

Working for Level Trust

Because poverty shouldn't stop a child from loving to learn



Who we are

Level Trust exists to remove the barriers that poverty brings to a child's learning. We do this by giving children aged 2-16 in Luton the things they need to fully participate.

Starting eight years ago with goodwill, an old laptop and some persuasive ideas, we now help nearly 5000 children every year.

Research into Level Trust by the University of Bedfordshire shows that our work:

- reduces children's experience of poverty at school,
- promotes inclusion,
- contributes to improved school attendance and experience,
- increases children's resilience.

We reach children who need us by working in close partnership with 80 local and national partners including schools, Luton Foodbank, Luton Borough Council, Child Poverty Action Group and End Child Poverty.

Delivering our work is a skilled and compassionate team of six part time staff, 20 regular volunteers and our dedicated board of nine trustees.

We provide an essential resource for children and families in Luton. Young leader, Hussain (15) summed up the need for and impact of our work, 'If everyone was to afford school uniform, bullying will be reduced, students wouldn't have to resort to illegal methods to get money, students would be happier - which would positively improve their grades and help them to get into further education.'

We have won numerous awards including most recently the High Sheriff Award for Outstanding Service to the Community which we received for our work helping families during lock down. We need more incredible people to come and join our fantastic team, helping us continue to change the lives of children across Luton.

The opening of our Uniform Exchange in 2017



What we do

We deliver our work through five main projects:

Uniform Exchange is a free second hand uniform shop in Luton town centre. Families use the exchange by swapping school uniform they have finished with for school uniform they need, all for free. Children with no uniform to swap can be referred by one of our partners to receive uniform without exchange. During the pandemic we quickly adapted our Uniform Exchange service, taking it online at www.uniform.exchange.

The Learning Locker is a free shop in The Mall Luton that provides school shoes, winter coats, learning resources and hygiene products to children for free. Children are referred to the shop using our gift card system with local schools and community partners.

SMASH is the name we give our holiday enrichment programme. The scheme provides a week of free educational activities and healthy hot meals for 450 children aged 8 -12.

Bedfordshire Learning Link is a project providing laptops to children to learn on at home. During lock-down we provided 1700 laptops to young people across Bedfordshire.

Level Up is our new training centre that works to highlight the voice of the young people we work with and by providing high quality training to schools on the inclusion of poorer pupils in education.

Key to our work is fostering relationships with our referral partners, ensuring they understand how to identify and refer a child or young person in need. We do this by running termly referrer meetings and an annual conference attracting over 150 delegates.

Visitors to our Uniform Exchange.



Our Values

As a team we:

Are committed to true **partnership** working, believing it brings about the best results.

Treat all people with the utmost **dignity**.

Believe that all children deserve to be safe, happy and **have fun**, and try to have fun ourselves.

Are **generous** and give other people the best of what we have to offer.

Are **passionate about Luton**, enjoy all its great attributes and see our work as contributing towards making it even better.

'Our values are really precious to us and underpin how we do everything. Following these principles does not only make a difference in the lives of our families, it changes my life too.'

Jane Malcolm, CEO

Learning to move on SMASH Performing Arts



Happy People!

We believe that happy people do the best work. That is why looking after our team is so important to us.

We want everyone to have a good life work balance. That is why we give every team member 33 days holiday pro rata so that they can take bank holidays when it works for them.

We love flexible working and encourage people to find a balance of home and office working that fits with their home and work commitments.

Developing positive team culture goes along way to helping people feel good. To help us do that we host termly team away days and find times when we can let our hair down together.

We believe our team need to be properly resourced to do their jobs well. We do this by providing each team member with an apple mac laptop and setting aside a training budget that allows staff to pursue development opportunities tailored to them.

Our SMASH staff team 2021

'Working for Level Trust gives me a sense of purpose, a new challenge every day and that 'feel good factor' of being part of a team who are making a difference to the lives of others'

Tina Edwards, Youth and Schools Lead.



What next?

Over the last eighteen months Level Trust has launched three new projects - Bedfordshire Learning Link, The Learning Locker and Level Up. These projects are in their infancy and need developing to ensure that they are meeting the needs of Luton children as effectively as possible.

To achieve this, we have three key strategic priorities:

Intensify

With child poverty on the rise, we are needed more than ever. We want to expand our current projects, helping 6000 children each year participate more in learning.

Sustain

We want to significantly invest in developing the Level Trust team, ensuring we have all the resources and skills required to deliver our work to a high standard.

Diversify

We have had huge success in raising funding from grant making bodies and trusts. We now want to build upon further areas of income generation, ensuring we are sustainable in the long term.

We are looking for incredible people to help us deliver.

If you are interested in joining us please email, jane.malcolm@leveltrust.org

Water fight at our activity programme, SMASH



