

Connection Support

Annual Report and Financial Statements For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

Charity registration number 1049740 (England and Wales)
Company registration number 03072719

Connection Support

Legal and Administrative Information

Trustees	Mr P Aston Ms E Duke Mr M Wortley Ms H Amura Ms R L Takundwa Mr P Bayley Mr P Collingwood Ms M Clark Ms C Dawson	(Appointed 9 May 2024) (Appointed 9 May 2024) (Appointed 9 January 2025) (Appointed 11 July 2024)
Secretary	Mr C Keating	
Charity number (England and Wales)	1049740	
Company number	03072719	
Registered office	The Old School First Turn Wolvercote Oxford Oxfordshire OX2 8AH	
Auditor	Gravita Audit Oxford LLP First Floor, Park Central 40-41 Park End Street Oxford OX1 1JD	
Bankers	The Co-operative Bank 1 Balloon Street Manchester M60 4EP	

Connection Support

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Trustees' Annual Report

The Trustees are pleased to present their annual report, which is also prepared to meet the requirements of the Companies Act for a Directors' report.

Chair of the Trustee Board's Statement

Connection Support has been providing housing support for nearly three decades. Even since I joined the Board of Trustees in 2022, I have witnessed the charity evolve in remarkable ways. None of this progress would be possible without the commitment and humanity of our staff and volunteers, the generosity of our donors, and the belief of our partners, funders, and supporters.

Three decades of experience have taught us a great deal. As we've grown and deepened our impact, we've taken time to reflect on what we've learned and how we can build on it. By listening closely to the needs of our clients, we have expanded to deliver specialist support with mental health, family support, services for young people, and support for refugees and asylum seekers.

One clear lesson stands out: many of the crises our clients face can be prevented with earlier, more proactive support. This insight has shaped our new organisational strategy, *Prevention First*, which sets out our commitment to act sooner, listen more closely, and work collaboratively to stop crises before they happen.

I am proud that, even in a challenging financial climate and with growing complexity of need, Connection Support has continued not only to respond, but to grow. This year, we increased our charitable income by 16.5%, securing vital funding to be able to expand our supported accommodation provision at [Bearbrook Place](#) and in Oxford City, deliver a new refugee service through [Homes for Ukraine](#), and invest more in families through our [Thrive](#) service.

The teams of people who are working to deliver this ambitious vision and improved outcomes for our clients are – quite simply – extraordinary, but we don't take this for granted; our teams go above and beyond, but they need support and development to be able to do so. As a Board, working closely with the Senior Leadership Team, we have prioritised investment in staff wellbeing, personal development, and fair pay. We were pleased to approve an uplift in salaries to demonstrate our commitment to offering the most competitive pay we can afford.

It's been inspiring to see wellbeing move from something we needed to improve to something we can now celebrate. This is reflected in our latest staff engagement survey, the growth of peer support groups that give staff safe spaces to connect and share, and the recognition we received in November 2024 as the 7th Best Charity to Work For in the UK. Personally, I have seen this reflected in the number of employees who have told me that Connection Support is the first workplace where they feel they can truly show up as themselves.

Of course, the year has not been without its challenges. The ongoing cost-of-living crisis continues to affect the communities we serve, and funding pressures affect the sector we work in. But through it all, our people have shown extraordinary resilience and compassion.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our Chief Executive Officer, Chris Keating, for his strong leadership and unwavering commitment, and to my fellow Trustees, our dedicated staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters for standing with us every step of the way.

As we move forward with *Prevention First*, we do so with a renewed sense of purpose and possibility. Together, we will keep working towards a future where everyone has the support they need to thrive. I look forward to what the year ahead will bring and to the difference we will continue to make - together.

Emma Duke,
Chair of the Trustee Board

Chief Executive's Statement

As we come to the end of another year, I'm proud to reflect on how far we've come - and even more excited about where we're heading as we implement our new '*Prevention First*' strategy.

Our new strategy signals an important shift for Connection Support. For many years, we've supported people through some of the most difficult moments in their lives, and that won't change – we'll always be there when crises happen. But we know that too often these crises could have been prevented. *Prevention First* puts this understanding at the centre of everything we do. It sets out our commitment to work earlier and more collaboratively, so that fewer people ever reach crisis point in the first place.

This year, the challenges facing the people we support have continued to grow. High inflation and pressures on housing have made life harder for many in our communities. Yet despite this, our staff and volunteers have shown extraordinary dedication and compassion, responding flexibly, evolving services, and finding new ways to help people stay safe, secure, and connected. We're strengthening partnerships, building new ways to listen and act on client feedback, and ensuring our teams have the support they need to do their vital work.

One of my proudest moments this year was seeing how *Prevention First* is already making a tangible difference. While shadowing one of our Embedded Housing Workers at the John Radcliffe Hospital, I saw firsthand how they collaborated with clinical staff to ensure that no one who was medically fit for discharge ended up back on the streets. Our team member arranged temporary accommodation for the client I met, placing them in one of our Step Down houses, and within just a few weeks, that individual had moved into independent accommodation. Beyond the practical support, what struck me most was the relationship of trust our colleague built at such a low point in someone's life, helping to restore hope and confidence in their future.

We know that putting prevention first can only succeed if we continue to look after our own people too. Over the past year, we've strengthened our focus on staff wellbeing, created new peer networks, and encouraged open conversations about inclusion and support. Initiatives like our menopause group and neurodiverse network have paved the way for even more staff-led spaces this year, including the Men's & Women's Survivors of Domestic Abuse Group and the Mindfulness & Wellbeing Group. Together, these groups are helping to build a culture where everyone feels included, listened to, supported, and valued.

We also recognise that prevention isn't just about how we deliver services, it's about tackling the wider systems and policies that push people to the edge. That's why we've continued to strengthen our advocacy work, meeting with local MPs alongside our partners, and working with Homeless Link to help shape the national conversation.

As I step into my fourth year as CEO, I feel privileged to lead an organisation that is ready to take bold steps to create real, lasting change. *Prevention First* sets a clear direction for the next three years - a commitment to act earlier, listen harder, and work together to build stronger, more resilient communities where everyone has the chance to thrive.

To our clients, volunteers, staff, supporters, and Trustees - thank you. Your dedication, trust, and belief in what we can achieve together are what make this possible. There will always be challenges ahead, but with this renewed focus and such an inspiring team behind us, I know we are ready to meet them.

Chris Keating,
Chief Executive Officer

About Us

Connection Support began in 1995, started by just five people who believed they could make a real difference by providing an outstanding homelessness prevention service in Oxfordshire. And they were right. Their dedication paved the way for the organisation to grow, securing contracts to deliver a wide range of vital services, from housing and homelessness support to mental health, family services, support for young people, and help for refugees and asylum seekers.

Today, our mission remains simple but powerful: we work alongside people to help them navigate life's challenges. Our goal is to support everyone in our communities to find safe, stable housing and live as independently as possible. We offer expert, compassionate support to help people tackle the issues they face day-to-day, and we're there to help them overcome the lasting impact of past trauma. Across Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes, and Oxfordshire, our team of approximately 230 staff and 110 volunteers provides tailored support to thousands of people each year.

Working closely with other organisations, we make sure our services truly meet people's needs. Everything we do is built on a person-centred, trauma-informed, and strengths-based approach. We help individuals set their own goals, build confidence, and take the steps they need to move forward with their lives.

Despite all the progress we've made, homelessness remains a widespread issue, and we're seeing a growing number of people coming to us with complex challenges and poor mental health. Many of these situations could have been prevented with earlier support, which is why we're now focused on delivering our new three-year strategy to drive earlier intervention and create lasting impact.

An overview of our services can be found in the **Appendix** on **page 66**.

“When I first came to Connection Support, I was vulnerable, withdrawn, and incredibly lonely. I didn't recognise myself anymore. But from day one, the support I received was honest, real, and consistent. My Support Worker helped me believe in myself again. She worked with me, not against me. She didn't give up on me. That's a big part of why I'm still here today.”

- Flo, former client and Brighter Futures Group member*

*You can learn more about our Brighter Futures Group in the Client Involvement section on **page 11**.

Our Year in Numbers

Throughout the 2024 - 2025 financial year, we...

- Delivered **33** different services to support over **5,400 people**
- Answered **14,031** calls from people seeking support or guidance
- Empowered **1,373** people to develop the skills to no longer need our support
- Partnered with **30+** organisations to deliver wraparound support where it's needed most
- Had over **30,000** visits to our website from people seeking information about our services
- Increased our number of leased properties by **16%** and bed spaces by **47%**, giving more people access to safe, supportive accommodation
- Involved clients in **50%** of staff recruitment interviews – up from 20% the previous year
- Were named the **7th** best charity to work for in the UK by Best Companies
- Had an average of **110** volunteers supporting our services each month, earning a 95% volunteer recommendation rate

Collaborating for Impact: Our Partnerships

We're passionate about working in partnership with other organisations, services, and local authorities to provide innovative, wrap-around support for our clients across the three localities we work in. Over the course of the year, we continued to work collaboratively with many of our existing partners, but we also forged some new relationships. Working in partnership allows us to have a greater impact as we're able to draw on the expertise of multiple organisations, sharing skills, knowledge, and resources, ultimately achieving the best outcomes for the people we support.

Buckinghamshire

- **Buckinghamshire Homeless Partnership:** We're working with [Aylesbury Homeless Action Group](#), [Wycombe Homeless Connection](#), [Youth Concern](#), and [Wycombe Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme](#) to build positive relationships with other like-minded organisations. Together, we're sharing learning, identifying and filling gaps, reducing duplication, and creating a more joined-up service for our clients. By speaking with one voice, we can also strengthen our collective impact.
- **Bucks Rough Sleeper Initiative:** Led by Buckinghamshire Council and funded by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), this collaboration of charities and services works together to provide localised support for rough sleepers.
- **Charities Together:** We work with [Age UK Buckinghamshire](#), [Carers Bucks](#), [Citizens Advice Bucks](#), [Community Impact Bucks](#), and [Youth Concern](#) to deliver Charities Together, a collaborative partnership that supports people in Buckinghamshire who have been affected by the cost-of-living crisis.
- **One Recovery Bucks (ORB Project):** Commissioned by Buckinghamshire Council, this project supports individuals affected by drug and alcohol misuse, offering help with treatment and recovery. The service is delivered by [Inclusion](#), and we work in partnership with them and [Build on Belief](#).
- **SafeHaven+:** We continued to work alongside [Buckinghamshire Mind](#), [Citizens Advice Bucks](#), [The Oasis Partnership](#), and Adult Mental Health Teams to deliver SafeHaven+ - a service that specialises in providing alternative support to help clients avoid crises and prevent hospital admission.

Milton Keynes

- **Restart Thames Valley:** We continued delivering this pilot project until October 2024, supporting ex-offenders in partnership with [Aspire Oxfordshire](#) and [Thames Valley Partnership](#). The aim is to help people leaving prison build a more stable and positive future. We're playing a key role in the evaluation of RESTART's outcomes and remain hopeful that it will demonstrate the service's value, paving the way for future funding and further development of the project.
- **Milton Keynes Homelessness Partnership (MKHP):** With homelessness on the rise in Milton Keynes, former MKHP Trustees have joined forces with local homelessness leaders to improve collaboration and develop joint solutions. Initiated by our CEO, Chris Keating, the new forum unites senior representatives from [YMCA MK](#), [Unity MK](#), and [The Bus Shelter MK](#) to tackle system pressures, the shortage of emergency accommodation, and the need for more coordinated, person-centred support. Recent meetings have reinforced their shared commitment to reducing homelessness and driving lasting change in the city.

Oxfordshire

- **Homes for Ukraine:** Delivered in collaboration with [Refugee Resource](#), this service is dedicated to helping displaced Ukrainians who have come to the UK under the Government's [Homes for Ukraine scheme](#), helping them to gain the skills and confidence they need to live independently in the UK.
- **Oxfordshire Homeless Movement (OHM):** We continued our collaboration with OHM, alongside [Asylum Welcome](#), [Edge Housing](#), and [SOHA](#), to deliver our 'No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)' service. This initiative was designed to help people who are experiencing homelessness in Oxfordshire who have lost or don't have access to state-funded benefits and housing.
- **Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance (OHA):** Alongside partners [A2 Dominion](#), [Aspire](#), [Elmore Community Services](#), [Homeless Oxfordshire](#), and [St Mungo's](#), as well as Oxfordshire County, City, and District Councils, we continued to work collaboratively. This alliance embarks on a ground-breaking programme of work to prevent and resolve homelessness so that no one sleeps rough in Oxfordshire.
- **Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership:** We continued to work alongside the [Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust](#), [Response](#), [Restore](#), [Oxfordshire Mind](#), and [Elmore Community Services](#) to provide intensive mental health support to those in need.

