

Rotherham Together Partnership



Annual Report 2023-2024



www.rotherhamtogetherpartnership.org.uk

Foreword

I'm delighted to bring you our Rotherham Together Partnership annual report for 2023/24.

Although the report can't possibly capture everything that local partners are delivering, it provides a really good snapshot of the projects, programmes and initiatives that are making a tangible difference for our people and places.

The range of activity taking place across our priority themes is striking: from helping people into work and delivering regeneration schemes throughout the borough, to family hubs, tree planting and tackling hate crime.

Partnership working is integral to what we do in Rotherham. It is about making connections and building relationships; enabling us then to pool our skills, knowledge and resources so that we can make more of an impact.

This approach is ingrained through the strong structures we have in place. More simply though, it reflects an attitude. Organisations and staff at all levels and across all sectors want to support each other, learn from each other, and – together – do their absolute best to create a better borough for everyone.



Councillor Chris Read,
Chair of the Rotherham
Together Partnership



Introduction

Rotherham Together Partnership comprises a range of partnership bodies and organisations from the public, private and voluntary and community sectors. Focusing on shared priorities set out in the Rotherham Plan 2025 and other thematic strategies, we combine our knowledge, skills and resources to deliver projects and initiatives that benefit local people and places.

This report highlights the progress made over the last twelve months, with key achievements and case studies, based around the five themes of the Rotherham Plan:

THEME 1  **A place to be proud of**

THEME 2  **Inclusive economy**

THEME 3  **Climate and environment**

THEME 4  **Health and wellbeing**

THEME 5  **Building stronger communities**

As a partnership, we will continue to listen, engage and act together to improve our places and enable our residents to live healthy and fulfilling lives.





A place to be proud of

Delivering regeneration across Rotherham, inspiring people and creating great places

Partners are delivering a transformative regeneration programme, complemented by a diverse range of events and activities. Major schemes in the town centre and across the borough focused on culture, leisure and living are well underway or nearing completion.

As we look forward to the Children's Capital of Culture in 2025, our young people are the driving force behind a series of events and experiences that showcase and celebrate our diversity, creativity and heritage.

Key projects

- ▶ **An inspiring creative and cultural programme**, including the Uplift Rotherham skate and art festival, the WOW (Women of the World) festival, which was co-curated by a group of young people from Rotherham, and Signals, a nine-day music festival with free gigs, concerts and music-making workshops, delivered by the Children's Capital of Culture team and Rotherham Music Hub.
- ▶ **Regeneration schemes** to boost the visitor and leisure economy, with improvements at Magna and Maltby Academy completed, work ongoing at Wentworth Woodhouse, and construction at Rother Valley country park due to start by September 2024.
- ▶ **Opening of Grimm and Co's** magical new base in the town centre, following an extensive refurbishment that has transformed an old church into a fantastical Emporium of Stories.
- ▶ **Flagship town centre development** at Forge Island, comprising an eight-screen cinema, 69-room hotel (now open) and eateries, on course for completion later this year.
- ▶ **45 homes completed on Millfold Rise**, bringing the total to 171 new homes across three town centre sites.
- ▶ **A range of capital improvement schemes** delivered across the borough through the Towns and Villages Fund, improving accessibility and enhancing local places.



The theme in numbers

- ▶ **488,102 engagements** with Rotherham Council's culture and leisure facilities (April-December 2023).
- ▶ Children's Capital of Culture: **42,307 participations** during 2023.
- ▶ **15 local capital improvement schemes** delivered through the Towns and Villages Fund, with 5 more on site or ready to begin; 23 children's play areas improved; and a new library opened in Thurcroft.
- ▶ **65% of the public satisfied** with Rotherham borough as a place to live.
- ▶ **82% of the public satisfied** with their local area as a place to live.

Case study

The Children's Capital of Culture traineeship programme – young people making Rotherham a place to be proud of.

In 2022, Children's Capital of Culture (CCoC) received funding through the UK Community Renewal Fund to pilot a traineeship programme that gave young people in Rotherham the experience of doing paid, part-time work in the creative sector. In partnership with seven cultural organisations across the borough, CCoC offered six-month traineeships to 59 young people. And in the three months after their traineeships ended, over 70% of these young people had gone into further employment or education.

