



Impact Report

2024-2025



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2024-25 and Beyond

A message from our Chair of Trustees and our Chief Executive

This was an exciting and groundbreaking year for us. We celebrated 50 years of supporting people who struggle to read printed books and launched our new five-year strategy, focussing on providing diverse audiobook choices to our members and on delivering impact in education, mental health and wellbeing.

My Calibre™ will focus on delivering audiobooks in formats of our members choice and will offer magazines and newspapers in audio.

Calibre Learning will work with schools and educators to create impact in helping children with learning challenges achieve their full potential. Later in the strategic period, we'll offer services to help young offenders achieve success by widening access to educational materials in audio.

Calibre Communities will work with local authorities, hospices, community groups, and social prescribing professionals to help combat isolation, loneliness and support the mental health and wellbeing of our members in their communities.



Howard Nead, Chair of Trustees



Anthony Kemp, Chief Executive

Who We Are

We set new core values in 2024-25

Calibre Audio offers a free or heavily subsidised audiobook service to those who have or support people with a print disability.

We focus not just on bringing the pleasure of reading to this group, but on the proven value and life-benefits reading can offer in supporting mental health, education, and independent living.

Our Core 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

Our 50th Year in Highlights

We celebrated a special anniversary



2024 marked half a century of making a difference to the lives of people with print disabilities. What began as a project ran by volunteers in a portacabin has now become a national charity serving a range of print disabled people.

Supported by Arts Council England, we were able to fund projects that fulfilled strategic objectives. We recognised the contribution made by volunteers across half a century by hosting a celebratory **Garden Party**.

We championed people with print disabilities with our short story competition, **Inclusive Voices**. 122 people, young and old, contributed stories featuring a central character with a print disability. The final entries were compiled into a physical book and an audiobook.



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Our Impact

The difference our members told us we made to their lives*

*results based on a 2025 survey of 600 members



97%

said they were **very likely to recommend** our service to someone with a print disability

"This truly has been a lifesaver for me. I'm on my own for prolonged periods, it keeps me company during the day, and I'm engrossed while I listen."

"Having Calibre in my life has really improved my emotional life. Having my books gives me something to look forward to and makes [me] feel less alone."



28%

said they **felt more relaxed or less stressed** for having access to our audiobooks



88%

said their **mental or emotional wellbeing improved** by having access to our service

"Thank you for giving me back the pleasure of books...when my sight deteriorated, I couldn't read, finding Calibre was wonderful"

Our Young Members

We worked directly with schools this year



287

schools across the UK found support through our services

Supporting schools began gathering steam in 2024-25.

We hired a **Head of Communities and Learning** to start resourcing our strategic aim: to bring audio to children who struggle to read print across the country. Most of our work began in Buckinghamshire, as part of our pilot scheme.

School members use their Calibre accounts in a variety of ways:

- 1:1 support for children with Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) who cannot access set texts through reading alone,
- Group literacy sessions for children who have special educational needs,
- To support extra-curricular book clubs to be accessible to all students.

Schools Pilot Scheme

The results



13 schools were part of our **Buckinghamshire pilot scheme**. We assessed the impact of pairing audiobooks with text in the print copy of a book.

All children enrolled in the 12-week study had a special educational need and their reading age was below their chronological age.

71% of pupils saw an improvement to their reading age at the end of the project.

The average improvement was 8 months; but 40% improved by 12 months; and 20% by 15 months.

Children reported they **enjoyed reading more** and **felt more confident about reading**.

Teachers reported that children's **vocabulary improved**, and the children seemed **more motivated to read** than before the intervention.



71% of pupils

saw their reading age improve following our pilot project

Supporting Communities

We began expanding our reach



Calibre^{audio}
Communities

We support organisations and libraries across the UK to run **audiobook groups**. These groups are valued by members and provide relief from social isolation.

We work flexibly with the groups to bring audiobooks and lively discussions to print disabled people in communities across the country.

"As an autistic I have limited social opportunities, so I've really enjoyed the audiobook group. It's a low-pressure environment. The staff have been wonderful and accommodating. I would highly recommend this to others."

- Victoria, Calibre book group member



37

audiobook groups
supported across the
UK, 5 ran by us directly

Our Collection

We widened our audiobook offering



Our members said, and we listened. We replaced the old ten-minute track format with traditional book chapters. This change was made at the request of our members via our panel and will be applied to all new audiobooks.

We attended the London Book Fair in March 2025, allowing us to showcase our service. We made agreements with publishers including Allison & Busby, Cybirdy Publishing, and Blackstone. These new agreements bring a wider variety of audiobooks to our members.

Existing partnerships with Penguin Random House, Hachette, Simon and Schuster, and Bloomsbury have helped us further expand our collection.

86%*

of members said our collection was **good or excellent**

*Based on our 2025 survey of 600 members

2,102

new titles added to the collection in 2024/25

64%

of members borrowed **3 or more audiobooks** each month

Calibre Staff

Our team made a huge difference

Certified Great Place to Work 2024-25

We partnered with Great Place to Work to run our staff survey in 2024-25. Our staff gave their feedback, which resulted in a 78% 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.



Apprenticeships

We used the UK Government levy scheme to fund apprenticeships, which help us to diversify our workforce and have greater social impact. In 2024-25, 7 apprentices were completing their courses with us.

Apprenticeships align with our vision of inclusivity and give chances for people to develop work skills and grow their careers with us.