Spotlight: Prevention as a Priority

One powerful example of our collaborative strength from this past year was our joint work we did with Aspire Oxfordshire and Homeless Oxfordshire to raise shared concerns about the future of national homelessness funding. In September 2024, we met with local MPs, including The Rt Hon Anneliese Dodds and Sean Woodcock, to share insights from the frontline and highlight the potential risks of reduced national investment – particularly the impact on preventative services that support people before reaching crisis point.

Together, we shared local data and frontline evidence to support a shared call for long-term, ring-fenced funding – including the impact of prevention-focused services delivered by both ourselves and Aspire, which supported over 900 households in the previous financial year. Many of these individuals and families were supported without needing to present to statutory homelessness teams, helping to reduce pressure elsewhere in the system. One of the MPs we met committed to raising the issue at a national level – a reminder of the power of unified voices to prompt further conversation in the right spaces.

We recognise that funding decisions are complex and must balance a wide range of needs. Our aim in these conversations was not – and will never be – to criticise, but to contribute towards a wider understanding of what's working locally, where the pressure points lie, and how organisations like ours can work together to achieve the best outcomes for our communities.

This collaboration reflects our shared commitment not just to service delivery, but to systems change – advocating for the funding, policy, and long-term solutions needed to end homelessness for good. Following our meeting, the government announced additional investment in homelessness and rough sleeping services through the Autumn Budget. We can't claim credit for the outcome, but our involvement highlighted how vital it is for local providers to come together and speak with a unified voice.

Our Champions

Our Champions networks have been active for nearly two years, driving positive change across the organisation in areas closely aligned with our vision, mission, and values. We have four dedicated groups, focusing on Client Involvement, Environment & Sustainability, Wellbeing, and Equality, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (EDEI). Colleagues are championing these key topics, helping to shape our culture whilst building their own skills in areas like public speaking, facilitation, monitoring and evaluation, and influencing change. Through their passion and commitment, our Champions are playing a vital role in creating a more inclusive, engaged, and values-led organisation.

Our **Client Involvement Champions** have made impressive progress in embedding the client voice throughout our work. They've encouraged managers to involve clients in recruitment, aiming to include a client on every interview panel wherever timing and availability allow. This focus has seen client participation in interviews rise significantly - from 20% of all recruitment to 50%. During this time, we have engaged and trained more clients keen to get involved, and we're continuing to build on this progress to make participation even more accessible in the future. To support this, the Champions have developed comprehensive guidance for hiring managers, and training sessions have been delivered to help prepare clients for taking part in interviews. Beyond recruitment, the Champions have also started organising monthly fishing trips in Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes, helping to build trust and encourage further engagement. These trips have been a huge success so far, with 19 clients attending.

Our **Environment and Sustainability Champions** have been actively involved in a range of initiatives to help reduce our environmental impact. Their work includes engaging in discussions around new traffic controls in Oxford City, sourcing quotes for sustainable lighting and electric vehicle chargers at our offices, and reviewing our environmental and sustainability policy. They also supported the closure of our Witney office. The most complex and time-consuming task has been calculating Connection Support's carbon footprint - a detailed process that required extensive data collection and technical analysis. With this now complete, we can set meaningful targets for the years ahead and benchmark our progress against similar organisations. In addition to this, the Champions are currently organising an energy audit of our properties to help us understand our environmental impact and shape future sustainability plans. They're excited that we're recruiting a Board sustainability lead to help drive this work forward.

Our **EDEI Champions** have led and supported a wide range of activities to celebrate and raise awareness of diversity across the organisation. Highlights include marking Black History Month and Pride Month with office displays, running activities for International Women's Day, and joining Oxford Pride with a stall and parade. The group supported the Marketing Team's impactful Refugee Week campaign, raising awareness of the challenges faced by displaced people and promoting our support services for refugees and asylum seekers. They also helped organise *Razom Fest* to celebrate Ukrainian Independence Day. In March 2025, we were proud to be recognised as a Disability Confident Employer. To achieve this, we made our recruitment and interview process fully inclusive with reasonable adjustments, shared interview questions, widened our advertising reach, delivered disability awareness training, and built a supportive culture through engagement, support groups, wellbeing days, and an open-door approach. Next, we're aiming for Disability Confident Leader status, which means proving we're delivering, monitoring, and improving on our commitments - for example, by offering apprenticeships and traineeships for people with disabilities and ensuring our policies and culture stay fully inclusive. It may take time, but we're excited to keep building on the support we already offer our team.

Our **Wellbeing Champions** have introduced a range of initiatives to support staff wellbeing and create more positive working environments. In Milton Keynes, a traffic light system was rolled out to encourage a calm, respectful atmosphere, alongside a dedicated "Wellbeing Space" where staff can relax and recharge. The Aylesbury office received a refresh by providing additional computer screens and chairs to

create a dedicated wellbeing space. The Wellbeing Champions also launched new initiatives, including the provision of sanitary products in every office, weekly mindfulness sessions, monthly Menopause and Neurodiversity peer support groups, and intranet articles covering stress management, workplace wellbeing, and men's health. The team marked World Menopause Day in October with a dedicated online event that over 70 staff members attended. A standout moment of the year was our first-ever Wellbeing Festival, which saw fantastic staff engagement in activities like yoga, meditation, and art therapy. The event created a real sense of community and provided a much-needed opportunity for relaxation and connection. Several new Champions have joined the group as we move into the next financial year, and plans include organising another wellbeing festival, continuing the peer support groups, understanding how we can make our offices more psychologically informed, and continuing to shape our approach around staff wellbeing needs.

Our Culture and How It's Driving Impact

At Connection Support, we know that the impact we create in communities is only possible because of the passion, resilience, and commitment of our teams. In 2024, that commitment was formally recognised when we were named the 7th best charity to work for in the UK by Best Companies – a significant achievement based entirely on staff feedback.

Best Companies offers an annual engagement survey that measures how people feel about their work and workplace. Results from participating organisations are benchmarked nationally, and those with the highest scores are ranked in sector-specific and regional league tables. This year, we saw a significant improvement across the board – moving from 12th to 7th place in the charity sector, 37th to 24th regionally, and from 60th to 23rd nationally.

This recognition reflects the inclusive, values-led culture we've worked hard to build. In this year's staff survey:

- 98% said we provide a great service to clients
- 96% said they feel proud to work for Connection Support
- 95% believe they can make a valuable contribution
- 95% feel their team does everything possible to support one another
- 90% feel they can openly discuss challenges with their manager
- 94% agree that we take diversity and inclusion seriously

This year, we've continued to build on what makes Connection Support special – not just through policies, but by creating real spaces for staff to shape our culture and feel supported. In 2024 to 2025, that looked like:

- Expanding our peer-led support groups with the launch of dedicated men's and women's spaces for staff who have experienced domestic abuse – creating safe, supportive environments where lived experience can be shared and acknowledged.
- Introducing a new working group focused on improving family-friendly policies – including maternity, paternity, surrogacy, and fertility treatment – helping us better reflect the diverse needs of our staff and ensure appropriate support is in place.
- Continuing to empower our champion networks, giving staff a genuine voice in how we work, and the power to influence policy, practice, and organisational culture (more on page 7).

- Involving staff and clients in shaping our *Prevention First* strategy through dedicated listening sessions, collaborative workshops, and a formal consultation – ensuring real-world insight is embedded into our shared vision, strategic aims, and the way we’ll work towards them through to 2027.
- Continuing to hold bi-annual meetings between staff and Trustees, providing a consistent space for staff to raise concerns, share learning, and contribute to leadership decisions.
- Bringing over 200 people together for our first organisation-wide Staff & Volunteer Conference and Awards Ceremony – recognising achievements, strengthening connections, and offering space to reflect on the impact we’ve made together.

The way we care for our people is the same way we show up for our clients – and it starts with a culture built on trust, safety, and shared purpose. By creating an environment where people feel heard, respected, and supported, we’re strengthening our ability to respond to complex challenges with compassion and resilience. Whether it’s shaping strategy, influencing practice, or supporting each other through tough times, our culture is the thread that runs through it all.

Being named the 7th best charity to work for in the UK didn’t happen by accident – it’s the result of deliberate, ongoing investment in our people. We know our impact is only made possible because of the committed team that goes beyond expectations to create real, lasting change. And so, we’ll continue to strive to be an organisation where people feel proud, supported, and inspired – because the best outcomes start with people who believe in the difference they’re making.

Volunteers

Volunteers are at the heart of Connection Support and play a vital role in delivering many of our services. Working alongside our Support Workers, they help clients navigate some of the most challenging times in their lives, offering practical and emotional support that makes a lasting difference - not only to the people they help, but often to their own lives too. In our most recent survey, 95% of volunteers said they would recommend volunteering with Connection Support to a friend.

Volunteering provides people with a meaningful way to give back to their community, while also gaining new skills, valuable experience, and lasting friendships. Many volunteers tell us that their confidence grows through volunteering and that the sense of making a positive difference is deeply rewarding. Volunteer numbers varied during the year, and we were fortunate to have had as many as 123 people who generously gave their time to support our services.

In response to volunteer feedback from previous years, we have continued to expand opportunities for volunteers to feel connected and valued. This year, we introduced monthly local coffee mornings, encouraged greater attendance at our Staff & Volunteer Conference and Awards Ceremony, and offered more in-person training. We also launched a regular volunteer newsletter to share news and updates from across the organisation, and worked closely with colleagues to strengthen supervision arrangements to ensure volunteers feel well supported in their roles.

To recognise and celebrate the invaluable contribution of our volunteers, we held a special event during Volunteers’ Week. Staff and volunteers gathered at our Oxford office to mark the occasion. The day included a workshop on neurodiversity delivered by our staff, an insightful session on substance misuse led by a team member with lived experience, and moving stories from volunteers who generously shared their own experiences with the group.

“I just wanted to say a huge thank you to everyone at Connection Support for organising the Volunteer event. I thought the session on ADHD and Substance Misuse was amazing. The real life examples were a refreshing change from the standard training that we receive! Also, hearing the volunteers speak about their experiences within their roles was really moving and has given me renewed motivation to help clients. Thank you all again for your hard work, and your efforts are truly appreciated.”

- Volunteer

Spotlight: From Outreach Volunteer to Trustee

Volunteering has always been at the heart of Connection Support, and one of our Trustees knows that better than most. After retiring from a career spent in senior leadership roles around the world, Peter was looking for a meaningful way to give back. In 2021, he joined our Outreach Volunteer team in Oxford, heading out in the early hours to locate, verify, and support people sleeping rough. What started as a few hours a week quickly became a deep commitment.

In 2024 alone, Peter:

- Volunteered 250 hours across 97 shifts
- Attempted to locate 222 referrals
- Covered 4,718 miles across two Oxfordshire districts

Peter's Story:

“When I retired, I knew I didn’t want to just stop – I wanted to find something purposeful. I started looking into how I could support people experiencing homelessness locally, and what I found really opened my eyes. The more I learned, the more I realised that homelessness isn’t just about housing – it’s about mental health, addiction, prison release, family breakdown, and trauma. Things that can affect any of us. That understanding made me want to do more than donate or read about it – I wanted to actually do something. I came across Connection Support and, after a short induction and training, began volunteering as part of their Oxfordshire-based outreach team.

I’d be out by 6:30 am and always accompanied by a qualified outreach support worker, helping to locate people sleeping rough, verify them, and start building a bridge to support. Some mornings were incredibly tough. One that’s always stayed with me was finding a man in serious crisis, accompanied by his two dogs. We were really worried about him. But he was eventually rehoused in a managed property, and things gradually began to get better, even returning to work. That’s the kind of outcome that reminds you why you do it.

Through volunteering, I saw firsthand the kind of impact Connection Support has and the difference it makes in people’s lives. I’m often one of the first people someone meets in their journey, and for me, it truly is a quiet privilege to be the person who reminds someone they matter – and that they don’t have to face things alone.

Over time, I wanted to do more. I felt drawn to the charity’s bigger picture, and coming from a corporate background, I felt I could bring a useful perspective – one grounded in governance, leadership, and long-term planning. I spoke to the CEO, Chris, and before long, I joined the Board of Trustees.

And being a Trustee here is something I genuinely enjoy. The board is made up of diverse and impressive people. The senior leadership team are some of the most humble, passionate people I've had the privilege to work with. And the staff are so incredibly committed, it's hard not to feel inspired. There's a real magnetism to this organisation – it makes you proud, and it makes you want to do more.

If you're thinking about volunteering, my advice is simple: do it. You'll learn more than you expect – about others, and yourself."

Today, Peter still volunteers. As well as giving up his free time to sit on the Board of Trustees, he hits the road in the early hours. And he brings that same sense of purpose to his role as a Trustee, helping to guide the very organisation that changed how he saw homelessness – and how he could help. His story is just one, but it represents the heart of something much bigger.