In 2023, CCoC secured funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to further develop their traineeship programme. Together with Flux Rotherham and Wentworth Woodhouse Preservation Trust, CCoC used an innovative and accessible recruitment process that saw a diverse group of over 100 young people apply to the programme. After shortlisting and a creative recruitment morning, 14 young people were selected.

One of our 2023 trainees was Sophie Ellingham (24), from Todwick. Sophie had always been passionate about working in a creative role and so, after finishing her A-Levels, she pursued a career in marketing. She worked at a start-up company, but the impact of the Covid pandemic meant the organisation had to fold, and Sophie was made redundant.

It was then that Sophie successfully applied to the CCoC traineeship programme, securing part-time roles with both Wentworth Woodhouse and Flux Rotherham.

She said: 'The Wentworth Woodhouse role was a film-based traineeship. At first, our group of nine trainees worked on live briefs to gain experience of film production. After this, our project team created a short film, and planned and produced a public event to showcase it.'

The Wentworth Woodhouse trainee team put on an interactive murder-mystery event called The Scene of the Crime. It sold out within 24 hours and received hugely positive feedback from its 300+ attendees.

'At Flux I was employed alongside two other trainees and gained vital skills around project planning and community engagement,' Sophie continued. 'Towards the end of the Flux traineeships, we became the co-project leads of large public programmes – like The Museum of the Moon, which came to Rotherham in November 2023 – before planning and running our own events.'

The fortnight-long Museum of the Moon festival reached over 10,000 people, while the other events Sophie has worked on with Flux have collectively reached audiences of over 100,000.

Sophie said: 'The traineeships have taught me so much about working as a team, communicating with different people, and building professional connections with artists and organisations. Through them I've developed so much confidence – both professionally and personally. It's been life changing.'

As Sophie nears the end of her traineeship, she is looking for work within the cultural sector. 'During my traineeships I loved working in film and in events, and so am keen to go into a creative producer role.

Thanks to the traineeships, I think I've developed an impressive CV for someone my age. Whereas previously I would've thought "there's no way I could do that", now I'm applying for the types of jobs I'm really excited about!'

Children's Capital of Culture have received further funding from UKSPF to continue to grow our successful traineeship programme, and are currently working with seven organisations to offer 20 traineeships during the first half of 2024.





Inclusive economy

Creating opportunities for everyone to participate in and benefit from a growing economy

A range of skills, employment and enterprise initiatives are helping people to access good quality jobs and supporting businesses to start up and grow. At the same time, we continue to develop our social value policy, ensuring the money we spend as partners delivers maximum benefits for local people.

Key projects

- ▶ **Joint initiatives** and commitments on social value and promotion of the Real Living Wage, including holding a social value celebration event for suppliers to showcase impact and inspire others.
- ▶ **Submission of the local skills improvement plan** to government, setting out how skills training provision can better meet the needs of local employers.
- ▶ **Delivery of a small business grants scheme** and opening of Century 2, a new business centre at Manvers.

- ▶ **Further external funding secured** to continue our key employment and skills projects, including Employment Solutions; Ambition; and Advance.



The theme in numbers

- ▶ **Total social and local economic value committed** via the Council's social value policy - £27.84m, an increase of over 100% from 2022.
- ▶ **19 full-time equivalent** long-term unemployed individuals to be hired on Council contracts, 1,526 weeks of training opportunities to be offered, and £1.796m worth of dedicated support to help young people into work.



- ▶ **Over 90 young people secured** or working towards Children's Capital of Culture arts awards.
- ▶ **216 businesses assisted** through the borough's business centres, with 187 jobs created or safeguarded through the 55 new occupants in 2023/24.
- ▶ **Advance project - 389 working people assisted** to upskill and further their careers (21 months to Dec 23).
- ▶ **217 job outcomes delivered** through the Inspire, Pathways, Individual Placement Support and Supported Employment projects.

Case study

Rotherham College are one of a range of organisations offering English For Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) courses in Rotherham. Their purpose is to improve spoken English, reading and writing, maths and IT skills, with courses tailored to cater for all abilities.

ESOL classes include students from all over the world and are taught in a friendly and relaxed way, including in community-based settings. The classes are one facet of integration and support for non-English speakers, which is vital in improving their employment prospects.

