

Learn

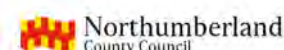
Develop

Thrives



# Annual Report 2025

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## Introduction

**Looking back over 2024, I'm reminded of what makes Oaklea so special — our ability to adapt, to care, and to keep moving forward, no matter what comes our way. This year has been one of change, but also one of fresh energy and real hope for the future.**

Following the retirement of Clive Wigley, after over 27 years, we were thrilled to welcome Jenna Hall as our new Group Chief Executive Officer. Jenna brings not just experience and insight, but a real enthusiasm for what Oaklea stands for — and she's already inspiring us all to think bigger and bolder.

She is joined by Roisin Burton, our new Director of Care, whose passion for delivering the very best care is shining through in everything she does. Together with the wider Senior Leadership Team, they make a formidable team, and I'm excited about where they are going to take us.

The Board, as ever, is in "close support" and we were delighted to welcome as a new Trustee, Anne Marie Kilkenny, who brings a wealth of business development experience and saddened to lose Colin Mitchell, who was forced to resign due to work commitments.

Of course, 2024 has had its challenges. The "Rachel Budget" meant we had to take a hard look at how we work and make some tough decisions. But instead of holding us back, it's pushed us to be more creative, to rethink, and to find new ways to deliver the quality and care that our customers, communities and learners richly deserve.

I believe the coming year holds so much promise. With our new leadership team, the dedication of our employees and volunteers, and the continued support of our partners and friends, Oaklea is ready to grow, to strengthen, and to keep making a difference where it matters most — in people's lives.

Thank you for being part of our journey.  
We couldn't do it without you.

**Chris Harris, Chairman**





# 21 Years of Care in County Durham

## Cementing the Oaklea brand

This year marked a major milestone for Oaklea in County Durham, where we've been providing care for 21 years!



"In 2002, Earls House Hospital in Co Durham, which was a long stay care environment for people with learning disabilities, launched their resettlement programme. Oaklea were one of the initial providers of care in this project. We opened our first supported living house in Murton for three men. This was quickly followed the following year by Oaklea opening another five houses. Today we are proud to support 49 people in 15 locations across Co Durham. Over the years we have had the good fortune to support many people to have fulfilling lives, enabling them to achieve their dreams, such as driving in a Formula One car, getting a job, making contact with long lost family members and holidaying abroad. In 2024 we decided to celebrate all the good times and friends we have made over the years by holding different themed parties. Individual houses chose their themes which included a neon disco, carnival party and afternoon high tea, and we remembered friends from the past and celebrated all our achievements. Along with our amazing teams and the people we support, we look forward to the next 21 years and the amazing possibilities ahead."

**Stella Crennell, Oaklea Head of Care**







## Right2Work Chair

**As the Chair of R2W, I echo Chris's thoughts about what we have achieved, the challenges we have faced, how we have evolved and what lies ahead.**

2024-25 was the biggest year yet for Right2Work and I would like to highlight in particular the growth in Supported Internships. I am also exceptionally proud to read about our customers and learners volunteering in the community to give back. Thank you to everyone who makes our important work possible.

Three new Non-Executive Directors have joined us, bringing new and different perspectives to Right2Work. They will help us to challenge and develop in the best possible ways. Thank you to all of our volunteers who give up their time to support our purpose. We could not be where we are without you!

I look forward to working with you all this coming year, supporting Jenna, Pete and the whole leadership team to learn, develop and thrive.

Thank you

**Jules Wood**







# Learn

## New contracts for Right2Work with Craven College, North Yorkshire Council and Mighty Oaks

In 2024-25 Right2Work secured new contracts to extend their Supported Internship offer to North Yorkshire centred around the Skipton area and Craven College.

Above: Skipton R2W team members Ellie and Sharon with learner Thomas and his Dad Tony

Click to read more about Thomas' story.



## Apprenticeship Success

George Ireland joined R2W Community Works as a Property Maintenance Apprentice in 2024. George is the face of R2W Apprenticeships.