With approximately 110 volunteers supporting our different services at any given time, there are many ways to help, just by giving one or two hours a week. The collective contribution of our volunteer team is extraordinary; whether it's early-morning outreach or strategic insight, they bring humanity, energy, and vital capacity to every corner of our work.

It's safe to say... we couldn't do it without them.

Client Involvement

By truly listening to our clients and giving them a platform to be heard, we can make better, more informed decisions about the future of our organisation. Amplifying our clients' voices is something we're deeply committed to, and because empowering people sits at the heart of our values, involving clients directly in decision-making is a natural next step. In 2024, we began training clients to sit on interview panels, and from 2025 onwards, efforts were made to involve clients in every recruitment process.

In the year to April 2025, client participation in interviews increased significantly, rising from 20% of all recruitment to 50%. During this time, we successfully engaged and trained more clients who were eager to get involved. Our clients shape our work in many other ways, too. They take part in consultations that help guide our organisational strategy and inform our marketing campaigns. We run a wide range of activities that give clients opportunities to build skills, connect with others, and improve their wellbeing - from arts and crafts groups and seasonal events to monthly fishing trips across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Milton Keynes. These activities help reduce isolation, boost confidence, and open up new opportunities for the future.

In Oxfordshire, we held monthly fishing trips between April and September 2024, involving 14 clients from Oxfordshire and Aylesbury with the support of staff and volunteers. A similar trip was launched in Milton Keynes in September 2024, with five clients taking part.

A key highlight this year has been the launch of our Client Advisory Board in January 2025. This group brings together ten participants from across our regions, supported by our client involvement champions, staff, and Trustees. The Board began by building connections, learning more about Connection Support and the principles of co-production, and setting out how they will work alongside our Senior Leadership Team to help shape the organisation's direction. Members have identified their individual and shared priorities, agreed on what they hope to achieve through their involvement, and chosen their name - *Brighter Futures*. The Board now meets every other month, with activities taking place between

meetings, and each member commits for a year to ensure new clients have opportunities to take part in the future.

We are also pleased to report continued progress with our Peer Mentoring programme. Originally launched as a pilot in Milton Keynes in 2022, the model expanded into Oxfordshire in 2023 and has continued to grow over the past year. By April 2025, we had recruited ten Peer Mentors in Milton Keynes and two in Oxfordshire.

Peer Mentoring provides an important way for clients to support one another, with people who have received help from Connection Support volunteering as mentors to share their own lived experience. Peer Mentors act as trusted role models, offering a listening ear, encouragement, and practical support to help others build confidence and move forward. Initiatives like this mean that our clients are not only heard - they play an active role in shaping our services and our future direction.

“Looking back, I don’t know how I would have coped without the support I received. Without it, the pressure would’ve fallen on my elderly father, and he simply wasn’t in a position to provide the kind of help I needed or answer the questions I was facing. Having someone there who understood the system and could guide me through it made a world of difference.

Fast forward to today, and after more than 30 years of living with serious mental health challenges, I’m now self-employed – something I never thought possible. I’ve also started giving back by helping to improve some of the services that once supported me, including hospitals and mental health initiatives. One of the most meaningful things I’ve been part of is the ‘Brighter Futures’ group at Connection Support – their client advisory board.

I’ve been involved from the beginning, and the group’s goal is to ensure that people with lived experience have a real voice in how the organisation is run. We work directly with the senior team to help shape the future of Connection Support, making sure that client perspectives are not only heard but at the heart of every decision. It feels empowering to know that our experiences are helping to build a more responsive, compassionate service for others.”

- Lyndsay, former client and Brighter Futures Group member

Personal Story: How Peer Mentoring is Changing Lives – Jess and AJ’s Story

Jessica has been volunteering with Connection Support as a Peer Mentor for around a year, drawing on her own lived experience as a former client to support others on their journey. “In my role, I’m there as someone to talk to and share experiences with,” she explains. “One person I supported wanted to get out more because they were feeling isolated, so we’d go for local walks together. I try to be flexible - everyone’s needs are different.”

Jess decided to become a mentor because she wanted to give back. *“I wanted to help others in the same way I was helped when I really needed it. The support I received made a huge difference during a difficult time in my life.”*

The experience has been just as rewarding for Jess as it has for her mentees. “I really enjoy walking alongside someone on their journey and watching them grow. It’s fulfilling, and I’ve gained so much confidence by sharing my story. I’ve also learned useful, transferable skills through training. If you’re thinking about volunteering, I’d say give it a go - the team is so supportive and welcoming. You’ll be guided every step of the way, and you really do make a difference.”

One person Jess has supported is AJ*, who turned to Connection Support for help while experiencing homelessness and struggling with mental health challenges. *“I was homeless and then when I found a home I became agoraphobic – I was scared to leave . I needed help to start going out again,”* AJ shares.

AJ found the peer mentoring experience invaluable. *“The matching was excellent. Jess gave me the support I needed and created a safe space where I could talk about my worries. She helped me overcome my agoraphobia by taking me out for walks and listening without judging or giving advice. Before, I was spending most of my time indoors and had no confidence to go out. Now I go out more often and feel so much more confident.”*

AJ added, *“Jess was a perfect match, and I want to thank her and my support worker Tamara for their continuous help.”*

This is just one example of how peer mentoring helps people regain confidence, reduce isolation, and build brighter futures - all through the power of shared experience and support.

***Client’s name has been changed**

Our Work

This year marked the launch of our 2024–2027 strategy, a bold step towards becoming a thought leader in preventing homelessness and mental ill-health. As we shift our focus further upstream, we’ve been laying the groundwork for services that intervene earlier, adapt to local needs, and amplify the voices of those we support.

Across Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Milton Keynes, we’ve strengthened what works by growing key services, embedding earlier interventions, and involving clients more directly in shaping support, all whilst adapting to rising demand and increasing complexity. And through it all, we’ve continued to prove that with the right support at the right time, crises **can** be prevented.

Whilst our work spans five core specialisms – homelessness and housing, mental health, family support, young people, and refugee services – each area we operate in faces unique challenges. To better reflect the breadth of our local delivery and the distinct needs of the communities we support, we're showcasing our impact by location.

Oxfordshire

Across Oxfordshire, demand for our services grew, with clients presenting more complex challenges than ever before. Despite housing shortages, rising mental health needs, and increasing pressure on local systems, our teams consistently delivered strong outcomes – from preventing homelessness to reducing hospital stays. Partnership working was central, with close collaboration across councils, housing providers, health services, and community organisations. Together, these efforts didn't just address immediate crises – they created pathways to stability, independence, and recovery. The next section highlights a selection of our services across the county, showing how these themes have played out in different communities.

At the heart of our work in Oxfordshire are services that directly prevent and respond to homelessness. From supported accommodation to floating support and community hubs, these services provide stability, safety, and practical help for people who are either homeless or at risk of becoming so. Together they show how timely, person-centred support addresses crises, helps prevent homelessness, and creates the stability people need for lasting change.

Housing Support Service

Our Housing Support Service provides floating support to clients at risk of homelessness, helping them maintain their tenancies and build the skills they need to live independently. The team works in a person-centred way, equipping clients with the skills to manage money, navigate benefits, and build independence to prevent homelessness.

Over the year, we supported more than 900 households, successfully preventing homelessness in 95% of cases. Demand remains high, with an increase in clients reporting mental health difficulties. To meet evolving needs, we launched a new tenancy sustainment service and continued to involve clients through regular forums.

The Housing Support Service has worked with a significantly higher number of households this year, reflecting rising demand as more people face complex challenges that put them at risk of homelessness. This demonstrates that, while risks are growing, becoming homeless doesn't have to be inevitable – with timely, personalised support and brief interventions, many crises can be prevented.

Adult Homeless Pathway

Our Adult Homeless Pathway service provides supported accommodation across Oxford, Witney, and Banbury, helping people take steps towards independent living. This year, 100% of our clients – every single person we supported – sustained their tenancy for over six months. This is a huge achievement, as many clients have overcome hurdles such as understanding service charge payments, managing tight budgets, and learning to live alongside others in shared housing. It's a testament to the dedication of our team and the perseverance of the people we support.

Despite strong outcomes, the year brought significant challenges. The team welcomed 41 new people to the service, many of whom arrived with more complex needs than we've typically seen – particularly in cases where people were leaving prison or exiting support services following a period of poor mental health. In these cases, the team has had to balance compassion with caution, sometimes making the difficult decision to say no to protect the safety and stability of the other people living in shared housing.

We were deeply saddened by the deaths of several clients this year – a devastating reminder of the complexity and vulnerability of the client group we support. Still, the team continued to show up with care, professionalism, and strength, supporting not only their clients but also each other through these difficult moments.

The learning from this year has been significant, with growing client complexity resulting in higher workloads and increased pressures on the team. Despite these challenges, the dedication of staff have ensured continued quality support, offering valuable insight into how frontline services can best respond to evolving needs.

Housing First

Our Housing First service supports former rough sleepers across the Cherwell district by providing immediate, permanent housing first as the foundation, followed by tailored ongoing support to help clients improve their health, wellbeing, and overall quality of life.

This year, 100% of our Housing First clients experienced improvements in their health and wellbeing. This positive shift may reflect not only better health outcomes but also clients feeling more empowered to discuss their needs and incorporate health into their support plans. Supporting this, the proportion of clients registered with a GP increased significantly, reaching 87.5%.

An ongoing challenge for this service is a significant shortage of available properties. Whilst we continue to work closely with Aspire, Cherwell District Council, and housing associations, securing enough housing to meet demand remains difficult. Recent Housing First access panels – meetings where agencies review and prioritise referrals for available support – consistently see more clients referred than available places, particularly in districts outside of Oxford City. This highlights the urgent need to expand Housing First provision across the wider county.

Banbury Beacon

The Beacon Centre offers a safe, warm, and non-judgmental space for people facing homelessness or social isolation in Banbury and the surrounding area. Visitors can enjoy food and hot drinks, connect with others in similar circumstances, and speak with Support Workers for a listening ear, practical advice, and emotional support.

Over the year, we welcomed around 50 people each week, offering not just immediate comfort but also pathways to longer-term help. We hosted visits from partner agencies, including Cherwell District Council to discuss housing, the Department for Work and Pensions to give benefit advice, and Turning Point to support people with drug or alcohol issues. These partnerships enabled visitors to access vital services in a familiar and supportive environment, helping them take steps towards greater stability and wellbeing.

We know that homelessness and mental ill-health are inextricably linked, and our specialist services work at this intersection every day. Some focus on supporting people as they leave hospital, while others provide ongoing mental health support in the community. Across them all, the aim is the same – to reduce crisis, improve wellbeing, and give people the stability they need to recover and move forward.

Hospital Discharge Service

Our Hospital Discharge Support service works within mental health inpatient wards to assist patients in the discharge process, working alongside hospital staff to overcome challenges and support safe transitions. Around 20% of inpatients face homelessness or housing needs, which can significantly delay discharge and extend hospital stays – adding pressure to both patients and the wider healthcare system.

Over the initial nine-month pilot, the service supported 40 patients, more than half of whom experienced positive changes in their mental health and wellbeing. The project's early success led to additional funding and an expanded service model for the next financial year, with embedded workers recognised as playing a vital role in helping patients navigate discharge challenges. Feedback from Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust praised our team's proactivity, problem-solving, and ability to build supportive relationships with patients and families.

This service exemplifies our commitment to collaborative, client-centred support by working closely with health partners within hospital settings to overcome discharge barriers, reduce hospital re-admissions, and support vulnerable individuals through critical transitions – all key to preventing crisis and promoting long-term wellbeing.

Oxfordshire Health & Homelessness Inclusion Service

As part of the Oxfordshire Health & Homelessness Inclusion Service (OHHI) – a multi-disciplinary team working to prevent homelessness and improve health outcomes – our Community Mental Health Support Workers help people move from hospital into safe, stable accommodation.

This year, the team supported 106 people, providing rapid, practical help at the point of discharge to ensure no one left hospital without a plan for safe, stable housing. Early outcome data from the service's commissioner shows the difference this makes: where our embedded mental health support is in place, mental health hospital readmissions have fallen by 51%, and for those who are readmitted, the average hospital stay is 62% shorter.

It's clear this service is having a significant impact – not only transforming lives but also easing pressure on NHS services. For one client, this meant turning six years of street homelessness into six months of successfully maintaining a tenancy, and with improved, stabilised mental health, no longer being subject to a Community Treatment Order.

