



25/26

ANNUAL REPORT

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“

I can see improvement in my strength with the weights I can lift and in my shape. My challenge this year is to improve my strength which I am confident in achieving thanks to Di's excellent teaching and support.

”

Debbie
Kore member

Leadership Team

Mark Braithwaite, Chief Executive Officer
Sonia Dillion, Finance Manager & Company Secretary
Mark Wildman, Head of Operations
Gemma Ellis, Head of People
Sean Mitchell, Head of Commercial

Our Purpose

Our customers are at the heart of everything we do

Sandwell Leisure Trust (Trading as Kore) is a non-profit distributing organisation which means we reinvest 100% of any surplus to improve, maintain and deliver quality services for the whole community, allowing local residents to be more physically active and improving their overall health and wellbeing.

With a continuing volatile and uncertain UK financial forecast, the ongoing cost of living challenges and lingering remanence of the energy crisis, it continues to be a difficult and uncertain commercial climate for the leisure industry. Although Nationally there have been many unfortunate leisure closures, Sandwell is still committed to providing an excellent leisure portfolio of facilities with Kore Sandwell investing around £1m into improving and enhancing vibrant and innovative fitness and activity spaces through the centres it manages for the wider community to enjoy.

Sandwell Aquatic Centre, the flagship of the borough located in Smethwick, is now a proven legacy venue built to host and used every day of the 2022 Commonwealth Games and now hosts local, regional and national aquatic events, has brought the sport of diving to Sandwell and grown a medal winning team of young divers representing Sandwell in UK competition. **With in almost 18,500 weekly visits, 6,000 fitness members and almost 3,000 on swim lesson programme**, this much loved amazing facility is firmly serving the heart of the community in Sandwell.

Our customers are at the heart of everything we do, it is vital we also continue to demonstrate the social impact, £20.5m of social value generated in 25/26, and showcase user testimonials and feedback of how the Trust and Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) continues to change people's lives. Sandwell Council's vision is to create a more physically active borough whilst driving the continuous improvement of key Public Health outcomes, Kore Sandwell plays a leading role in the successful delivery of this vision and achievement of these outcomes, demonstrating and celebrating Sandwell is a place to live and enjoy leisure by serving the whole community.



Identifying and measuring benefits

These benefits can be identified through social value, case study examples of how Kore Sandwell is changing people's lives and measured by the sustained increase in participation in physical activity, sport and leisure throughout Sandwell.

Arising harm

No harm arises from Kore Sandwell's purpose, the beneficiaries are the general public and locally-based community and voluntary organisations, and that no private benefit arises from these purposes. The objects of Kore Sandwell are to promote the benefits without distinction of sex, race or political, religious or other opinions.

Kore Sandwell will where possible use local suppliers and employ people from the diverse local community therefore supporting the local economy of Sandwell and will adopt efficient and environmentally friendly processes to optimise the best possible use of resources

“

Sandwell is a place where residents live healthy lives and live them for longer, and where those of us who are vulnerable feel respected and cared for.

”

Penny Venables

Chair of Kore Sandwell Board

Total Visits

2,447,980

↑ 0.47%

Total Website Visits

970,835

↑ 5%

Total Impressions

3,982,532

↑ 29%

Active App Users

13,812

↑ 10.41%

Wedgesbury
Leisure Centre
Powered by Kore SANDWELL

Kore Rebrand



Launched our
first AI chatbot



New member
benefits and
discounts
through our app

Total Fitness Members

14,784

↑ 22.5%

Total Swim Lesson Members

6,193

↑ 3.87%

Group Exercise Participants

272,631

↓ 22.1%



AWARDS
WINNER 2023

Launched Sandwell's
first Reformer Pilates
studio

Launched Hyrox
functional training
studio

Gym refreshes
at Sandwell
Aquatics Centre
and Tipton
Sports Academy

Kore Community

The Social Value report quantifies and benchmarks the contribution sport and leisure services make on four main categories:



Physical &
Mental Health



Subjective
Wellbeing



Individual
Development



Social & Community
Development

These categories are key measures of how charitable and leisure operators contribute back to their local areas.