The college supports students' learning and provides advice and guidance on next steps for a successful future. Many of the students have progressed either into employment, to one of the vocational courses on offer, or to apprenticeships and higher education or degrees.

The positive impacts of ESOL classes are wide-ranging and learners have, for example, stated their motivation for joining as wanting to be able to help their children with

their education, with wider benefits in improving English speaking and listening skills, creating social connections and more confidence in speaking English in public.

Marie, a language learner with limited English skills and a learning barrier, has been attending the ESOL community class at the Unity Centre. Marie faced challenges in education due to her limited English and fear of being ridiculed. Marie started attending the ESOL class, where her confidence began to grow.

Marie said: "I have found it difficult to go to any educational setting, I feel other people would laugh at me because I can't speak much English. By attending this session, my confidence has grown, and I feel much happier within myself. I have also made some friends and look forward to seeing them in class."

Through my confidence growing, I attended another community session that has been organised by the NHS. I contributed by sharing my thoughts in this session. I feel that the tutor in my ESOL class always encouraging me to speak English has helped me

so much. I also shared information with the rest of the group when I came back to my ESOL class about the services the NHS provides. I received positive feedback from the rest of my peers."

Marie's journey from insecurity and limited language skills to confidence and active community engagement demonstrates the positive impact of ESOL programmes and supportive educators in addressing barriers. Her story highlights the transformative power of language education for community integration and improving wellbeing.

Another learner, Saira, entered community ESOL class with significant challenges. She struggled to communicate in English, which severely impacted her confidence and social interactions. Saira's transformation during the first semester of the ESOL class was remarkable. Through consistent participation in class discussions and activities, Saira's confidence began to grow, she gradually overcame her initial shyness and started speaking English with more fluency. She was able to assist other learners and helped them understand how to use the English alphabet. One of the most significant outcomes of Saira's

participation in the ESOL class was her successful job placement as a support worker. This achievement marked a turning point in her life. Her role involved assisting and caring for individuals in need. This career opportunity opened up due to her English language skills and heightened self-confidence.

Through determination, active participation, and support, Saira not only improved her English language skills but also gained the confidence to pursue a fulfilling career as a support worker. Saira's journey from a place of low confidence and social isolation, to becoming a confident, active participant in the community and even securing a job highlights the importance of inclusive education and community support in empowering individuals to overcome language barriers and social isolation.





Climate and environment

Building a healthy and attractive local environment, whilst acting on the climate crisis

A collective commitment to respond to climate and nature challenges is set out in the partnership's climate and nature charter. As well as taking action to reduce emissions, we are working to maintain a healthy environment, ensuring that Rotherham's wealth of green space – our urban and country parks, nature reserves, woodlands and playing fields – are resilient to future impacts.

Key projects

- ▶ **Partners signed up to** a climate and nature charter, which sets out 10 pledges on the net zero journey.
- ▶ **A new community woodland has been created** in Dinnington, where 7,700 trees have been planted with funding from the Woodland Trust's Grow Back Greener programme. Before any of the trees were planted, children from Laughton All Saints primary school took part in a litter pick to help clear the site.

- ▶ **Youth Cabinet members have been formally trained** in carbon literacy and can now deliver the training programme peer to peer within their schools and other youth groups.
- ▶ **The Wath to Manvers and Broom Road cycleways are complete** and the second and third phases of the Sheffield Road scheme are expected to be complete by August 2024.

The theme in numbers

- ▶ **Greenhouse gas emissions within scope of the council's net zero 2030 (NZ30) climate change target have decreased** year on year over the last three reporting years. Total NZ30 emissions decreased 1.9% from 8,121 tCO₂e in 2020/21, to 7,970 tCO₂e in 2021/22. Emissions decreased by another 1.4% the following year, to 7,862 tCO₂e.



- ▶ **11,348 trees planted**, including 8,919 woodland and 2,429 urban trees.
- ▶ **6,505 metres of cycleways completed.**
- ▶ **Initial design work and engagement has been completed** on 6 major flood defence/mitigation schemes.

Case studies

Tree planting at Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust

The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust (TRFT) is demonstrating its environmental commitment by planting 130 seed grown trees in collaboration with NHS Forest.