A reduction in community team workers and a shortage of ward-based social workers increased demand on our team, whilst cuts to dedicated benefits services meant more people turned to us for help with PIP and Universal Credit claims. These pressures made timely intervention even more important, as without it, people leaving hospital risked losing their accommodation, experiencing rapid deterioration in their mental health, and returning to crisis situations that were far harder to resolve.

Personal Story: Support, Stability, and Small Steps Forward – Anna's Story

Growing up, things were alright. My dad was quite strict, but it wasn't a bad childhood. When he passed away when I was 18, it left a gap in my life, but I managed to carry on. I never imagined that, years later, everything could fall apart so quickly.

It all started when I was admitted to the hospital with a broken leg, just before a knee replacement operation. The day before my surgery, I was handed a Section 21 eviction notice. My benefits weren't enough to cover rent and living costs, so I fell into arrears. That's when I met Julia from Connection Support, who referred me to their Out of Hospital service (now the Oxfordshire Health & Homelessness Inclusion Service). It felt like someone was finally on my side.

Social services went to my flat, packed up my belongings, and asked for my keys while I was still in the hospital. They left me with just two t-shirts and the clothes I was wearing. I stopped paying rent because I was being evicted anyway. From there, things spiralled. I had follow-up appointments for my leg, and during surgery, I died three times on the operating table.

After being discharged, I was still in my flat with nowhere else to go. I was served another eviction notice, admitted to the hospital again, and couldn't leave because I had no home to go to. I was taken to court, and I lost my job in the meantime.

My Support Worker, Shannon, told me to start paying my rent after receiving my Universal Credit. I did, and the judge noticed. Instead of immediate eviction, I was granted a bailiff's warrant giving me eight more weeks. It bought me time, but it wasn't easy.

After this, I went between different temporary accommodations – Travelodge, Premier Inn, and some poor-quality places I had to clean myself. Every few weeks, I didn't know where I'd be. I had a breakdown. I couldn't cook, so I lived on pot noodles and crisps. A friend helped me out – I did my washing at her place twice a week. Eventually, I was offered a flat. At first, I thought it was in a bad area, but when I viewed it, I realised it was a great location – close to town and near the GP surgery. No more taxis, no more uncertainty.

When I think back to that time, I remember feeling completely broken. I even had a breakdown in hospital. Shannon supported me through all of it. She worked so hard and always tried to be there for me. There were moments I was desperate and needed her, and it was tough when she couldn't be there – like when I had to go to court about my Universal Credit.

Still, she never gave up on me. Shannon helped me transition into my new accommodation and even appealed my Universal Credit to get me more support. She had such a big impact on my life. I miss her. She's a bubbly, smiley, positive lady, and she helped me believe that things could get better.

Today, I'm settled. My rent is paid. My leg still gives me trouble, and I have ongoing health issues. I'm waiting on a weight-loss injection so I can have the surgery I need. I still feel like I need someone to turn to, but I'm in a better place now.

One of the things that's helped is being involved in the Client Advisory Board at Connection Support. We're called 'Brighter Futures' – I've met some really lovely people through them, and it gives me a sense of community again.

My journey isn't over. I still have hopes for the future – mostly, I just want to stay stable, healthy, and feel supported. But looking back, I'm proud of how far I've come. Proud that I kept going even when everything seemed to be against me. And incredibly grateful for the people, like Shannon and Julia, who walked with me through the darkest times.

Step Down Housing

Step Down Housing offers short-term accommodation for patients who are ready to leave hospital but have no safe, suitable place to recover. Many are facing homelessness, housing insecurity, health-related mobility challenges, or situations where returning home would put them at risk. By working directly inside hospitals, our team bridges the gap between medical discharge and stable housing, ensuring no one is left without a plan.

As part of the Oxford Health & Homelessness Inclusion Service – a multi-disciplinary partnership bringing together housing specialists and clinical professionals – we help to prevent rough sleeping and reduce delayed hospital discharges. Through this collaboration, 86 people were able to recover in the

safety of one of our Step Down houses. Its impact was recognised nationally, with the partnership named finalists in the 2024 Health Service Journal Awards for Place-Based Partnership and Integrated Care.

Demand for Step Down Beds remains high, driven by a shortage of affordable housing and long social housing waiting lists. While stronger partnership working has improved discharge planning, some patients are still discharged too soon, risking setbacks in their recovery.

Over the year, we saw a rise in people presenting with complex needs – from substance dependency and neurodivergence to poor physical health, terminal illness, and significant mental health challenges. There was also a growing need for accessible housing, whether for those recovering from injury or living with long-term mobility issues, including broken bones. These factors mean that people leaving hospital often require more than just a roof over their heads – they need an environment that can meet their physical, emotional, and practical needs. This service offers exactly that. Step Down Housing provides safety, stability, and tailored support so people can focus on healing and moving forward with confidence.

Mental Health Support Service

As part of the Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership, we provide focused support for people living with severe and enduring mental health needs, helping them to move forward and live more independently. Support is tailored and can last from 6 to 24 months, covering areas such as housing, benefits, and social inclusion.

Over the year, housing pressures intensified, with longer waiting lists and fewer affordable options. This affected clients in varied ways – from individuals experiencing homelessness following the breakdown of relationships or changes in family circumstances, to young people with dual diagnoses who were unable to access social housing due to a lack of previous tenancy history. Many of these clients were also unable to consider shared accommodation because of the nature of their conditions. We also supported more people with multiple diagnoses that did not fit neatly into existing categories, adding complexity to their housing and support needs. Despite these challenges, we supported an average of 70 clients, providing consistent, personalised support to help each person work towards a safe home, improved wellbeing, and greater independence.

Alongside our housing and mental health work, we also deliver specialist support for people whose circumstances bring additional challenges. For families rebuilding after conflict, this might mean navigating an entirely new culture; for people with no access to public funds, it means overcoming barriers to even the most basic support; and for young care leavers, it's about having a safe first home and the guidance to become independent. Together, these services show how flexible, person-centred support can adapt to different starting points and create stability where it's needed most.

Refugee Resettlement

For almost a decade, our Refugee Resettlement Service has helped families fleeing conflict to build safe, stable lives in Oxfordshire. Launched in 2015 during the Syrian crisis under the Government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS) – later the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) – the service adapted over the years to meet changing global needs, including providing support to Afghan families following the crisis in Afghanistan.

Over the years, we've supported 30 families in Oxford, 20 in Cherwell, and 6 in South and Vale. In response to the Afghan crisis, the team expanded to welcome 6 Afghan families in Cherwell, which grew to 42 families by May this year. Many of these households were large, with up to eight children, meaning our work reached hundreds of individuals.

Our role went far beyond case management. We welcomed families at the airport, set up their homes with everything they needed – from bedding to books and toys – and guided them through every step of life in the UK, from registering with a GP to opening a bank account. We supported people to learn English, find volunteering and work opportunities, and gain the confidence to live independently. Thanks to the team’s efforts, many children we supported are now thriving in schools and universities, with bright futures ahead. Some clients even went on to become volunteers and later staff at Connection Support – a testament to the lasting connections built. The team itself was wonderfully diverse, bringing together colleagues from France, Kenya, Syria, Algeria, Azerbaijan, and beyond – using their skills, languages, and lived experiences to provide culturally sensitive, personal support.

Alongside the challenges of resettlement, including the high cost of living, we’ve celebrated countless milestones with the families at community events, watching them build friendships and flourish. In May this year, the service came to an end, but we are pleased that local authorities will continue providing support to Afghan families in Cherwell. Before closing, we came together for celebration events in Banbury and Ambrosden to reflect on all we had achieved and to say our goodbyes.

This has been a remarkable service – one that leaves behind a legacy of resilience, community, and hope, showing how the right support at the right time can change the trajectory of entire families for generations.

Homes for Ukraine

Our Homes for Ukraine service, delivered in partnership with Refugee Resource, supports displaced Ukrainians arriving under the Government’s Homes for Ukraine scheme to build safe, stable lives in Oxfordshire.

This year, the team supported 884 guests, providing more than 1,500 instances of tailored advice, guidance, and practical help. Alongside one-to-one support with eVisa applications, learning English, finding work, and accessing mental health services, we brought people together through wellbeing activities such as yoga, art therapy, dance, and music. These sessions welcomed 10–30 guests each time, whilst larger community concerts and festivals drew 200–300 people, creating opportunities for connection, friendship, and celebration.

The service also delivered life-changing individual outcomes. In one case, we successfully appealed a Department for Work and Pensions decision to refuse a guest’s PIP claim, securing a reversal that resulted in a significant backdated payment and the means to pay for additional support. In another, we helped a guest establish the Ukrainian choir OKSAMYT – now made up of both Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians – which has gone on to perform at events across Oxfordshire.

The year wasn’t without challenges, such as long waiting times for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes and access to mental health services, but the team continued to find creative ways to bridge these gaps. Every connection made, whether through practical support or a shared cultural moment, helped strengthen the foundations for guests to rebuild their lives with confidence and independence.

No Recourse to Public Funds

Our No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) project supports homeless people in Oxfordshire without access to state benefits or housing. Funded by the Oxfordshire Homeless Movement and working in partnership with Asylum Welcome, SOHA, and Edge Housing, the service provides tailored support to help clients rebuild their lives, including dignified accommodation, legal advice, and assistance in resolving their immigration status.

Over the year, 26 clients were supported, with six newly housed and seven successfully resolving their immigration status – a significant increase from the previous year. Engagement with health and social care services remained high, with 95% accessing these, and 70% engaging with mental health services.

Client engagement was a particular strength this year. Participants contributed to a council-commissioned focus group, took part in an external project evaluation, and were interviewed by The Big Issue during the financial year, although the article won't be published until next financial year.

An [external evaluation published](#) in April 2025 highlighted the project as a cost-effective, dignified, and lasting solution to support people with no recourse, filling a critical gap in housing and support provision.

The service also played a key role in contributing to Oxfordshire's designation as a 'Council of Sanctuary' and is working with local councils and partners to further develop NRPF support. Stronger connections with migration and statutory agencies have helped raise the profile of NRPF needs locally.

Challenges included a difficult legal aid environment, rising mental health needs often beyond the project's scope, and increasingly complex referrals – including individuals posing potential risks to others. Despite this, the team remained committed to balancing support with safety, ensuring that clients received the best possible support within these constraints.

Young People's Supported Accommodation (YPSA)

YPSA provides safe, supported housing for care leavers aged 16–25 across Buckinghamshire and South Oxfordshire. Each young person referred by Oxfordshire County Council receives their own furnished accommodation and regular visits from a Support Worker, helping them to gain confidence, develop life skills, and prepare for independent living. Support ranges from budgeting, cooking, and maintaining a tenancy, to registering with health services, accessing education or employment, and building healthy relationships.

Over the year, we supported 30 young people – 80% of whom sustained their accommodation – with five young people feeling empowered to move into their own home. Every single client was also supported with accessing health and dental services – a vital step in building stability and self-care. We introduced a Psychologically Informed Environments budget, giving every young person a £100 voucher to personalise their home, and delivered Christmas hampers and gift vouchers to all of the young people.

Whilst we successfully onboarded several new properties this year, sourcing enough one-bedroom homes of an appropriate standard remained difficult. At the same time, we experienced avoidable property damage linked to some young people presenting with more severe or escalating mental health needs, which significantly impacted their ability to maintain their living environments. This increase in the number of young people needing intensive support prompted us to implement a new strategy using creative ways to support with living skills, as well as regular property inspections. We have also seen more clients with undiagnosed neurodivergence and difficulties maintaining healthy relationships, which in some cases has further affected tenancy sustainment. We'll continue evolving our approach in response to these emerging needs, building on what works and finding new ways to give every young person the strongest possible start in their first home.

Milton Keynes

Although our services across Milton Keynes span different specialisms – housing, mental health, and independent living – they faced many of the same pressures. Rising complexity, financial hardship, and stretched local systems meant people often arrived with urgent and overlapping needs. Whether helping someone keep their home, manage their mental health, or take control of their own care, each service

worked in its own way towards the same goal: making stability and independence possible, whatever someone's starting point.

Milton Keynes Integrated Floating Support

Our Integrated Floating Support Service helps single adults with a history of rough sleeping, or at risk of it, to find and maintain settled housing and improve their wellbeing. Combining elements of our Housing First and Next Steps models, we provide tailored, practical, and emotional support through strengths-based, trauma-informed plans. Over the last financial year, the service supported 208 clients. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with 94% rating their support as excellent or good. Around 80% of clients reported improvements in managing their tenancy and mental health, and 85% saw progress in managing their physical health. Additionally, 68% of clients are working towards reducing alcohol or drug use.

A key challenge this year has been delays with Universal Credit for some clients placed in private rented accommodation, leading to rent arrears. However, our team actively supported clients to manage these challenges, reducing the risk of eviction.