Click the button to hear George explain how he's making the most of his Apprenticeship, the on the job learning and his time at Kendal College, where he completes classroom based learning each week.

## Apprentices Start in the North East

Oaklea continues to invest in the next generation of care professionals through strong partnerships with East Durham College and Kendal College. Together, we're supporting students on their journey to becoming apprentice Lifestyle Co-ordinators. Currently, four apprentices are gaining hands-on experience across County Durham, each working towards their Level 2 Health and Social Care diploma. We're proud of their progress and hopeful they'll soon become permanent members of our Oaklea family.

In Kendal we were excited to welcome a new apprentice to the Garth Brow team in September 2025. The Oaklea Group Academy has gone from strength to strength, and we remain committed to creating meaningful opportunities for students from our local communities.

Emily Jayne (left), our apprentice in Murton, supporting James, one of our valued customers, during mealtime – a moment that reflects the heart of what we do

**SKILLS  
FOR LIFE  
MULTIPLY**





# Living the 7 Keys to Citizenship Delivering Outstanding Care



## New Director of Care, Róisín Burton

**It has been a real pleasure getting to know the individuals we support, their families, colleagues, and various networks across our services.**

This has helped me to understand what is important, and explore how we can align ourselves to ensure our organisation embodies our ethos and provides the best opportunities for everyone.

My focus is the continuation of the strong foundations we have at the Oaklea Group and ensuring delivery of our Strategic Plan.

Supporting the vital work of the charity is important to me, and keeping our charitable aims at the forefront of what we do is what drives me. I am a strong advocate for the very best outcomes for everyone who accesses our services, as well as for those who provide direct support.

I believe in the importance of co-production and welcome anyone interested in meeting or having a chat with me to reach out. Email me directly at [roisin.burton@oakleatrust.co.uk](mailto:roisin.burton@oakleatrust.co.uk)





## Making Our Home Welcoming – Developing Our Space in Brandon



right2work

“Our customers were supported by the Team to prepare the garden wall with lining then they attached timber lats and treated the lats with oil. Customers planted flowers and plants in the wall boxes and pots around the yard. They were supported to choose pictures to be painted on the wall; including different areas they have visited on activities across the North East. Customers prepared the wall with a base coat of paint before one talented member of the Team created the wall art. Everyone was really pleased with the finished result and how the space now looks and feels.”

*Bev Hutchinson, Team Manager in Brandon*



# Develop

## We're Listening - Calum

It has been a momentous time for Calum, from Murton near Seaham. He volunteers regularly at Durham Cathedral, has been selected to represent our Customers on a forum at Durham County Council and has moved into a new room upstairs. Click the button and scroll down to hear his thoughts.



## Friends Re-united - Kit Meets Up With Former Carer Jeff - Life and Love

Over the years we have featured Kit from County Durham. For many of those he was supported by Jeff Smith. But since Jeff retired Kit missed his presence. On retiring from Oaklea, Jeff moved to the South West, so for Kit seeing him wasn't that straightforward. But Kit, empowered by our Support Teams, made the solo journey via Exeter Airport to see Jeff!

“Kit had a really good relationship with Jeff when he worked with us in Barnard Castle and really missed him following his retirement and move down South. He was always keen to see Jeff again when the time was right. Kit had talked about making the trip to see Jeff several times and was really excited and looking forward to it when it finally happened.”

*Paul Copley, Barnard Castle Team Manager*



**Right2Work continues to develop its partnership with The Mighty Oak Initiative, based in Kendal and Penrith, to deliver inclusive employment, training, and educational opportunities for young people facing barriers to work and learning.**

Through this collaboration, we provide job coaching and hands-on experiences that help learners build life and work skills in supportive environments. The Mighty Oak Initiative offers bespoke educational pathways tailored to individuals with Special Educational Needs or Social, Emotional, and Mental Health needs, fostering a culture where differences are embraced and achievement is celebrated. Together, we aim to empower young people to realise their potential and contribute meaningfully to their communities.