TRFT were successful with two bids to obtain the trees and this aligns well with its policy of replacing those trees that die or are required to be felled with twice as many fresh young trees. The trees have been provided by NHS Forest under a national environmental

sustainability initiative and will enhance the natural landscape at both Rotherham Hospital and Woodside. This endeavour comes as part of the trust's dedication to fostering a greener future for its community, aiming to enhance the local environment whilst contributing to broader sustainability goals.

An initial batch of 30 urban trees were planted on Valentine's Day. A second batch of 100 wild trees were planted in early to mid-March.

The trees will provide:

- Improved wellbeing by creating a serene environment with privacy and shade, promoting staff and patient comfort

- Sustainable climate action. Trees cool buildings naturally, purify air and combat climate change by storing carbon, which is a major ozone depleting greenhouse gas
- Enhanced biodiversity, encouraging many diverse species of wildlife and fostering a vibrant ecosystem for all to enjoy.

This collaborative effort with NHS Forest – planting trees and nurturing green spaces – continues to pave the way for a healthier, greener future for Rotherham, building on previous environmental initiatives on the Rotherham Hospital site that are aimed at improving both the environment and wellbeing.

These include:

- A woodland walk, with wheelchair-friendly access
- Picnic areas
- Bird feeders
- Bat boxes
- Outdoor gym including equipment for those with disabilities and mobility challenges
- Specially selected colourful, seasonal blooms which provide a sedate and calming atmosphere

Creation of a wildlife corridor at Dearne Valley College

Based in Manvers in Rotherham, Dearne Valley College is a further education college, providing vocational training to 16 to 18 year olds, adult education and apprenticeships.

It has extensive grounds including heath, meadow and 4.2 hectares of woodland. The college puts a high emphasis on sustainability and is keen to use its grounds to promote nature and biodiversity.

In February 2024, staff and students undertook a scheme to plant a wildlife corridor to link the main woodland to a smaller area of scrub and trees, creating one large habitat. This will support a greater number of plants and animals and a more diverse mix of species; increase tree cover at the college with 200 trees planted; and return an unused part of the college grounds to use.

Involving students in the planting gave them an opportunity to learn about nature and to be proud of their contribution to the campus grounds.

Students were instructed in how to plant and care for a tree, and learned what their part in the scheme meant for the college and for nature more generally. The hope is that involvement in the scheme has sparked an interest in and connection to nature.

The trees were supplied by The Conservation Volunteers, paid for by Ovo Energy. The college worked with partners from Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust to ensure the trees were planted correctly. Working with partners strengthens the college's links to the wider

community and helps promote its sustainability values.

The project is a model for how the college can approach sustainability challenges in the future, especially by encouraging student involvement.





Health and wellbeing

Enabling people to lead healthy lives,
tackling inequalities and focusing on prevention

Partners continue to deliver tangible service improvements designed with and responding to the needs of individuals, families and communities. Alongside this, our long-term strategic approach is addressing inequalities and putting the emphasis on prevention.

Key projects

- ▶ **New diagnostic centre opened** at Badsley Moor Lane, providing an out-patient respiratory and sleep physiology service. The centre has more space, equipment and staff, and - with greater capacity for certain tests - is reducing waiting times.
- ▶ **Implementation of 'family hub' approach in children's centres** to provide integrated support to families, with up to 16 services now co-located in hubs across the borough.
- ▶ **Launched 'Say Yes!', a new public health improvement and prevention campaign** to provide advice on areas such as stopping smoking, tobacco control, food and physical activity.

- ▶ **A renewed strategic approach to physical activity** through the Moving Rotherham partnership, focusing on: *active champions, active environments, active communities and active communications*. Partnership achievements over the last year:
 - **training social prescribers/link workers** to increase awareness of the benefits of physical activity
 - **securing £100,000** to support additional community activities in Rotherham schools
 - **the addition of a local activity finder** on the Rotherhive wellbeing and mental health website.

The theme in numbers

- ▶ **45,478 web page views** (directed via 'Say Yes' campaign)
- ▶ **Supporting active communities:** over 650 Bikeability training places for children delivered since April 2023, including at SEND schools; more than 1,500 visits to Bike Hub since April 2023, with over 130 bikes loaned, over 400 bikes checked and over 360 bike training sessions.