In addition, the service saw a rise in clients with complex backgrounds, including those with offending histories and sexual offences. The team met these challenges with skill and dedication, providing tailored support to address the diverse and complex needs presented.

Personal Story: "I Didn't See a Future – But Now I Do" – Jodey's Story

Looking back, I was very sporty as a child. I ran track and field for Milton Keynes Athletics club and represented my school teams. I also used to love playing for various football clubs in Wolverton, Stoney Stratford, and Newport Pagnell.

But everything changed in 2020. I became homeless, and that was just the beginning of a dark time. While I was living on the streets, I was the victim of a hit-and-run accident. I still live with multiple long-term injuries from that day. After the accident, I found myself being moved from one hotel to another by the council. It was overwhelming – I had just come out of the hospital, and instead of recovering, I was being shuffled from place to place. At one of those hotels, I was even jumped.

In the space of just two weeks, I lost my home, I was seriously injured in a hit-and-run, and I was attacked while trying to rest and recover. That's when Connection Support stepped in. They found me in 2022, still living in a hotel, and that was the turning point. Since then, they've made a huge difference in my life and have supported me every step of the way.

They helped me find a stable place to live, somewhere I could finally call home. After years of feeling like I was stuck in survival mode, I had a roof over my head and someone to help me get things in order. Because of my accident, my memory has been affected significantly. My caseworker has supported me

with keeping track of appointments, bills, rent payments – just everyday things that became really difficult to manage. Their support helped me rebuild my life, piece by piece.

My injuries are still a concern today, as I am still going through a lot of medical tests and treatments to this day. But mentally and emotionally, I'm in a completely different place. My mental health has improved a lot. I've cut down on alcohol and started making better choices for myself.

The encouragement I've had from my caseworkers has made a huge difference. They helped me rebuild my confidence. A few years ago, I couldn't see a future for myself. Now? I'm part of the Brighter Futures

group with Connection Support, their client advisory board. I'm even thinking about starting an accounting course soon. I try to get out every day, meet new people, and stay active in my community.

What I'm most proud of? Honestly, the fact that I'm still here. I went through so much in such a short amount of time, and I survived it. I've paid off my rent arrears, and I'm happy to have a little bit of extra money coming in. I can now prioritise my other arrears, and I'm so proud of the fact that I'm so close to getting permanent housing. I never thought I'd be in this position – feeling hopeful, proud, and looking forward to the future. But here I am.

Mental Health Floating Support

Our Mental Health Floating Support Service provides flexible, housing-related support to help clients with mental health needs avoid homelessness or maintain their tenancy and independence. Support is offered in clients' homes or communities, working closely with statutory and voluntary partners. The service also includes 'Windrush', independent supported accommodation for clients with Autism.

This year, we accepted 104 referrals. Several clients who initially faced eviction due to challenges understanding housing procedures were supported to successfully challenge decisions, resulting in permanent accommodation and no longer being at risk of homelessness.

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges we faced this year was the time it took to build trust with clients who may have had negative experiences with services in the past. This is why our approach focuses on meeting clients where they are – whether in their home or out in the community – and adapting support to their individual circumstances. We work alongside other statutory and voluntary agencies to provide joined-up, practical help, from sustaining tenancies and resolving repairs to managing money, benefits, and debt, as well as supporting clients to explore education, training, and employment opportunities, and connect with their local community.

Dissatisfaction with temporary accommodation – particularly within the private landlord sector – and financial hardship worsened by low Universal Credit payments continued to compound these pressures. But even so, our flexible, consistent, person-centred presence was key to building the trust needed for clients to feel safe engaging with us, helping them make lasting changes.

Direct Payment Support Service

Our Direct Payment Support Service empowers adults with disabilities and families across Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes to take control of their own care. Rather than relying solely on traditional care options, we support people to design personalised arrangements that reflect their lifestyles – whether that's employing a trusted carer, attending social activities, or simply accessing the community on their own terms.

This year, demand for the service surged well beyond expectations. Over 3,000 enquiries to our Direct Payment Helpline were responded to within two working days. We supported 291 adults with disabilities and parents of disabled children to take ownership of their care arrangements by becoming employers, offering them the freedom to recruit and manage personal assistants in ways that best suit their lives. In parallel, our Payroll Service provided monthly support to 746 personal assistants and processed over 1,300 payslips on behalf of employers. Our Holding Account service also continued to grow, with 171 users supported and more than 6,500 payments made every month on their behalf.

Beyond day-to-day delivery, the service played a valuable role in system learning and collaboration. We delivered training for local social work teams, co-produced resources through the Milton Keynes Direct Payment Users Group, and hosted online workshops and networking sessions for adults with disabilities

and families. We were also proud to be finalists in the Milton Keynes Inspiration Awards – a moment of recognition for the team’s continued dedication to supporting people with disabilities to live independently and on their own terms.

However, this year’s rapid growth also brought significant pressure. A 25% increase in Payroll users and a 29% rise in Holding Account activity have placed strain on staff capacity, making it increasingly difficult to accommodate demand. We’ve also seen a notable increase in complex mental health needs, requiring more flexible and responsive support to prevent care arrangements from breaking down when needs fluctuate. This work is a clear example of how our strategy is coming to life – helping people prevent crisis, retain independence, and shape the support that works best for them.

Buckinghamshire

Across Buckinghamshire, our work spans all five of our specialisms – homelessness and housing, mental health, family support, young people, and refugee resettlement - with this section highlighting a number of those services. This year brought rising demand and growing complexity, but our teams continued to achieve strong outcomes: people sustained tenancies, families found stability, and young people took steps towards independence. The year also marked a period of growth, as we began delivering one of our largest services to date.

Across the county, our homelessness and housing services give people safety, stability, and the chance to move forward. Each service is shaped around timely, person-centred support – helping people to overcome crisis, rebuild confidence, and take steps towards long-term independence.

Bearbrook Place

At the start of the financial year, we began delivering one of our largest accommodation services, Bearbrook Place. Able to house 36 residents across two wings, Bearbrook Place offers supported accommodation for single people aged 16 to 55 who are homeless or at risk of becoming so. The service provides holistic, person-centred support, helping residents build skills and confidence to move towards independent living.

In its first year, Bearbrook supported 50 clients and received 151 referrals. Whilst we couldn’t accept all referrals, we’re proud that 89% of the people we supported saw an improvement in their relationships, 98% registered with a local GP, and 98% created personalised support plans within their first four weeks. Additionally, 86% successfully registered with social housing, and seven clients moved on to independent living.

Taking over the service from another provider presented challenges, but our team worked diligently to ensure a smooth handover that maintained stability for existing residents. The strong relationships between clients and staff were evident during our launch event, where clients actively contributed through crafts, performances, and sharing their lived experience of homelessness.

Building renovations reflected our commitment to creating a psychologically informed environment. Residents and staff collaborated closely on decisions about colours, artwork, and décor, helping transform the space into a welcoming home that residents feel proud of.

The service received commendations from statutory agencies and voluntary sector partners alike. High-profile visits from the High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire, the Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, and Laura Kyrke-Smith, MP for Aylesbury, highlighted the value and impact of the support offered at Bearbrook.

However, the year also presented significant challenges. Transitioning from a previous provider required quick adaptation to different practices, whilst working to fully understand residents' risk information, including any urgent mental health needs. Some residents also reported feeling stuck with limited move-on options. To support positive change, staff employed motivational interviewing and personalised goal-setting, helping to empower residents, resulting in seven successful move-ons.

Another challenge we encountered was the increase in the complexity of needs. Residents often presented with low mental health, substance misuse, and neurodiversity concerns such as suspected ADHD – issues compounded by long waits for assessments and limited support options. The team responded with determination and flexibility, tailoring support to individual needs and working closely with residents to overcome barriers. Their efforts have been crucial in helping residents make meaningful strides towards stability, despite the difficulties posed by these complex and intersecting challenges.

Perhaps one of the most powerful reflections of life at Bearbrook comes directly from a resident. This poem captures the resilience, diversity, and community spirit of those who call it home:

“We live in a place called Bearbrook,
It’s a place that’s heaven sent, but doesn’t get a double look,
For many of us it’s taken us from the street,
Out of the cold, rain, snow and sleet,
It’s not society’s fault, we don’t get a second look, as we all get judged before you read the book.
We are all different to most,
But get to know us if you are in need, as we are excellent hosts,
Then you have the staff, our friends,
Who dedicate their time to help us get on the mend,
Not one of us in our community are the same,
But the connection and love we share is real and not a game.
People look at us as down and outs,
But could you sleep on the pavements, beg for food and still not pout,
We are all survivors of every kind of scenario,
Tear us down and we just rebuild like Meccano,
Or just need a bit of help to get you off the floor.
Come see Bearbrook Community and staff,
Make some friends, get the ball rolling and have a laugh,
We are all unique with similar tales to tell,
All of us will be there for you as you leave the gates of hell,
So put on your biggest smile, because you have walked through the door and started your own
personal mile.”

Rough Sleeper Outreach Buckinghamshire

As part of the Rough Sleeper Initiative, our Outreach team aims to reduce rough sleeping across Buckinghamshire. Through intensive outreach to people who find themselves street homeless, and a limited number of short-term emergency accommodation places, we’re able to support people in moving into more stable housing.

Over the year, the service received 814 referrals from various sources, including the public, partners, and agencies reporting possible rough sleepers. We were able to accept 98% of these referrals for an outreach visit. During these visits, some individuals could not be located, chose not to engage, or were found not to be sleeping rough, meaning the team successfully verified and engaged 252 people confirmed to be sleeping outside.

Of these, 90 were accommodated in emergency housing – a reflection of the small number of beds we have available – whilst others were supported in different ways, from applying for benefits and managing money to accessing healthcare, drug and alcohol services, and pathways into training or employment. Many were also helped to find and sustain longer-term accommodation, ensuring support extended well beyond immediate crisis intervention.

The service faced challenges throughout the year, such as reduced funding, staff losses, and an increase in clients with more complex needs. But despite this, the team’s commitment ensured continued vital support for some of the county’s most at-risk individuals.

One Recovery Bucks

ORB provides housing-related support for people over 18 who are doing well in their recovery from drug or alcohol addiction, having abstained for at least three months. Pre-tenancy support is provided

alongside guidance on sustaining a tenancy, budgeting, accessing benefits, paying bills, and finding training or employment opportunities. Across the county, 20 dedicated ORB flats offer a safe and stable place to live while people focus on their recovery.

In addition to the residents in the flats, 26 people accessed housing advice through drop-ins with the substance misuse team. One client, a parent of two young children, successfully moved from an ORB flat into a social housing property – a major milestone in her recovery. Having completed tenancy sustainment training, remained abstinent, and fully engaged with support to manage risks and triggers, she shared that she now feels confident managing her tenancy and is excited to return to work.

The year wasn’t without its challenges. In a small number of cases, property damage by residents caused delays for others waiting to move in, whilst legal backlogs slowed the eviction process. There was also a rise in clients presenting with significant mental health needs, adding to the complexity of support. Yet despite these additional pressures, the team stayed adaptable and solution-focused, keeping people’s recovery journeys moving forward.

Personal Story: Facing Life Instead of Running from It – Flo’s Story

Growing up, life was good. I had a happy childhood, but when I lost my stepdad at the age of 12, everything changed. That loss hit me hard – it affected my confidence, my education, and my perspective on the world. I didn’t realise it then, but that grief planted a seed that would shape a lot of the struggles I’d face in years to come.

Later on in my life, I ended up in a very abusive and controlling relationship – I was getting beaten up regularly and felt completely trapped. There was no way out. I tried everything, including getting arrested, just to escape. I found myself in and out of prison, constantly on the run from a situation I didn’t know how to change. Eventually, I ended up homeless, living on the streets of London.

At one point, I got so sick I ended up in the hospital with pneumonia. My local borough moved me temporarily to Wycombe, and I spent a month in the hospital recovering. It was during that time that I realised I was ready to address my substance misuse. I needed a fresh start, and Wycombe gave me that change of scenery I so desperately needed.

When I first came to Connection Support, I was vulnerable, withdrawn, and incredibly lonely. I didn’t recognise myself anymore. But from day one, the support I received was honest, real, and consistent. My Support Worker helped me believe in myself again. She worked with me, not against me. She didn’t give up on me. That’s a big part of why I’m still here today.

She helped me maintain my tenancy, checked in on me regularly, and gave me the space to be open and rebuild my trust. Because of that support, my life is a lot better now. I'm more optimistic about the future and not so afraid to face each day and the challenges it brings. I'm proud to be part of the solution now, instead of feeling like the problem.

These days, I'm working hard on becoming a better version of myself – staying positive and not being so hard on myself. I know I still have a long way to go, but I also know I've come so far. I'm proud of the fact that I'm facing life now instead of running from it.