Calibre volunteers

Their contribution in figures



102 Narrators

Recorded books into audio for Calibre



15 Checkers

Ensured the recordings were of the highest quality



1,513 hours

Spent by narrators recording the stories across the year



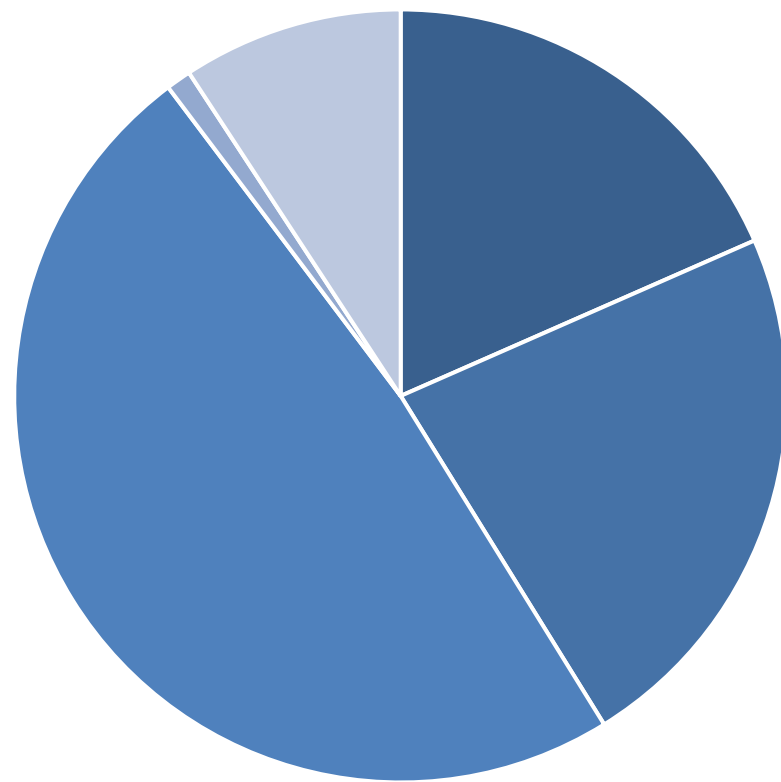
231 Audiobooks

Produced and added to the collection by volunteers

Finances overview

What came in and where we spent it in 2024-25

Income (total of £1,123,283):



25% Donations

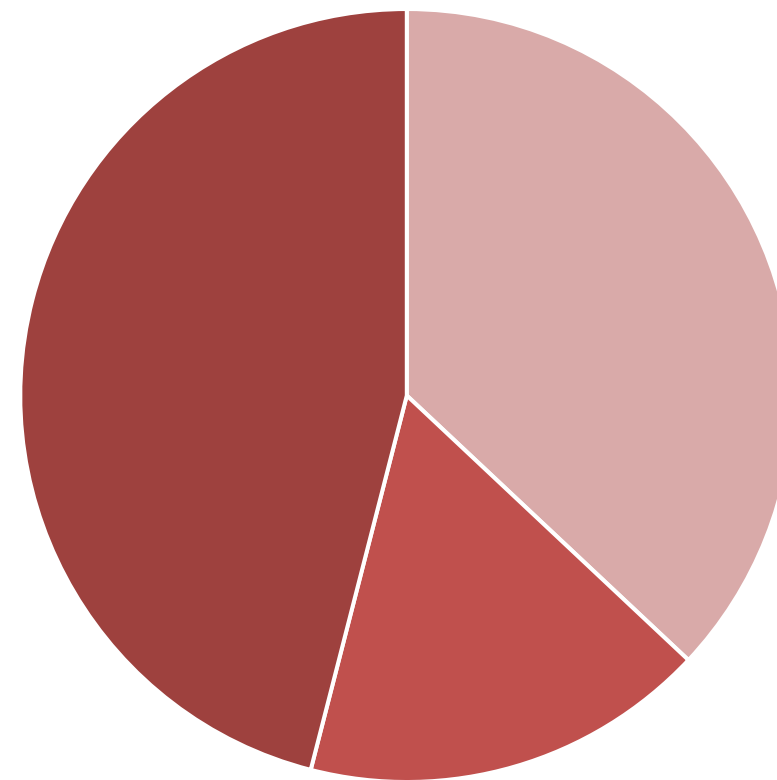
43% Legacies

22% Trusts & foundations

1% Merchandising

9% Other

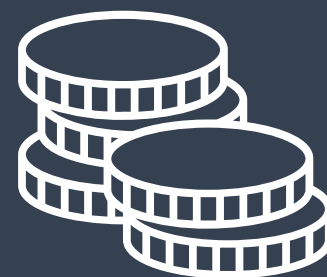
Expenditure (total of £1,434,908):



37% Service and digital development

18% Fundraising costs

45% Operational costs



**For every £1 donated,
85p goes directly to fund
our service**

Finances overview

What came in and where we spent it in 2024-25

Our focus was investing in capacity and resources to deliver the new strategic themes of Calibre Communities and Calibre Learning.

We invested in a pilot for the new Assisted Reading Programme focusing on children with dyslexia in schools.

2025-26 will see us realising the benefits of our property review with a capital receipt of over £1m from the sale of land no longer required for residential development.



Looking to the future

How you can support our mission

We'd love to have you support our mission. Our charity receives no government funding, meaning we rely entirely on the generosity of donors to fund our service, and to continue providing audiobooks to people who consider them a lifeline.

Our team are open to discussing opportunities and ensure a future for generations of print disabled people to come. Call or email our executive management today:

Anthony Kemp, Chief Executive

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Our Fundraising Team

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It costs us £1.5m annually to run our service

Contact us

All the ways you can get in touch



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**

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