Total social value across all facilities in 2025/26 is estimated to be

£20,520,491.95

The largest increase relative to previous years is that generated by Sandwell Aquatics Centre. In 2025/26 SAC generated

£7,982,236.76

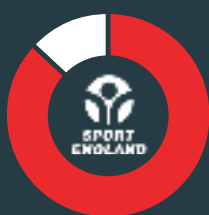
constituting 38.89% of the total Social Value

Public health and physical engagement

Portway Lifestyle Centre

Portway Lifestyle Centre continues to provide a fully accessible Health, Leisure and Wellbeing Centre for everyone by bringing health, leisure, and social care under one roof from early years all the way through to older adults.

As part of the Kore rebrand there has been a wider focus to grow the services available to the public. This includes working with Healthy Sandwell and Public Health to launch an Exercise Referral Scheme and Adult Weight Management Programme across all centres. We have also planned to launch a number of other programmes over the next 12 months.



In-line with new Sport England methodology, and after alignment with HM Treasury Green Book guidance, subjective well-being accounts for 87% and 13% from societal cost

The mean IMD decile for participant areas is approximately **3.88**, with a median of **3.0**



54.84%
in the bottom 30% most
deprived neighbourhoods

Core Memberships

2,884 **13.0%**

Portway Pass Scheme

550 members* **22.0%**

*plus single usage via our concessionary discounted memberships

Kore Aquatics

Sandwell Diving Club

The 2025-2026 season has been a fantastic year for the club and programme.

The programme is striving and looking at new opportunities to grow and develop with a full team of staff in place. The club is continuing to be a force within the diving world, competing at all levels, gaining medals at numerous events from Skills to Elites. The coaching team is developing and now starting to look at the progression and nurturing of new level 1 coaches to start building on the next generation of coaches. The atmosphere and environment continues to be one of the best on the country with continued success being shown.

356 Total registered divers  **-11.2%**

228 Learn to Dive program attendees  **6.5%**

33
Divers competing regionally

29
Divers qualifying for Nationals

98 Total podium finishes  **12.6%**

This year saw the club represent at all diving levels from Skills to British Championships (including masters). 97 medals in total, with 47 gold, 29 silver, 21 bronze and including 61 regional medals and 5 national medals.

The coaching team grew to 3 full time staff and 1 part time with casuals working each week. Coaches and athletes are successfully representing on national programmes and being part of the development and success of the sport internationally.

Looking ahead to 2026/27

- Increased National representation
- Increased programme numbers and new products offered
- Host 2 major national events
- Run schools participation programme and offer tasters to all
- Continue building strong links with club/programme and sport governing body



Swimming in Sandwell

6,193 Total on swimming lessons  **3.8%**

OVER 60% of Sandwell schools supported with swimming lessons

48,778

Free swims delivered to those aged 18 and under or over 60

Learn to Swim Success Story – Ollie

Ollie joined Tipton Leisure Centre's Learn to Swim programme in 2019 at age 4, starting in Duckling class. He took to the water naturally and never showed fear. He tackled every stage with determination, Stage 3 required extra effort, but he persevered and made steady progress throughout.

Swimming has boosted Ollie's confidence enormously, and last summer he earned his 1-mile badge, swimming 64 lengths in under an hour.

Swimming is a life skill, give your children the gift of learning, fun, confidence, and water safety. Ollie's next goal is joining the Junior Lifesaving Programme.

Kore Kids

HAF (Holiday Activities & Food) Camps and Community

Our sports coaching team deliver Curriculum based PE in local Sandwell Primary Schools on various days throughout the week, where we deliver to EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

We also deliver:

- Lunch time and after school sessions at local schools and community groups, supporting wraparound provision for local families.
- Various schools and 'School Games' sports such as cricket; tennis; athletics; and Boccia.
- Over 22 schools attended Tipton Sports Academy to host their school sports days.
- Regular weekly sessions for home school groups helping support their PE requirements and focusing on health and well-being.
- 6 Sandwell schools have taken part in padel coaching taster sessions, introducing them to this exciting new sport.



