



IMPACT REPORT

2025-2026



Contents

Welcome	2
Our Values	3
A Year in Review	4
Our Impact	5-6
Calibre Learning	7-8
Our Staff and Volunteers	9-10
Our Collection	11
Calibre Communities	12
Our Financials	13
Our Future Plans	14



Welcome

For over 50 years, Calibre Audio has been a charity with reading at its heart – enabling people to discover, enjoy and love reading in a way that works for them.

This has been a year of strong progress as we advanced our five-year strategy, expanding access to diverse audiobooks and deepening our impact across education, mental health and wellbeing.

My Calibre[™] has enhanced the member experience through improved systems and broader access to our vast collection.

Calibre Learning has grown significantly, reaching more schools and highlighting strong demand for accessible reading support, while beginning to extend provision to disadvantaged young people.

Calibre Communities has continued to develop, with initiatives like local book groups helping reduce isolation and build connection.

Despite a challenging environment, we have remained resilient, and being recognised again as a Great Place to Work reflects the strength of our culture and ongoing commitment to meaningful impact.



Howard Nead
Chair of Trustees



Anthony Kemp
Chief Executive

Our Values



We show empathy

So that we can effectively meet the needs of our community



We display creativity

Embracing innovation to help us reach our goals



We value community

Our members, colleagues and partners are at the heart of our service



We have integrity

acting with honesty and transparency in all we do



We take accountability

Showing ownership of our actions and their results



A Year in Review

This year has marked a significant step forward in our development, with a continued focus on improving access, strengthening partnerships, and supporting educators in meaningful ways. Alongside our investment in systems such as Catmin, our membership services portal, we have prioritised ensuring that our work translates into practical benefits for the communities we serve.

A key milestone was the SEN Teachers' Conference in January 2026, which provided an important opportunity to engage directly with practitioners, share learning, and gather insight to inform our next steps. We have also welcomed the first cohort of schools taking part in our Assisted Reading with Audiobooks project, with early progress demonstrating the value of this approach in supporting inclusive reading.

In March 2026, our attendance at the London Book Fair opened up new conversations with publishers, creating opportunities for further collaboration and development. Together, these developments highlight our growing impact and continued commitment to building more effective, inclusive services, alongside a levelling up in our membership numbers, with almost half of our members now under the age of 25.

Our Impact

The period 2025-2026 saw a significant increase in the number of people we support. The average membership age is dropping, due to the increase in the number of children being assisted in schools. However, despite this increase, there is a huge problem across the UK which we are only just starting to address. 1 in 10 people in the UK are registered as being dyslexic and more than 2 million people have some sort of visual impairment.

Our service isn't just about reading, for many of our members, it is a lifeline.

25,909

total registered members

6,152

new members in 2025-26

40%

of our members are
Visually Impaired

28%

of our members are
registered as Dyslexic

Our Impact

72%

of members surveyed said they felt less lonely as a result of using the service

“One word only describes Calibre:

Lifesaver”

Andy - Calibre Member 2026

My 102 year old, nearly blind, mother would be lost without this marvellous service. Thank you.

Kate, a Calibre Member's Daughter 2026

9.06 out of 10

member satisfaction score. Up from 8.74 last year.

over half

of members surveyed said they have discovered new interests from using the service

This is a first class service, we are delighted with it.

Joanne - Calibre Member 2026

Calibre Learning

Calibre Learning is a free audiobook platform for schools, created to support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who find reading printed text challenging.

Launched in September 2025 as part of the Calibre Audio family, the platform is currently in beta phase. It provides access to thousands of audiobooks, available via streaming, download or USB postal loan, and can be used on phones, tablets and computers, ensuring pupils can listen in ways that suit them.

"Your charity has transformed so many young people! In our school, it has had a dramatic impact which is leading to great things as we embed a reading culture across the school."

Karen - School SENDCO

177

schools using the platform in the UK

4,275

individual learners aged 4-19 using the platform

Calibre Learning

Thanks to funding from the Julia Rausing Trust and Dulverton Trust, the Assisted Reading with Audiobooks project has delivered weekly, audiobook-supported reading groups in UK primary schools. Originally piloted with Bucks iSEND, the programme supports small groups of pupils, mainly in upper Key Stage 2, who need extra literacy help. Sessions build reading skills, confidence and wellbeing through guided listening and discussion.

The project has exceeded expectations, expanding from a planned 24 schools (288 pupils) to 42 schools supporting over 540 pupils with SEND. Now reaching areas including Buckinghamshire, London, Greater Manchester and the North East, the programme demonstrates strong demand and potential for wider national impact.



"For us, the main impact we have seen is the increase in the enjoyment of reading...The project has also provided the children with the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to comprehend a text verbally. It is really interesting to see how well the children can answer both literal and inferential questions from listening to a text and orally explaining their answer as opposed to having to read a text and provide a written answer to questions in a reading assessment paper."