# Thrive

## Family Feedback

With the dedicated support of the Oaklea Team, Alice was able to revisit her childhood home on the Isle of Mull; reconnecting with her roots and lifelong friends. Our commitment to person-centred care ensures that families remain closely involved and supportive, through regular reviews and open communication. Alice's cousin Jayne, joined by her partner Ian, shared heartfelt appreciation for the support Alice receives. Their reflections speak volumes about the impact of our work. Click the button to hear their story.



"It's just amazing to have had this positive feedback from the family of an amazing lady that we support in her daily life choices. Mentioning how well they see Alice looking and

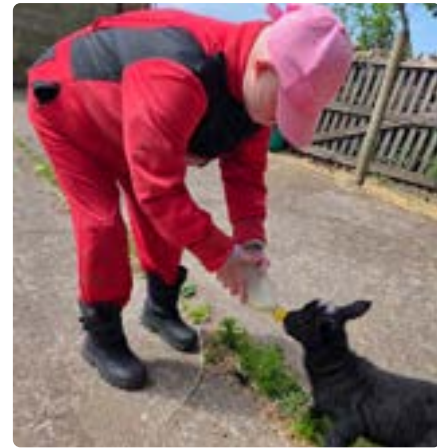
feeling makes us, as support workers, just feel appreciated and successful in the job that we are doing. Brimming with pride in a job well done. Congratulations Oaklea support team."

**Team Manager at New Road,  
Vanessa Washington**



## Mary's Farm Visit in Rothbury

Mary, who receives support from Oaklea in Rothbury, Northumberland, recently enjoyed a joyful day reconnecting with her farming roots. "I lived on a farm when I was little," she shared, "and I've had the best day feeding the lambs and helping with all the jobs." Experiences like this reflect our commitment to meaningful, person-centred support — creating moments that celebrate individuality and bring lasting joy.



## Small Steps, Big Impact: Our Ongoing Commitment to Sustainability

At Oaklea Group, we believe that meaningful change begins with everyday actions. As part of our strategic priority to "provide an infrastructure which reduces our environmental impact," we continue to embed sustainability into our learning environments and community spaces. Future Choices recently installed a water butt to support hands-on learning about sustainable practices, helping Learners understand the value of conserving natural resources. Meanwhile, Community Works has introduced a new recycling facility at our Care Home in Ulverston — a practical step towards reducing waste and encouraging greener habits. These initiatives reflect our belief that sustainability is a shared responsibility. We hope that the lessons learned with us inspire individuals to carry these values into their homes, workplaces, and communities.





**Training With Purpose: Co-Producing Learning That Reflects Real Lives**

Oaklea is preparing to launch new sessions within its Core Competency Frameworks, starting with Autism Awareness and Learning Disability Awareness. These courses are designed to support staff development and ensure the highest standards of care.

What makes this training especially meaningful is the involvement of customers with lived experience. They'll be helping to shape the materials we use and organise the sessions, with the potential to co-deliver the training itself in the future — a great example of co-production in action.

“The great thing about these two training courses is that I’ll be involving some of our customers with a lived experience of these conditions in the training. To begin with, they will be helping me to prepare the training materials and setting up the training roster. I’m hopeful that, in future, they will eventually get involved in delivering some of the training with me. Those of you working in the Kendal office can expect to see them popping in here and there next year to help me get all the material organised and I hope you’ll all support them as they help to bring a new aspect to the training sessions.”

**Pete Embling, Training Officer at Oaklea Group**

This approach not only strengthens our training but also empowers customers to contribute meaningfully to their communities and to Oaklea’s continued growth.