I want to thank Patricia and Rachel - they've had the biggest impact on me during my time with Connection Support. They're truly valuable and respected individuals. Because of them, I feel more able to deal with life.

RESET

RESET supports ex-offenders to secure safe housing and make positive life choices that reduce their risk of reoffending. This year, we supported 58 male ex-offenders into suitable housing and helped 100% of them maximise their income through benefits or employment. We also worked with 38 women, 42% of whom successfully moved into safe, secure accommodation. For some, this progress opened doors to new opportunities – including training and employment – which can be difficult for our clients to prioritise when they're facing complex challenges.

We work alongside clients not only to find accommodation and sustain tenancies, but also to address wider needs such as health, recovery, skills, and employment. This wrap-around support ensures people have the stability and resources to rebuild their lives. One man's journey took him through every stage of our service: from living in a tent and using drugs daily, to finding safety in an emergency bed, moving into recovery housing, re-entering work, and sustaining his tenancy with ongoing recovery support.

Finding appropriate and affordable housing in Buckinghamshire remains challenging, and clients are increasingly presenting with multiple, co-occurring needs such as addiction and mental ill-health. There is also a growing demand from people on bail seeking support, particularly women, who we can accommodate more easily than men. Despite these pressures, our presence on the Accommodation Board at HMP Bullingdon and the CAS3 Board for Thames Valley is improving our ability to intervene early, enhancing continuity of support, and strengthening our partnerships – giving clients the best possible chance of building a stable, independent future.

Our mental health services provide flexible, housing-related support that helps people avoid crisis and build the confidence to live independently. Whether through short-term, preventative work or more intensive wrap-around support, they are shaped around the principle that recovery is possible when people feel listened to, understood, and supported in their housing and wellbeing needs.

SafeHaven+

Delivered in partnership with Buckinghamshire Mind, Citizens Advice Bucks, Oasis Partnership, and Adult Mental Health Teams, SafeHaven+ provides support to adults with mental health issues and complex needs, aiming to prevent crisis, avoid unnecessary hospital admissions, and improve overall wellbeing. Connection Support's role is to provide intensive housing-related support as part of this wraparound approach.

Over the course of the year, 50 clients were referred to the service, with 12 people in acute mental health crisis supported into long-term accommodation. For many, SafeHaven+ was a turning point – helping people navigate both the housing system and the challenges of managing their mental health. One client shared that the support they received not only secured them a home suited to their needs, but also gave

them the strength to keep going during an incredibly difficult time. In feedback provided to the team, the client mentioned how they felt listened to, supported beyond expectations, and felt as though they now had a future to look forward to.

The year brought its challenges, including difficulties in securing guarantors for clients entering the private rented sector and navigating gaps in statutory service provision. Some clients faced additional barriers due to the complexity of their needs, such as living with both a mental health condition and a personality disorder, or undiagnosed neurodiversity that made engagement with services more difficult. By offering a safe space to turn to in moments of crisis and the practical support to rebuild, SafeHaven+ helped people take back control of their housing and mental health – preventing the need for repeated crisis interventions and giving them the stability to plan for the future.

Prevention Matters

Prevention Matters supports people over 18 who are finding it hard to stay independent – whether that’s due to illness, mobility issues, loneliness, anxiety, or a loss of confidence. Through short-term, tailored support, the service helps people reconnect with their community, take part in activities, and access the right services to maintain their independence long after support ends.

This year, we received 786 referrals to the service, and we were able to help 685 people who were eligible to receive one-to-one support from our team. The remaining referrals were signposted to other services better suited to their needs, ensuring everyone was supported to find the right help. Many clients were able to remain independent in their homes, re-engage with their communities, and access help with everyday needs – from organising transport to completing important forms. The team worked alongside clients facing significant mental health needs and difficulties accessing other support, ensuring no one had to navigate these challenges alone.

Demand for the service remains high, but the team continues to adapt – strengthening community links and providing consistent, person-centred support so people have the tools, confidence, and connections they need to live life on their own terms.

Over the years, we’ve seen how early intervention can transform outcomes not just for individuals, but for families too – stepping in at the right time can prevent crises from happening, giving children a more stable foundation to grow from. In Buckinghamshire, this takes place through Thrive, our dedicated family support service. Like all our work, Thrive is built on person-centred support, but what makes it so dynamic is how it is commissioned. Funded by The Tony and Sheelagh Williams Charitable Foundation, Thrive has the freedom and flexibility to adapt to each family’s circumstances – ensuring no family is left without access to support and that help lasts as long as it’s needed.

Thrive

Thrive supports families across Buckinghamshire, tailoring help to each household’s needs – from substance dependency and domestic abuse to learning difficulties, social exclusion, and lack of parenting skills. When the service first began, it operated in select areas of Aylesbury and High Wycombe, but now it covers the entire county, so no family is left without access to support. By working alongside 199 families this year, Thrive reached 531 children, helping to build skills, confidence, and parental wellbeing so children can grow up in a more stable, positive environment.

Ten of the families we supported were struggling financially due to the cost of living crisis, and we were able to secure grants totalling £6,600 to help with urgent needs such as rent arrears and utility debts.

We're also grateful to have received a further £2,000 from Heart of Bucks, which enabled us to host parties during school holidays. Across four events, 81 families enjoyed the chance to come together, connect, and celebrate in a relaxed setting.

Strong partnerships with local schools have been integral to Thrive's success, with one school sharing: *"Thrive are fantastic – we have seen more of an impact with our families who are supported by Thrive than any other services!"* Alongside collaborations with services like Early Autism Support, which worked with 28 families during the year, Thrive has grown its network from just six to 22 partner agencies since it began.

This growth has come during a period of rising need – with more children referred who have diagnosed or undiagnosed special educational needs, and fewer local services available to meet those needs. These gaps in provision make Thrive's role even more vital, ensuring families have consistent, tailored support when it matters most. With our expanded reach and strong partnerships, Thrive is well-placed to continue intervening earlier to create lasting change for future generations.

Our Strategy

This year marks the launch of our new three-year organisational strategy focused on putting prevention first. Whether it's due to homelessness or poor mental health, the number of people experiencing a crisis is on the rise, and the origins of these crises often stem from childhood. We know that the human and financial cost of the revolving door is intolerable and unnecessary. That's why we're taking the battle against homelessness and poor mental health to its source. We consulted with clients, staff, and volunteers to ensure our focus stays on the people we support and that we remain committed to our mission of seeing everyone in our community safely and sustainably housed and ensuring they can live as independently as possible.

Our vision for 2027 is to be a thought-leader in the prevention of homelessness and mental ill-health, spearheading innovative services that prevent crises from happening, whilst being there to offer client-centred support if they do. We know that demand for support with homelessness and mental health is increasing all the time, and our client referrals are becoming even more complex, so over the next three years, our core work will still meet the current need that we see around us. However, as we move forward, we'll ensure that each of the crisis services we provide has a preventative approach woven in, enabling people to build resilience to avoid future emergencies so that they don't return through a revolving door.

Our passion to increase the positive impact we have on people's lives cannot be delivered without additional financial resources, so we'll be focusing more of our efforts on generating fundraised income. Whilst our core work will still be to deliver statutory services, we'll use this additional fundraised income to design innovative projects that meet the needs in society that existing services aren't currently able to meet. We'll strive to identify new opportunities so that we can avoid turning people away when their work is nearly finished. We'll be here to provide needs-based, not time-based support.

Our team are at the core of everything we do – without them, our support services would cease to exist. It's because of their expertise, compassion, and unwavering commitment to helping people that we're able to support our clients achieve incredible milestones. That's why we're investing in our staff in terms of training, remuneration and wellbeing so that we can be an even better employer, building on our success as one of the best charities to work for.

We believe in a future where people are free from crisis, and effective prevention is the key. But for the times when crises do happen, we'll be there to help every step of the way. As part of our Prevention First strategy, we have set new objectives grouped into three key themes. The details of these, alongside the planned activities to achieve them, are presented below.

Achievements and performance against objectives

In the last year, we have taken considerable steps towards our three key themes:

1. Quality service delivery

We're dedicated to improving the lives of the people we support, and so to continue meeting the needs of our clients, we're developing new ways to ensure we're always providing the highest level of quality.

What we achieved this financial year:

- A huge effort has gone into implementing a new client management system to improve processes and collect meaningful management information to support future funding. This involved extensive data collection and review across all our services, strong collaboration between teams, and key insights from a dedicated workshop. The first pilot is now ready to launch, with a full rollout planned in 2025 - 2026.
- We've developed and successfully piloted our bespoke quality assurance system, built on a strong framework that drives high standards across all our services. At the heart of this approach are learning reviews, used to celebrate success and highlight areas for continuous improvement. Taking a 360-degree view, we go beyond reviewing case files by actively involving staff, partners, and clients in the feedback process.
- This year, we've grown the number of properties we manage by 16% and the units we manage by 47%. Managing these properties enables us to provide accommodation that's client-centred and psychologically informed - meaning it's designed with an understanding of residents' mental and emotional needs. This approach creates a supportive, safe environment that helps reduce stress and build stability, with trained staff and services focused on healing and wellbeing, not just housing.

2. Prevention is better than cure

With a renewed focus on prevention, we're seeking opportunities to innovate in the gaps in existing service provision and fundraise for new services so that we can help more clients pave the way to a crisis-free future.

What we achieved this financial year:

- **Focus on prevention**
 - We analysed data from our services and reviewed existing prevention approaches to start developing our Theory of Change. It's been fantastic to see such enthusiastic engagement from clients, staff, and volunteers during the consultation on the draft version. The Theory of Change is now in its final stages of development, and we're working on communication materials to help bring it to life for everyone.

- **Innovate in the gaps in provision**

- We secured fundraising income to support people with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.
- We successfully repurposed our property in High Wycombe to provide accommodation for formerly rough sleeping NRPF clients in Buckinghamshire.
- We secured grant funding to deliver our Tenancy Ready training courses for clients across both Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.
- Our Thrive service, which works to prevent the next generation of rough sleepers by supporting families in Buckinghamshire, has continued to grow this year. We have been exploring opportunities to replicate this model in other regions.

- **Compelling communication**

- We've steadily built momentum throughout the year to strengthen our reputation as a thought leader in preventing homelessness and mental ill-health. This has included engaging with local MPs, attending high-profile events, increasing our presence in radio and press, securing TV coverage, and being approached by influential stakeholders.
- We successfully secured a workshop slot at the Homeless Link Conference, where we had the opportunity to showcase our Thrive service in Buckinghamshire - a great platform to highlight the impactful preventative work we're doing.
- We ran two campaigns in 2024: a Refugee Resettlement awareness campaign in June and a Christmas fundraising campaign in December.
- We have developed a clear stakeholder map that helps us identify and visualise the key individuals and groups we want to engage with for different campaigns and projects. This tool enables us to plan our communications more strategically, ensuring we reach the right people with the right messages to build stronger relationships and maximise our impact.
- To empower staff as active ambassadors of our work, we've delivered social media training to both staff and Board members, along with brand training during our bi-
- monthly all-staff meetings. We've also introduced quarterly branding workshops to help staff understand the importance of consistently representing and upholding our brand.
- We've developed a strong portfolio of client stories to more boldly highlight the issues faced by the people we support. By amplifying their voices, we're using real-life experiences as powerful evidence to demonstrate the ongoing need for services like ours.

3. People, partnership, and culture

Our people make us who we are, so we're doubling down on our efforts to be an ever-improving employer and partner.

What we achieved this financial year:

- We approved a 5% annual salary increase for all staff – maintaining our status as a Living Wage Employer, and reaffirming our commitment to pay as generously as we can afford to.
- We continued to work with Best Companies to deliver our third staff engagement survey. Our response rate rose to 81%, and the insights we gained have helped us develop an action plan to

- tackle our key focus areas. We were also thrilled to be named as the 7th best charity to work for in the UK in their league tables.
- We conducted a remuneration benchmarking review to establish how we compare to our peers.
- We reviewed our employee benefits provider and, based on staff feedback and market research, selected and implemented a new provider to enhance the range and quality of benefits available to all employees, ensuring better value and improved support for staff wellbeing.
- We strengthened our champions networks and monitored our EDEI data against our initial benchmark to track our progress. We also developed and launched a new EDEI strategy, which included organising events such as attending Oxford Pride and celebrating International Women’s Day. In addition, we launched a new wellbeing strategy, delivered through a staff wellbeing festival, training and awareness sessions, and a calendar of events such as World Menopause Day and Neurodiversity Week.
- In January 2025, we launched our Client Advisory Board, ‘Brighter Futures’, made up of 10 participants supported by staff, Trustees, and client involvement champions. The Board connects with our Senior Leadership Team to help shape the organisation’s direction through co-production. Members meet every other month, take part in activities between meetings, and commit for a year to allow new clients to get involved in the future.
- We created an internal development group which meets quarterly to strengthen links between our marketing, fundraising, and operations teams.
- To support the ongoing growth and positive development of our organisational culture, we engaged Actuate Global to conduct psychometric assessments for all staff, providing valuable insights into current team dynamics.