▶ Family hubs:

- **14 workforce training programmes completed** or in delivery, increasing the knowledge amongst professionals to improve support to Rotherham families (Apr-Dec 23).
- **1,078 professionals trained** from partner agencies, including the voluntary sector (Apr-Dec 23).
- **1,408 visits to family hubs' online offer** since going live on 6th November 2023 (Nov 23–Jan 24)

Case study

Grassroots community group goes from strength to strength

A mental health lived experience community group in Rotherham set up just over two years ago has become a success and is helping to keep people well and improve mental health.

S62 was co-founded by Sarah Lacey, director and operations manager, and Luke Brailsford, peer support worker. It has operated from The Drop-in Centre on Harding Avenue in Rawmarsh since September 2021.

Samantha Smith is S62's newest director and one of Rotherham's Recovery Community Champions. Through her own lived experience she successfully launched their new recovery peer support group, The Next Chapter, which has opened up another much needed support avenue in Rotherham.

2024 has been a successful year already, with S62 securing grant funding of £347,521 over three years from The National Lottery, enabling their first one-to-one peer support offer to begin in April.

As part of the ongoing transformation of community mental health services, S62 is actively participating in service design, delivery and evaluation to help mental health services navigate towards person-centred care. S62 has now secured the contract to deliver the South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board mental health peer support service - the first in Rotherham.

S62 are also working with RDaSH (Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust) to enable people to have a say on services and advise on potential improvements while giving peers an opportunity to have their voice heard through sharing their experiences.

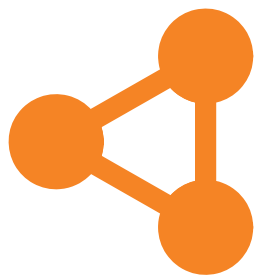
To find out more, contact S62:

Email: enquiries@S62ctr.co.uk

Website: <https://s62ctr.co.uk/>

Follow on social media: @s62ctr





Building stronger communities

Working with individuals and communities on the things that matter most to them

This theme has seen a raft of activity, from community safety measures, to investing in the voluntary and community sector and delivering the Rotherham Show. Partners' efforts continue to reflect what local people tell us is important to them, helping to shape our neighbourhood-based approach.

Key projects

- ▶ **The Rotherham Show** returned to Clifton Park in September 2023, offering free entertainment and family fun. New for 2023, the Festival Village, curated by Flux Rotherham, treated visitors to music from Rotherham Drummers United and The Bewonderment Machine, poetry from Ray Hearne, a wonderful workshop from artist and designer Ellie Way, and traditional dance by Wath Morris Minors.
- ▶ **New agreement in place** to provide support to voluntary and community sector organisations, enabling growth, resilience and sustainability within the sector through help with business planning, effective governance and funding diversification.

- ▶ **A range of safety improvements** in Rotherham town centre, including new lighting at Snail Hill, a replacement fire door at Wellgate multi-storey car park and upgrades to the 'shop link' radios, which will help local businesses communicate with one another if an incident takes place.
- ▶ **A new mobile CCTV unit** to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour across the borough, targeting hotspot areas and open spaces, as well as being used for events.

The theme in numbers

- ▶ **1,374 people attended Open Arms sessions** (Apr 23 to Mar 24) for support with issues related to the high cost of living. 696 people reported that this had a positive impact on their health and wellbeing and 506 received follow up 1-2-1 support from partners.
- ▶ **31 schools signed up** to Rotherham Youth Cabinet's hate charter pledges
- ▶ **11,450 unpaid work hours, valued at £119k**, provided through community payback scheme

- ▶ **Estimated audience of 88,918 for Rotherham Show**, with significantly increased attendance from ethnic minority communities (7% to 21%)
- ▶ **The Homes for Ukraine scheme was launched** in March 2022. By March 2024, residents had welcomed 104 family groups (198 individuals) into their homes.



Case study

Tackling hate crime

Hate crimes can have a devastating effect on individuals. They can cause emotional harm, long term trauma, and a feeling that the victim doesn't belong, which can lead to a change of lifestyles to avoid further incidents. Wider communities can be affected by increased tensions and unease if hate crimes are left unchecked.

Partners have delivered some successful educational work with children and young people to explore and challenge attitudes that foster division and hate in communities; equipping our young people to be responsible citizens in the future.