## Oaklea Group Financial Summary



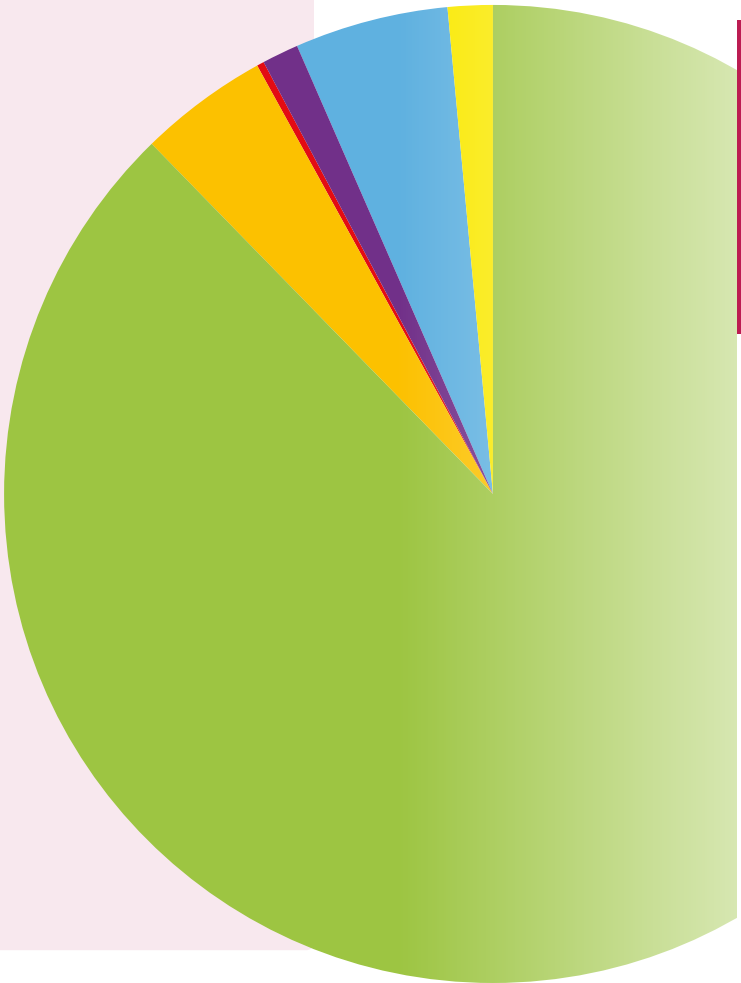
“During 2024/25 Oaklea Group has supported over 460 individual customers and learners through our bespoke programmes. In addition, we have engaged hundreds more through the Appleby Hub, The Furniture Warehouse and Community Works, each of which provides opportunities to both individuals and local groups and champions the development of stronger communities.

2024-25 was a more difficult year for the Charity following change in contractual terms relating to our work across County Durham, the impact of national minimum wage, CPI and National Insurance Contributions; however, through good planning, monitoring and management, the Charity and its subsidiary have been able to remain financially robust, and whilst it was a harder than expected year, the result overall was solid and provides strong foundations from which the new Executive Team can address the future with confidence.”

**Dr Philip Smith MBE, Chair of the Finance Committee**

### Oaklea Group Consolidated Accounts

	2025	2024
<b>Income</b>	£'000	£'000
Donations, Grants and Fundraising	9	21
Charitable Activities	10,674	9,894
<b>Total Income</b>	10,683	9,915
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Employee costs	9,219	8,485
Property expenses	451	415
Governance costs	25	17
IT costs	127	114
Other Direct and Charitable Overheads	534	494
Depreciation	156	121
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	10,512	9,646
<b>Surplus</b>	171	269



**As a people focussed charity the Oaklea Group recognises that employees are our most valuable asset.**

**With the team having grown in the past year to 375, this is also demonstrated in the fact that for every £100 of expenditure £87.70 is spent on employee costs.**

**For every £100 of income here's what we spent it on in 2024/25**

Employee costs	£87.70
Property expenses	£4.29
Governance costs	£0.24
IT costs	£1.21
Other overheads	£5.08
Depreciation	£1.48
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£100.00</b>