A message of thanks from Cllr Suzanne Hartwell

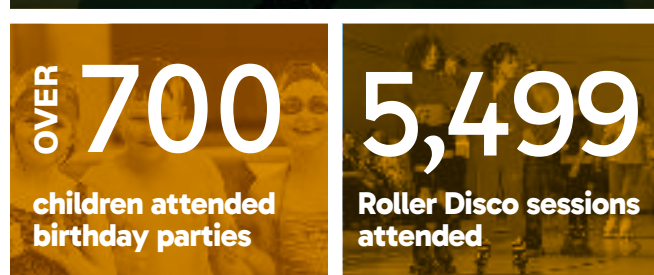
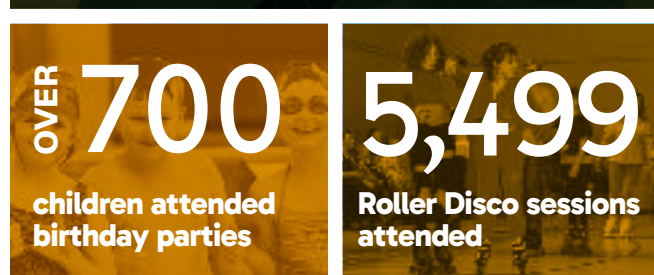
I would like to send my sincere thanks on behalf of myself and Cllr Kerrie Carmichael for your kind invite to the launch of the new developed outside Tennis and Netball courts at Tipton Sports Academy. The courts are very impressive, and **it was great to see so many young people participating and enjoying themselves**, having spoken to a couple of the parents they were also thrilled with the development and the way we are improving sports opportunities here in Sandwell. Sandwell is blessed to have strong partnership working relationships and it goes to show when Angela, committee member from Enover Community Trust attended having travelled from Windsor to come and witness the great work SLT are doing here in Sandwell.

Cllr Suzanne Hartwell Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community, 2025



Sandwell's Vision 2030

The HAF sports camps programme (a government funded initiative in conjunction with the DFE and local authorities) is continuing to be a success. This programme allows us to deliver holiday activities and food education to families, as well as providing a healthy meal each day to eligible low-income families. **The project running here at TSA contributes to ambition 1 and 2 of the Sandwell 2030 Vision.** Through partnership work this year, we have helped deliver holiday activities within local Sandwell parks, allowing the families and young people of Sandwell to access structured physical activities and sports in local green spaces during school holidays.



Kore Racquets

Indoor tennis/padel programme at Tipton Sports Academy

Our indoor tennis programme is continuing to offer a strong pathway with a great variety of coaching and competitions for all ages and ability levels. A new Red Futures squad was introduced to allow talented players aged 5 to 8 to increase their training hours with an introduction to the performance pathway.

OVER
360 juniors & adults take part in tennis coaching sessions each week

OVER
200 taking part in pay and play weekly court bookings and competitions

We successfully launched 3 new indoor padel tennis courts, with general play, coaching sessions and competitions on offer.



Padel attendance is over
2,600 a month

Kore Racquets



Enovert Community Funding

Thanks to Enovert Community funding we successfully resurfaced and reinstated 2 outdoor tennis courts, into an all-weather surface to accommodate both tennis and netball bookings.

High performance tennis players from our junior programme qualified and took part in International ITF events. Casey Unitt in particular has had great success reaching finals and winning ITF junior ranking events. Casey also passed his level 2 LTA coaching award and now works as a tennis coach on our weekly programme inspiring others.

Our Schools tennis roadshow was a success once again, offering taster sessions to young people who attend local primary and infant schools. Weekend tennis tournaments and competitions are consistently on offer, with more events being added to the calendar to offer competitive opportunities for various age groups.



21,214

Badminton courts booked

Kore Fit

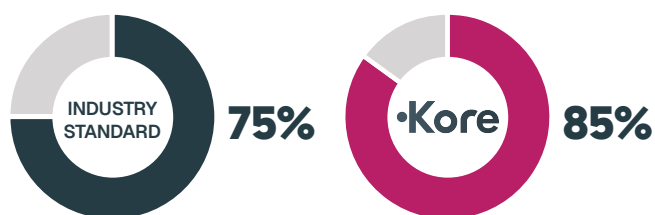
What our customers say

Big thank you to Diane for running this program. Not only has she shared her knowledge and passion for lifting but also motivated and welcomed us into the 'scary' part of the gym that I wouldn't have ventured into before. It was well tailored to beginners and was great value too. My EGYM bio age has reduced by 5 yrs! It was great to meet all the girls and I hope to see you around at SLT.

Adele - beginner



Proinsight Report



Kore delivered a stronger year of mystery visit performance, **with the total average score rising to 85%**, a 3pt year-on-year improvement across a programme of journeys including membership, telephone enquiry and tennis/padel experiences.