Following a meeting on hate crime with the School Council, Swinton Academy pupils were invited to work on a project to design a cover for school exercise books on the theme. The winning design and 3,000 copies were subsequently printed.

This enabled engagement with secondary schools across the borough as books were handed

over to year 7 student reps, classes and year group assemblies. The books were something practical pupils could use to jot down notes in lessons; while reinforcing, daily, awareness of hate crime and how to report it within the borough. Teaching staff found the books a useful tool to introduce, or build upon, the theme of hate with pupils.

A display of all the designs created by students was showcased at Swinton library to show the local community a) the work undertaken, and b) the understanding among our younger residents about the harm hurtful comments and discrimination can cause. An accompanying summary reminded residents that the borough's hate crime reporting centres include all its libraries.

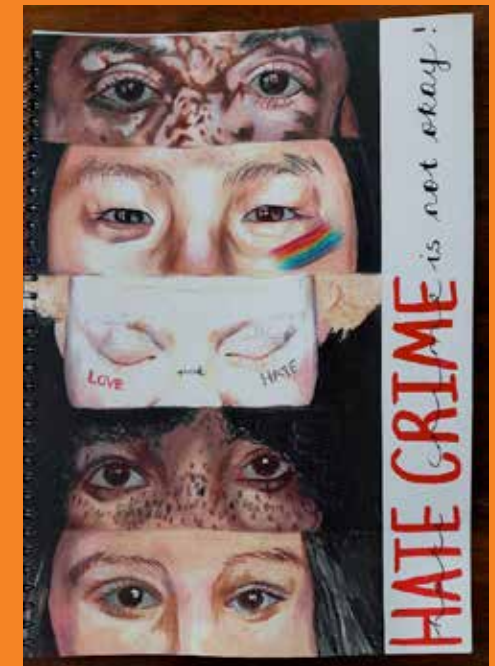
A quarterly e-newsletter for schools signed up to Rotherham Youth Cabinet's hate charter pledges, 'Hate Bullying', launched in June 2023. This raises awareness, shares good practice and flags up training opportunities and useful resources for teachers. Its circulation and sharing within academy trusts has resulted in three more schools adopting the charter pledges, bringing the total to 31.

Examples of the range of work undertaken by schools last year to tackle bullying and hate were captured and celebrated in a calendar that was issued to all schools and colleges. Designed for wall display in staff rooms, the calendar shares good practice and reporting information. Apart from schools, the photos also feature some of the partners working to support our young people and build their resilience to hateful narratives. These include Victim Support, South Yorkshire Police, the Anti-Bullying Company, Rotherham United Community Trust and Remedi.

Rotherham Council contracts Remedi to provide hate incident support for schools. In the last financial year, Remedi delivered one-to-one and group sessions to over 500 pupils. In addition, 81 one-to-one sessions were delivered to 27 hate incident perpetrators.

In February 2024, the latest Harms of Hate event was held for year 6 pupils. Targeted at schools in areas deemed at higher risk of extremist exploitation, the event had representation from across the

borough with 154 pupils attending sessions on: hate and bullying; knives and violent crime; and radicalisation. The event received extremely positive feedback from pupils and teachers.



Looking ahead

There will be a wealth of partnership activity taking place during 2024/25. Here are just a few highlights.

- ▶ **Forge Island opens** – Rotherham's new eight-screen cinema will open to the public in autumn 2024, part of a fantastic leisure development featuring restaurants and a Travelodge hotel.
- ▶ **Olive Lane** – January 2025 will see the new medical centre open at Waverley, an essential component of the Olive Lane 'heart of the community' scheme.
- ▶ **Social value** – throughout 2024-25, a wide-ranging support programme will help to further increase major organisations' spend with local businesses. This will include a series of sector-based meet the buyer events, tailored one-to-one support for local firms, and work with public sector procurement teams.
- ▶ **Tree planting** – 12,000 woodland trees and 1,000 urban trees will be planted in the 2024 to 2025 season.
- ▶ **Castle View** – building work on Castle View, a purpose built day centre for people with high support needs, is due to start by December 2024.
- ▶ **Children's Capital of Culture** – the 2025 festival will be launched in late 2024, with the opening programme from January to March 2025.