Plans for the future, future direction of the charity, and likely future developments

1. Quality service delivery

Key activities planned for the next financial year are:

- We are preparing to roll out our new client management system, starting with pilot programmes across several services. These pilots will help us refine our understanding of the system, and manage the transition effectively with minimal disruption to teams and service delivery. To support staff, we will offer training sessions, and as the rollout continues, we will work closely with managers in planning and leading the transition within their teams.
- We will be fine-tuning our quality assurance framework to align with our new client management system, ready for a full rollout across the organisation.

2. Prevention is better than cure

Key activities planned for the next financial year are:

- **Focus on prevention**
 - We will continue to deliver our core services with our How We Work principles embedded throughout. These will be formally outlined in a new internal framework launching later this year, designed to ensure a consistent, prevention-first approach across all teams.

- **Innovate in the gaps in provision**
 - We will expand our Fundraising team, which – along with our improved monitoring processes and data systems – will strengthen capacity to generate income for priorities which fall outside the remit of our statutory services.
 - We will investigate partnerships with organisations that have identified the need for us to complement their work, such as preventing homelessness among young people and ex-offenders.
- **Compelling communication**
 - We will continue to strengthen our reputation as a leader in preventing homelessness and mental ill-health by sharing our Theory of Change with key stakeholders.
 - We will strengthen our collaboration with the fundraising team to engage key stakeholders through tailored communications and focused campaigns, supporting more effective fundraising outcomes.
 - We will work closely with the fundraising team to raise our public profile by organising and promoting fundraising events that not only generate vital income but also increase awareness of our work and strengthen our connections with the wider community.
 - We will seek out national and local awards to enter to raise awareness of the quality and impact of our work.

3. People, partnership, and culture

Key activities planned for the next financial year are:

- We will carry out a comprehensive review of our pay scales, undertake a full consultation process, and implement a new remuneration approach.
- We will progress our training and development offer, including opportunities such as mentoring, secondments, job shadowing, and improved induction knowledge sharing. We will formalise these processes and establish best practice to ensure they are accessible and consistently delivered across the organisation.
- We will continue to invest in learning and development through the creation and implementation of a Performance Management and Development model. This will include reviewing personal development plans to identify training needs at both the organisational and individual levels. We will gather feedback throughout the process and adapt the training as needed. In addition, we will introduce organisation-wide competency training to replace the annual appraisal process and roll out our new competency model.
- We will implement projects to strengthen our clients' voices, volunteering, and peer mentoring by leading a series of activities, workshops, and forums to ensure clients are actively involved in shaping our services. We will also develop peer mentoring in Buckinghamshire and demonstrate its positive impact. Additionally, we will promote the value of volunteers internally through training and information sessions to encourage wider understanding and engagement.
- We will actively engage in both formal and informal partnership structures at local and national levels, exploring opportunities to tender for work collaboratively. We will attend partnership

meetings to coordinate activities in the best interests of our target client groups and take a proactive leadership role within the Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance, the newly formed Buckinghamshire Homeless Partnership, and the revived Milton Keynes Homelessness Partnership. Additionally, we will support the creation of new partnerships where connections do not yet exist, ensuring we continue to strengthen our reach and impact.

- We will prioritise staff wellbeing after serious incidents by implementing an emotional support system for individuals and teams, offering reflective sessions and face-to-face counselling.
- We will map out clear career progression pathways into management at Connection Support, outlining the core training required at each stage. This framework will be embedded into our business-as-usual practices to ensure consistent development and support for emerging leaders across the organisation.
- We will develop a comprehensive people strategy that builds on our employee experience, wellbeing, learning and development, and diversity and inclusion initiatives. This strategy will also incorporate innovative approaches to recruitment and retention.
- We will monitor EDEI data against our initial benchmark to track progress and continue advancing our diversity and inclusion efforts.

Structure, Governance and Management

Connection Support is a charitable company, limited by guarantee. It is governed by its Articles of Association, dated 26 May 1995.

The Trustee Board is responsible for the governance of the charity. The Trustee Board delegate the day-to-day management of the charity to Chris Keating, the Chief Executive Officer, who is supported by Amy Delisser, Deputy CEO, Paul Prosser, Operations Director, Dipen Parekh, Business Services Director, and Carol Steel, Finance Director.

Each director has taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as a director in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditors are aware of that information. So far as each director is aware, there is no relevant audit information (information needed by the company's auditors in connection with preparing their report) of which the company's auditors are unaware.

The Board of Trustees

Connection Support is governed by a Board of unpaid Trustees who meet with the staff leadership team every two months. The Board delegates monitoring of financial matters to a Finance Sub-committee, which meets once a quarter, and delivery of organisational development initiatives to a Development Sub-committee, which meets every two months. There is also a Remuneration Committee that meets annually, and a Board Appointments Committee that meets every 6 months. Other committees can be formed on a task-focused basis.

Under the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, one third of Board members, or if their number is not a multiple of three, then the number nearest to one third, shall retire from office at the Annual General Meeting each year. Any Trustee appointed between Annual General Meetings shall only retain office until the next Annual General Meeting and then shall be eligible for re-election. The Trustees who served the charity during the financial year, alongside Trustees who have recently been appointed, can be viewed on the previous page. During this financial year, Richard Allman continued as Chair but had announced his intention to retire. To support succession planning, Emma Duke was appointed as Co-Chair.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

The Board aims to ensure that a broad range of experience is represented by Trustees, particularly in health, housing, social care, business and finance. A skills audit of Board members is conducted every two years to inform recruitment and succession planning. Detailed information is provided to prospective Trustees, including governing documents, financial accounts, Charity Commission guidance on the responsibilities of Trustees and information about the charity's services. Applicants are invited to an informal discussion with the CEO followed by a formal interview with two Board Members and the CEO. The interview covers the responsibilities of Trustees, in line with Charity Commission guidance and the Charity Code of Governance. References are taken prior to full Board approval of appointment.

Trustees' Induction and Training

New Trustees are provided with information about the charity including its strategy, plans, organisational structure, finances and risk register. New Trustees meet with the CEO for a full briefing on the charity's work and to agree areas of more specific input. Newly appointed Trustees are supported by a mentor from the Board during their induction period. Training opportunities are circulated to Board members as they arise.

Charitable Objectives

The Charitable Objectives of Connection Support are to relieve poverty, sickness and distress in people over the age of 16 and living, or about to live, in local authority, housing association or private accommodation (particularly but not exclusively those who have been in care or have been homeless, those who suffer from mental health problems and those with previous or current addiction to drugs or alcohol) through the provision of advice and advocacy services, counselling support and whatever charitable means the Trustees shall decide.

Statement of Public Benefit

The Trustees take into account the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit and believe that the activities of Connection Support, as set out in this report, cover the duty of showing public benefit in line with that guidance. Our principal public benefit is to enable vulnerable people to maintain their independence. This includes people with mental health problems, drug and alcohol problems, families, young people, refugees, people who have been homeless, older people, and people with an offending background. People who receive support must need this support to enable them to live independently. There is no charge for this support.

Fundraising

Connection Support is registered with the Fundraising Regulator, and our fundraising activities comply with the standards set out in the Code of Fundraising Practice. Our fundraising is open, honest, and respectful, and we consider the needs of any donor who may be in vulnerable circumstances or who may need extra support to make an informed decision. We did not receive any complaints related to fundraising during this period.

The charity is deeply grateful for the support it has received over the year. We are delighted to have raised over £863,000 in charitable income from local and national trusts and foundations, individual donors, and local organisations. Fundraised income is used to run projects and activities that would not otherwise exist, such as our No Recourse to Public Funds service, which supports people experiencing homelessness who are not entitled to state-funded benefits, and our Thrive service for families in Buckinghamshire.

Equality, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

As part of our ongoing commitment to being a truly inclusive organisation, we have implemented an EDEI Development Plan. This plan is reviewed quarterly and has resulted in the creation of ongoing commitments, such as identifying regular training, encouraging client involvement to shape our work, and setting up networks to support staff needs. We aim to ensure that all our staff, clients, and volunteers feel welcomed and supported, and feel free to be their authentic selves.

Environment

Connection Support recognises that our work has an impact on the local, regional, and global environment. We are committed to continuously improving our environmental performance by prioritising sustainability, energy efficiency, and making the most effective use of resources.

Connection Support's Environment and Sustainability Champions lead a range of initiatives designed to reduce the impact of our work upon the environment.

Risk Management

Connection Support operates a detailed risk register, which identifies risks and mitigations in the following categories: governance, external, regulatory and compliance, financial, and operational. The CEO and Senior Leadership Team review the register on a bi-monthly basis, assessing the risks that need to be mitigated most urgently, and defining measures to counter these. This is submitted to the Trustees at each Board meeting. Working this way, we are proactively building a culture of transparency around risk management.

The Trustees have identified the key organisational risks facing Connection Support, and strategies to manage these risks, as below:

Nature of risk	Risk management strategy
Reduced funding available for activities, due to economic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diversification of income streams through increased provision of Supported Accommodation and Fundraising activities. - Rolling schedule to assess potential new contracts and to evaluate prospective risks to existing services.
Societal need far outweighs service capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partnership with other charities and service providers to maximise cost efficiency around service-delivery. - Communication with local authorities and charitable funders to foster a collective response to community needs. - Focus on quality and on ensuring our work meets the highest standards of service.
Increasing complexity of client needs, including mental health needs in services which are not funded to support mental health specialists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specialist training package in place for all staff, with all employees given access to training. - Supportive line management to manage client caseload, including regular one-to-one supervisions and Reflective Practice sessions. - Employee wellbeing initiatives to support skills' retention. - Dialogue with funders around the increasing volume and complexity of Connection Support's client base.

Reserves Policy

It is the policy of Connection Support to maintain free unrestricted reserves (that is, unrestricted reserves not invested in fixed assets or designated for specific purposes) at a target level which can finance at least four months' full payroll and operational costs.

At 31 March 2025, the target operating reserve equated to £2,640k. This has been established as the level which provides Connection Support with the financial stability to deliver the organisation's core activities, without compromising the principle that the income received will be used to support the charitable objectives of the organisation wherever possible.

Whilst this reserves policy is designed primarily to satisfy our charitable objectives, the level of four months' reserves additionally provides a window for the Senior Leadership Team to manage cashflow issues, in the event of delays receiving contract or rental income due.

As an additional requirement, Connection Support ensures that unrestricted reserves are maintained at a level which can support the winding up of the organisation in a solvent manner, should this scenario occur. Winding up costs are currently calculated to be £2,100k. These are calculated on a standalone basis, and not in addition to the operating reserve.

Investment Policy

Connection Support aims to ensure that it maintains its free reserves in a way which ensures that (i) funds are accessible to support the liquidity of the organisation on a day-to-day basis, whilst also (ii) upholding the value of the organisational balance sheet against rising inflation in the longer term.

To achieve this, the Trustees have established a multipronged approach:

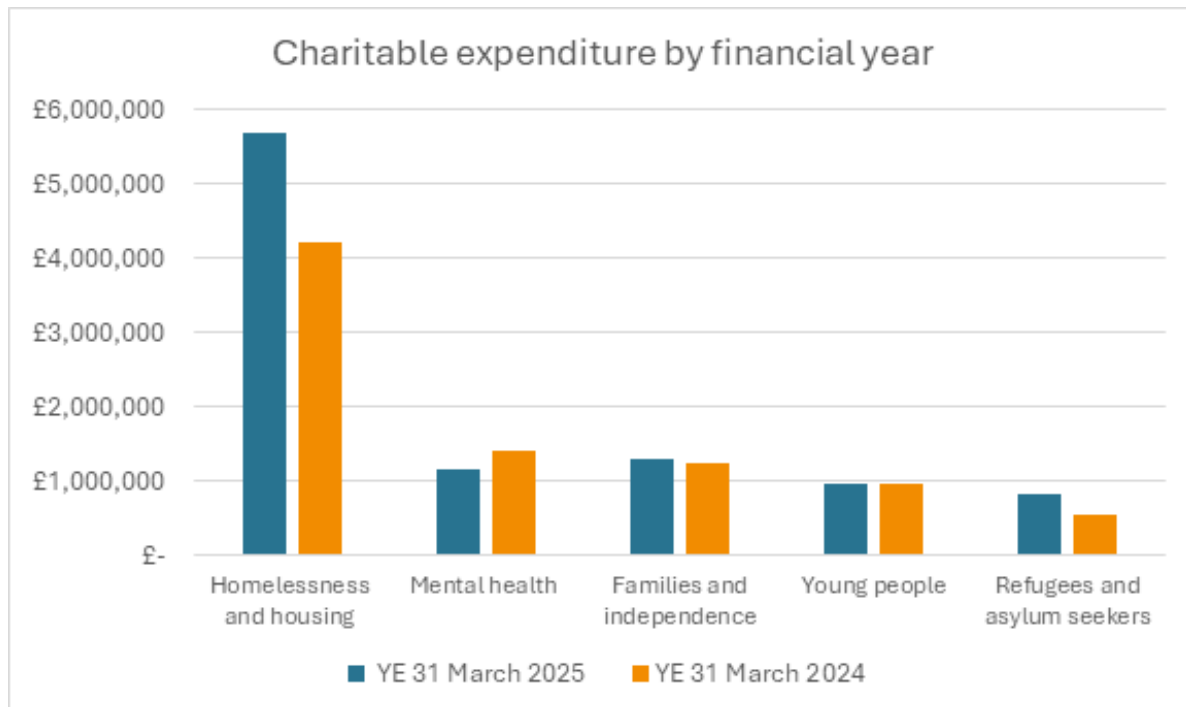
- The Trustees have planned investment of up to £250,000 per year into organisational development. This has proved successful, yielding a return in diversified income streams and strengthened organisational infrastructure.
- To the extent that reserves are required to support the routine cashflow demands associated with local authority contract funding, funds are held in instant access bank and building society accounts.
- Funds which the Board have set aside to achieve longer term growth, are maintained in interest-bearing bank and building society accounts.