Within the membership sales journey specifically, performance sat well ahead of benchmark across every channel: **face-to-face 88% (+16pts)**, **digital 81% (+16pts)** and **telephone 77% (+12pts)**. Advocacy was also positive, with an average NPS of +31, while 33 perfect 100% shops demonstrate the level of experience delivered when teams are fully engaged. Strengths were clearest in friendly, professional service, rapport-building, cleanliness and the overall in-person experience.

The key opportunity is to make telephone handling more consistent, with sharper follow-up, data capture and personalisation to convert more enquiries proactively.



Reformer Pilates

Kore has strengthened its commitment to helping local people live healthier, more active lives with the launch of the region's first dedicated Reformer Pilates studio at Wednesbury Leisure Centre.

Developed in partnership with PILAT3S, the specialist facility brings a premium fitness experience to Sandwell, offering expert-led classes in a welcoming and supportive environment for people of all abilities. With sessions designed to improve strength, flexibility, posture and overall wellbeing, the studio provides an accessible way for residents to enjoy the benefits of Reformer Pilates close to home, supporting both physical health and community wellbeing.



EGYM

Our investment in EGYM has been one of the year's standout successes, transforming the strength training experience for our members. The innovative, personalised training technology has been exceptionally well received, contributing to a 15% improvement in member attrition while helping members achieve measurable health outcomes, including increases in strength and reductions in biological age. By combining smart technology with tailored training programmes, EGYM is supporting more people to stay motivated, engaged and achieve their wellbeing goals. Following the positive results and excellent member feedback, we are now planning to expand EGYM across additional Kore centres, enabling even more communities to benefit from this innovative approach to fitness and health.

Kore People

The Trust has invested

£33,080

in staff learning and development

and

£7,000

on staff health and wellbeing

Employee wellbeing

Supporting our workforces wellbeing has continued to be a primary objective. We have introduced Wellbeing Surgeries, Listening groups, Health Check clinic amongst supporting other wellbeing campaigns and initiatives. Our Wellbeing Champions received recognised training this year and continue their work as advocates of our employee wellbeing programmes. In addition to this, 12 staff members were trained as Mental Health First aiders.

We have continued to strengthen our support on employee wellbeing. Following the extensions to our Staff Memberships Scheme, we now have 262 staff memberships, including extended family members, with 28 staff members enjoying discounted swimming lessons. This year, we launched our Cycle to Work Scheme, Discounted Padel Play along with access to HealthKey.

We currently
employ

302 staff

55%

are Sandwell residents



Thrive at work

Fully funded by West Midlands Combined Authority, provides a structured approach to workplace health and wellbeing, underpinned, and assessed under 5 themes:

- Enablers of health
- Mental health
- Musculoskeletal health
- Lifestyles
- External risks to health

There are 4 accreditation levels:



With gold demonstrating that an organisation has become a specialist in the field, and this is the level that the Trust aims to achieve. The aim of the framework is to drive results to impact the bottom line whilst creating a healthier and happier workforce. **This year, we have successfully achieved Bronze level accreditation.** We are already working hard to achieve the next level of Silver.



Partnership working

We have continued to develop our working relationships with local schools and colleges, along with DWP. This year we have supported upwards of 30 work experience placements across the trust. Another vital partnership we have continued to support is the government backed schemes, Maximus, providing 121 wellbeing support to our workforce. In addition, we have also worked alongside charities such as Kaleidoscope to support staff wellbeing and mental health. We continue to partner Aspire and continue to promote a career in leisure and grow our apprenticeship programme.

Financial Analysis

Income & Expenditure

	2025/26	2024/25	VAR
	£000s	£000s	£000s
Income from			
Charitable activities	13,648	13,701	(53)
Trading activities	280	290	(10)
Investments	147	156	(10)
Restricted grants	95	33	63
Other Income			0
	14,169	14,180	(10)
Expenditure on	£000s	£000s	£000s
Raising funds	87	118	31
Charitable activities	13,256	13,355	100
Restricted	89	102	13
	13,431	13,574	143
Other Recognised Gains (Losses)	£000s	£000s	£000s
Actuarial gains (losses) on pension scheme	(322)	(8)	(314)
Net movement in funds	416	597	(181)

Source: Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) for the year to 31 March 2026 (unaudited)

Balance Sheet

	2025/26	2024/25	VAR
	£000s	£000s	£000s
Fixed assets	1,481	1,123	359
Current assets (non cash)	701	1,634	(932)
Cash at bank and in hand	3,814	3,351	464
Creditors - due within one year	(1,996)	(2,523)	526
Creditors - due after one year			0
Net assets (excluding Pension Scheme liability)	4,001	3,584	416
Pension Scheme liability	0	0	0
Net assets	4,001	3,584	416

Source: Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2026 (unaudited)

The Pension Scheme liability is the responsibility of SMBC

Our board

Our Board is made up of Trustees that provide strategic leadership to the Trust and ensure good governance is adhered to for the Charity. Board Members

marketing, HR, people management, legal and/or business transformation.