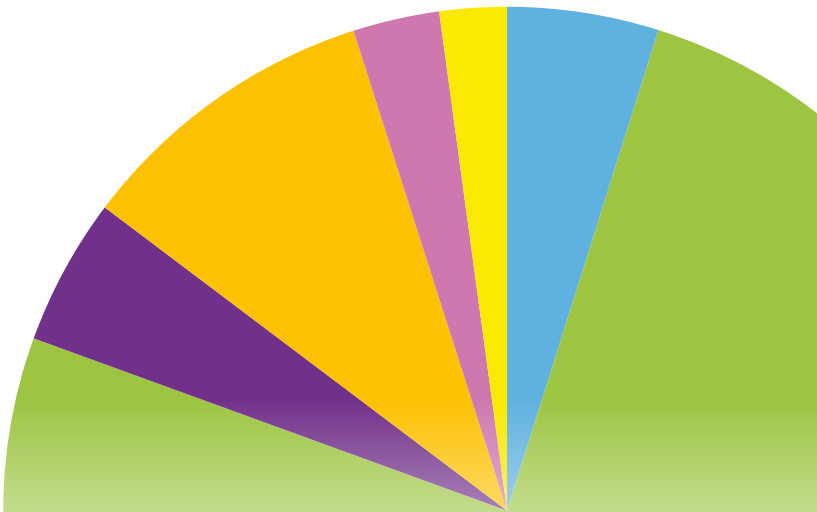
# Right2Work Financial Summary

“The efforts of the Right2Work Team continue to make educational, societal and environmental impact upon the communities in which we operate. Right2Work performed strongly to the year ending 31st March 2025, helping the Group as a whole to end the year with a small surplus and a gift aid donation to the Charity this year of £271k; whilst maintaining transfers to our reserves and strengthening our balance sheet for the future. Right2Work will continue to invest in the growth of our business and seek new opportunities in the coming years.”

*Dr Philip Smith,  
Chair of the Finance Committee*



Right2Work Accounts	2025	2024
	£'000	£'000
Turnover	1,755	1,272
Cost of Sales		
Purchases and direct costs	70	40
Employee costs	1,090	852
Administrative expenses	68	75
Property and Motor expenses	141	126
Legal, Financial and Professional	40	27
Depreciation and interest	31	35
	1,440	1,155
<b>Profit before Tax</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>117</b>



Split of Expenditure in 2024/25

Employee costs	76%
Administrative costs	4%
Property and motor expenses	10%
Legal, financial and professional	3%
Depreciation and interest	2%
Purchase and direct costs	5%



## Oaklea Group CEO

**Since joining Oaklea in December 2024, I have been surprised, delighted and encouraged by the commitment, skill and kindness I have witnessed every day.**

Taking the big leap that I did from Belfast to Kendal and from the arts to adult social care took courage and conviction, and I’ve not looked back. As this report demonstrates, 2024-25 was a year of change, engagement and ambition and there is a strong appetite to build on the brilliant foundations laid well before I joined. I am looking forward to building on these and continuing to listen to our customers, learners, team members and partner organisations as we move further into our new chapter. By placing the needs and interests of each customer and learner at the very centre of our work, we have supported them and our dedicated teams to learn, develop and thrive. Our Board of Trustees and the Directors of Right2Work have been similarly dedicated to planning for the future, and relentless in their commitment to

ensuring our customers and learners experience the highest quality services and best possible outcomes. This is equalled by their support for the team and investment in the Group as a whole. Our five strategic themes remain the same across the Group as in 2023-24, when they were introduced. In simple terms we seek to:

- Deliver outstanding care, learning and personal development
- Attract, develop and retain high quality team members
- Diversify our revenue sources
- Develop the Oaklea Group brand across the North of England
- Enhance our Governance

I am genuinely excited to continue to support our customers, learners, teams and Boards to achieve these objectives and develop our plans for the future. I look forward to sharing updates with you throughout the coming year and for many more to come.

**Jenna Hall, Oaklea Group CEO**





# Future Plans

## Expanding Opportunities

Building on the success of our Future Choices programme in South Lakes, we are excited to introduce and expand pre-Supported Internship options into Furness and Carlisle in 2025. This development reflects our commitment to creating inclusive pathways that empower individuals to learn, grow, and participate fully in their communities.

