he entered and had a tell-tale laugh that gave him away when he was up to no good. Cam had a huge love of rugby and house music with some very questionable songs being his favourite. Also the proud owner of a huge novelty slipper collection, with over 50 pairs.





THE NEXT STEP TRUST

Continuing to meet individual needs



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