The October meeting was followed by the Strategic Planning meeting which included representatives from the local authority and Public Health to deal with matters relating to the Business plan for the forthcoming year.

Sub committees met in the periods between Board Meetings to consider Business and to make formal recommendations to the full Board of Trustees.

Board Sub Committees exist in the following areas:

- **HR Remuneration Sub-Committee** – Responsibilities include changes to terms and conditions of service, employment disputes, policies and procedures.
- **Finance & Commercial Sub-Committee** – Responsibilities include approval of financial accounts, considering all business cases for major expenditure and new business, advise on all financial policies.
- **Health & Safety and Compliance Sub-Committee** – Responsibilities include assisting in risk management and compliance, working with external consultancy to ensure that there are adequate and appropriate quality governance structures, processes and controls in place throughout the Trust.

SLT (trading as Kore) has its own Governance Code and Conduct Policy for Board Members which adopts the Charity Commissions 7 Principles for larger charities to ensure high standards of Governance are adhered to.

Current Trust Board Membership includes:

Penny Venables (Chair)
Paul Piddock (Vice Chair)
Melanie Briggs
Neil King
Tracy Pearce
Steve Washbourne
Dave Rosser
Scott Thomas
Shahin Akhtar (Resigned 31.05.26)

Our centres

Hadley Stadium Leisure Centre

Wilson Road, Smethwick, B66 4NL (1972)

Tipton Sports Academy

Wednesbury Oak Road, Tipton, DY4 OBS (1998)

Portway Lifestyle Centre

Newbury Lane, Oldbury, B69 1HE (2013)

Tipton Leisure Centre

Alexandra Road, Tipton, DY4 8TA (2013)

Wednesbury Leisure Centre

High Bullen, Wednesbury, WS10 7HP (2015)

Sandwell Aquatics Centre

Londonderry Lane, Smethwick, B67 7EW (2023)

Haden Hill Leisure Centre

Currently closed for redevelopment, opening Autumn 2027

Future improvements

The upcoming year presents an opportunity to build on the success of last year. Our strategic plan continues to focus on enhancing customer experience, expanding our service offerings and embracing technological advancements.

Key improvements include:

- **Facility Upgrades:** Introducing Egym at Wednesbury & Tipton Leisure Centre and additional Padel courts at Tipton Sports Academy.
- **Improved Programs:** Introduce more wellness programs, and activities tailored to various age groups and interests.
- **Digital Integration:** Introduce additional AI service agents and member benefits scheme and new phone system.
- **Green Initiatives:** Invest in energy-efficient systems, waste reduction programs, and sustainable sourcing of materials.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborate with local schools, businesses, and Public Health to expand our reach and community impact.
- **Staff Development:** Offer continuous professional development opportunities to ensure staff remain motivated and skilled.

Our awards



RoSPA

Proud to once again be awarded the highest possible accolades in the internationally renowned Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) 2026 Health and Safety Awards having been awarded RoSPA. Highly Commended in the Public Service & Local Government Sector Award.



The Active Standard

A quality mark for the physical activity sector, developed by ukactive and independently assessed. Demonstrating our commitment to provide facilities that are safe, inclusive and compliant.



QUEST

Kore maintains QUEST accreditation, the national quality scheme for the leisure industry. It defines industry standards in facility operations, staffing, customer service and service development and review as recommended by the British Quality Foundation.



UK Active Awards

At the 2025 Kore won two UK Active awards for Outstanding Leadership and Digital Transformation

Kore SANDWELL
WELLBEING STARTS AT THE CENTRE

Sandwell Leisure Trust, A Company Limited by Guarantee,
Registration: England & Wales 5011501, Registered Office: Tipton Sports Academy, Wednesbury Oak Road, Tipton, West Midlands, DY4 OBS
Registered Charity (England & Wales - Registered Number 1102431)