In Furness we will be represented in College House on Howard Street and in Carlisle, we're establishing a new base at Milbourne Street within the Bourne Business Centre - both spaces that will support our continued growth and deepen local engagement.

As part of this expansion, we'll be hosting Day Opportunities events to connect with local authorities, fellow providers, social workers, and brokers. The aim is to foster collaboration, share



best practice, and identify key partners who can help progress Future Choices across the region.

And in Kendal, we look forward to welcoming you to a new Learning Centre, not only a new location for Future Choices and Supported Internship programmes in South Lakes but additional space for meetings and hot desking.

By working together, we hope to inspire new possibilities for those we support — and ensure that every step forward is shaped by the voices and experiences of our communities.



## Developing Best Practice, Growing Our Offer

The aims of the Care Directorate are focused on embedding innovation and providing support tailored to the individuals we serve.

We have successfully collaborated to establish a Safeguarding Team that includes several Designated Safeguarding Leads, who assist with safeguarding practices and support our customers, learners and colleagues in this area.

They are composed of members from the Board of Trustees, Executive Team, Registered Managers, and our HR team, creating a robust support system for our organisation. As a team, we are all trained to effectively triage safeguarding matters should they arise. We support our customers and provide assistance, advice, and education to our colleagues. We intend to continue to embed and communicate safeguarding practice, as well as support and empower through knowledge, kindness and active advocacy wherever possible. In 2025 our teams took part in interactive workshops and completed training about the Mental Capacity Act and how best to support customers and their families to understand consent and to make decisions about their care and support plans. We will continue to



refine our practices in this area over the coming months. Workshop-style learning has been welcomed, and this year we are designing further workshops in the area of Medication, Equality, Dignity, to name a few to support our colleagues. This will encourage a learning culture that is led by many individuals and will extend to all of our colleagues in the future and beyond.

We are looking at improvements in technology and how this can support innovation, understanding data in a meaningful way and using it as an intuitive guide to where support is

needed at any one time.

In 2025 and beyond, we will be working alongside colleagues and professionals to strengthen and expand our offer of services in people's own homes, Personal Health Budgets, Individual Service Funds, and multi-faceted Health, Social and Education commissioning to extend our offer of services.

## New referral options

We have changed some of our processes and streamlined our referral routes, which are now more accessible and can be found here: <https://www.oakleatrust.co.uk/contact-us/make-a-referral/>





**Employer Engagement R2W**

Working with employers will remain a key priority to ensure our learners access the opportunities they deserve. In addition to working with a wide range of employers, our Supported Internships will continue to work in partnership with Centre Parcs and The Station Hotel in Carlisle, while launching a new programme with Skipton Building Society in late 2025. R2W will also be introducing employer training to strengthen partnerships and create more sustained, meaningful opportunities for paid employment.



**Strengthening Digital Foundations for Safer, Smarter Care**

Delivering safe, high-quality care in a digital age requires more than adopting new tools — it calls for secure infrastructure, strong governance, and a clear commitment to protecting our people. Oaklea is actively planning for investment in technology to help futureproof our systems, support and to

improve data capture. This important work will help us to understand and innovate our care, support and learning practices, to reduce risk and meet or exceed contractual expectations. This will require well considered, co-produced projects that involve teams, customers and stakeholders.

“We’ve already laid solid foundations, but as digital technologies and requirements evolve and AI becomes more embedded in care delivery, we recognise the need to adapt. Our vision includes improving how we engage with learners and customers through accessible communications, digital surveys, and integrated care records, all linked to our HR and finance systems for greater efficiency and responsiveness. While risks exist, we are confident they can be mitigated through careful planning, clear communication, and ongoing evaluation. This reflects our commitment to innovation that benefits everyone we support.”






**Alex Wolfenden, Director**











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## right2work

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## right2work

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