Aimee - School SENDCO



Our Staff and Volunteers

Certified Great Place to Work 2025-26

Once again, we partnered with Great Place to Work to run our staff survey in 2025-26. Our staff gave their feedback, which resulted in a 79% score and meant we gained Great Place to Work status. This certification solidifies our commitment to the wellbeing of our team and gives us a platform to receive actionable feedback so we can continue to improve.



25 staff

15 full time, 10 part time

52,781 hours

of office working

Apprenticeships

We used the UK Government levy scheme to fund apprenticeships, which help us to diversify our workforce and have greater social impact. During 2025-26, three members of staff participated in apprenticeship programmes. One colleague successfully completed a Level 7 Senior Leader apprenticeship, while another continued a Level 6 Cyber Security Technical Professional apprenticeship. A further colleague undertook a Level 3 apprenticeship in library and information services.

Our Staff and Volunteers

Over 7,500
volunteer hours

Over 150
volunteers including
trustees, narrators,
checkers, library and
editors

£120,000*
of value delivered by
volunteers
*Based on National Living Wage

Let's Celebrate!

Our volunteers are a vital part of who we are and what we do. Their dedication, selflessness and generosity make a lasting difference to the people we serve. Many have given their time week after week, year after year and their commitment has helped shape our organisation in ways we could never achieve alone.

We celebrate those reaching significant milestones this year with deep gratitude.



Length of Service	Number of Volunteers
Over 5 years	3
Over 10 years	14
Over 15 years	11
Over 20 years	1
Over 25 years	2

Our Collection

2,189,559

hours of listening by
our members

212,011

books borrowed

7

new publisher partners

87%

of members surveyed said they
found the service easy to use

82%

of members surveyed said they
could find the audiobooks they
wanted to listen to

707

new children's titles

16

new categories

327

titles narrated, checked
and edited by Calibre
Audio volunteers

4,716

new titles added to the
collection in 2025/26

Calibre Communities

In building community engagement and tackling social isolation, Calibre Audio's audiobook book groups play a vital role in bringing people together through shared reading experiences. The launch of the Bucks Audiobook Groups marked a significant step forward in expanding this offer, creating new spaces for connection, conversation and belonging.

Through audiobooks and facilitated discussion, these groups do more than encourage reading. They build confidence, reduce loneliness and create meaningful social connections. By working collaboratively with partner organisations and directly with members, Calibre Audio continues to widen access to books while strengthening inclusive communities.

37

audiobook book groups nationally, supported by Calibre Audio

Over 340

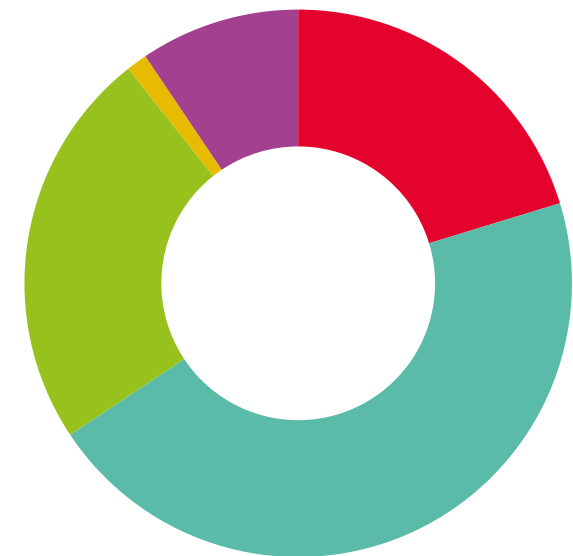
people attended audiobook book groups nationally

8

audiobook book groups run by Calibre Audio

Our Financials

Income (total of £1,140,000)



- **20%** Donations
- **46%** Legacies
- **24%** Trusts & Foundations
- **1%** Merchandising
- **9%** Other

Expenditure (total of £1,370,761)



- **9%** Fundraising Costs
- **43%** Service Delivery Costs
- **48%** Operational Costs



91p
of every £1 spent is on delivery
and operation of our services

Our Future Plans

Over the next three years, we will focus on expanding our reach, strengthening resilience and deepening impact, ensuring that more people who cannot access standard print are able to experience the joy and benefits of reading. By building on our existing strengths and embracing innovation, we will continue to evolve our services to meet changing needs and reach new audiences.

Our five strategic objectives for the next three years are:

- Increasing subscribed, diverse member base to 50,000
- Increasing national brand awareness and reach
- Achieving long-term financial sustainability
- Improving the lives of older people
- Improving the lives of younger people

Across all of these areas, we will also be committed as an organisation to measure and report on the social impact of all areas of our work.

Together, these priorities will enable Calibre Audio to reach more people and transform more lives through accessible reading, while also strengthening our long-term sustainability and ensuring we remain a trusted, relevant and impactful charity for years to come.



"A wonderful service - wouldn't want to live without it - thank you."

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Calibre Audio is a charity registered in England, Wales (286614) and Scotland (SC051461)