In investing funds, the trustees evaluate the security of the funds, the likely return on investment, plus the social, environmental and ethical impacts of prospective investments. The Finance Subcommittee of the Board of Trustees, have sufficient expertise to evaluate investments which fall within the scope of this policy, and review the performance of investments on a quarterly basis.

£239k reserves held in investment funds were sold and transferred to interest-bearing bank accounts during the financial year, in line with this policy.

Financial Review

Connection Support generated a 16.5% increase in charitable income during the year (2025: £10,066k, 2024: £8,624k). This reflects the significant growth of our supported accommodation services, alongside smaller-scale expansion of our services for families, homelessness prevention, and support for refugees and asylum seekers, as illustrated below:



Of total expenditure, 99.4% related to charitable activities, with the balancing 0.6% dedicated to the cost of raising funds.

We were delighted to see a 29% increase in fundraised grants and donations in the year (2025: £863k, 2024: £668k), with funds going to provide essential direct support for our clients, as well as supporting our innovative services working to house rough sleepers with no recourse to public funds, and providing crisis prevention support to families. We anticipate increasing our investment in fundraising activities in the next financial year, in order to fulfil our ambition of expanding this work.

Overall Connection Support is reporting a surplus of £142k for the year. This breaks down as a £48k increase in restricted funds, and a £94k increase in unrestricted and designated funds.

A challenge for Connection Support, as our work continues to grow, is ensuring that free reserves sustain the corresponding level of growth required to remain within the optimal range, ensuring financial stability.

During the year Connection Support transferred furniture, fittings and IT equipment held on the balance sheet from free reserves to designated funds, in order to optimise transparency and support the monitoring of free reserves. As a result, free reserves dropped to £2,267k at the financial year end, but remained within the target range needed to ensure financial stability of £2,100k - £2,640k.

Auditor

In accordance with the company's articles, a resolution proposing that Gravita LLP be reappointed as auditor of the company will be put forward at a General Meeting.

The Trustees report was approved by the Board of Trustees.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Emma Duke', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Ms Emma Duke, Chair of the Board of Trustees

Date: 1 December 2025

Connection Support Statement of Trustee's Responsibilities

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

The Trustees, who are also the directors of Connection Support for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Connection Support

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Members of Connection Support

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Connection Support (the 'Charity') for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Connection Support

Independent Auditor's Report (continued)

To the Members of Connection Support

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of our audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared, which includes the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law, is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the directors' report included within the Trustees' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Charity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors' report included within the Trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of Trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the Trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the Trustees' report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the statement of Trustees' responsibilities, the Trustees, who are also the directors of the Charity for the purpose of company law, are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

Connection Support

Independent Auditor's Report (continued)

To the Members of Connection Support

- the engagement partner ensured that the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- we identified the laws and regulations applicable to the company through discussions with directors and other management, and from our knowledge and experience;
- we focused on specific laws and regulations which we considered may have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the company;
- we assessed the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations identified above through making enquiries of management and inspecting legal correspondence where applicable; and
- identified laws and regulations were communicated within the audit team regularly and the team remained alert to instances of non-compliance throughout the audit.

We assessed the susceptibility of the Charity's financial statements to material misstatement, including obtaining an understanding of how fraud might occur, by:

- making enquiries of management as to where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud, their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud; and
- considering the internal controls in place to mitigate risks of fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations.

To address the risk of fraud through management bias and override of controls, we:

- performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships;
- tested journal entries to identify unusual transactions;
- assessed whether judgements and assumptions made in determining the accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
- investigated the rationale behind significant or unusual transactions

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we designed procedures which included, but were not limited to:

- agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation;
- reading the minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- enquiring of management as to actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reviewing relevant correspondence.

There are inherent limitations in our audit procedures described above. The more removed that laws and regulations are from financial transactions, the less likely it is that we would become aware of non-compliance. Auditing standards also limit the audit procedures required to identify non-compliance with laws and regulations to enquiry of the directors and other management and the inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

Material misstatements that arise due to fraud can be harder to detect than those that arise from error as they may involve deliberate concealment or collusion.

Connection Support

Independent Auditor's Report (continued)

To the Members of Connection Support

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Katherine Wilkes BSc FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)

For and on behalf of Gravita Audit Oxford LLP, Statutory Auditor
Chartered Accountants
First Floor, Park Central
40-41 Park End Street
Oxford
OX1 1JD
Date: ...8/12/25.....

Connection Support
Statement of Financial Activities
Including Income and Expenditure Account
For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

		Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
	Notes						
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	3	18,447	844,941	863,388	10,320	658,055	668,375
Charitable activities	4	9,141,358	60,781	9,202,139	7,894,779	61,341	7,956,120
Investments	5	15,492	-	15,492	16,502	-	16,502
Total income		<u>9,175,297</u>	<u>905,722</u>	<u>10,081,019</u>	<u>7,921,601</u>	<u>719,396</u>	<u>8,640,997</u>
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	6	57,997	-	57,997	51,208	-	51,208
Charitable activities	7	9,025,176	857,614	9,882,790	7,584,521	741,607	8,326,128
Total expenditure		<u>9,083,173</u>	<u>857,614</u>	<u>9,940,787</u>	<u>7,635,729</u>	<u>741,607</u>	<u>8,377,336</u>
Net gains/(losses) on investments	11	2,205	-	2,205	10,056	-	10,056
Net income and movement in funds		94,329	48,108	142,437	295,928	(22,211)	273,717
Reconciliation of funds:							
Fund balances at 1 April 2024		<u>2,755,072</u>	<u>169,107</u>	<u>2,924,179</u>	<u>2,459,144</u>	<u>191,318</u>	<u>2,650,462</u>
Fund balances at 31 March 2025		<u>2,849,401</u>	<u>217,215</u>	<u>3,066,616</u>	<u>2,755,072</u>	<u>169,107</u>	<u>2,924,179</u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

Connection Support

Balance Sheet

As at 31 March 2025

	Notes	2025		2024	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	13		793,456		706,399
Current assets					
Stock	14	-		3,000	
Debtors	15	1,269,960		960,778	
Investments	16	-		239,426	
Cash at bank and in hand		1,618,319		1,712,789	
		2,888,279		2,915,993	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	17	(615,119)		(698,213)	
Net current assets			2,273,160		2,217,780
Total assets less current liabilities			3,066,616		2,924,179
The funds of the Charity					
Restricted income funds	19		217,215		169,107
Unrestricted funds - general	20		2,266,692		2,402,422
Unrestricted funds - Revaluation reserve			130,000		130,000
Unrestricted funds - Designated funds	20		452,709		222,650
			3,066,616		2,924,179

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 1 December 2025



Ms Emma Duke

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Company registration number 03072719 (England and Wales)

Connection Support
Statement of Cash Flows
 For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

	Notes	2025		2024	
		£	£	£	£
Cash flows from operating activities					
Cash (absorbed by)/generated from operations	26		(152,943)		328,962
Investing activities					
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(202,335)		(229,098)	
Proceeds from disposal of tangible fixed assets		3,685		-	
Purchase of investments		-		(4,752)	
Proceeds from disposal of investments		241,631		-	
Investment income received		15,492		16,502	
Net cash generated from/(used in) investing activities			58,473		(217,348)
Net cash generated from financing activities			-		-
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents			(94,470)		111,614
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year			1,712,789		1,601,175
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year			1,618,319		1,712,789

Connection Support

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

Connection Support is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is The Old School, First Turn, Wolvercote, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX2 8AH.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charity's constitution, the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Charities SORP "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019). The Charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the Charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to include the revaluation of freehold properties and to include investment properties and certain financial instruments at fair value. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the Charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the Trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

The Trustees have not identified any material uncertainties about the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the Board of Trustees for particular purposes.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors or grantors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

1.4 Income

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when the Charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Income received by the way of grants, donations and gifts is included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable. Grants, where entitlement is not conditional on the delivery of a specific performance by the Charity, are recognised when the Charity becomes unconditionally entitled to the grant.

1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure represents amounts invoiced, including value added tax which cannot be recovered.

Support costs are allocated per service according to the Full Time Equivalent number of staff working on each service.

1 Accounting policies **(Continued)**

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful economic lives on the following bases:

Buildings	2% straight line
Leasehold improvements	Over the life of the lease
Accommodation furnishings & office equipment	25% reducing balance
Computer Equipment	25% reducing balance

All assets costing more than £1,000 are capitalised.

When Connection Support furnishes a new unit of supported accommodation, set-up purchases are treated as a single asset and depreciated accordingly. This is intended to maintain consistency of practice with the depreciation on furniture and fittings claimed through Housing Benefit for supported accommodation.

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is credited or charged to income or expenditure.

1.7 Current asset investments

Investments are measured at fair value at the year-end date.

Investments are classified as current when they can be converted into cash within one year. The Charity has either decided to sell the investments within one year or is undecided about the long-term strategy regarding investments.

1.8 Stocks

Stocks represent donated goods. See Note 1.14.

1.9 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.10 Financial instruments

The Charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the Charity's balance sheet when the Charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs.

Connection Support

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

1 Accounting policies (Continued)

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors, are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

1.11 Taxation

The Charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Irrecoverable VAT

All resources expended are classified under activity headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Irrecoverable VAT is charged against the category of resources expended in relation to which it was incurred.

1.12 Retirement benefits

The Charity operates a money purchase (defined contribution) pension scheme. Contributions payable to this scheme, or appropriate scheme of the employee's choice, are charged to the income and expenditure account in the period to which they relate. These contributions are invested separately from the Charity's assets. Pension arrangements are in line with auto-enrolment requirements.

1.13 Leases

Rentals applicable to operating leases where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remain with the lessor are charged to expenditure on a straight-line basis over the period of the lease.

1.14 Donated goods

Donated goods are measured at their fair value. Goods donated for distribution to our clients are valued at the equivalent of the fair market value at the time of receipt and recognised as stock, with the corresponding income recognised within donations. When the stocks are distributed, they are recognised as an expense in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Connection Support benefits from the contribution of unpaid general volunteers but has not recognised this in its accounts, owing to the absence of a reliable measurement basis.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the Charity's accounting policies, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

Critical judgements

The following judgements (apart from those involving estimates) have had the most significant effect on amounts recognised in the financial statements.

Fixed Asset Depreciation

Depreciation was calculated based on management's estimate of the useful economic lives of tangible fixed assets. During the year ended 31 March 2025, depreciation totalled £114,380 (2024: £73,186).

Fixed Asset valuation

Residential properties are held at market value, and valuation assessed for impairment/against market movements each year to ensure valuation is appropriate.

3 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Donations and grants						
Donations	18,447	77,817	96,264	10,320	15,078	25,398
Grants to support client living costs and welfare	-	96,487	96,487	-	33,180	33,180
Grants funding the provision of charitable services	-	630,583	630,583	-	560,222	560,222
Grants funding client accommodation	-	40,054	40,054	-	27,075	27,075
Donated goods	-	-	-	-	22,500	22,500
	18,447	844,941	863,388	10,320	658,055	668,375
	18,447	844,941	863,388	10,320	658,055	668,375

Donated goods

Gifts in kind consists of donated SIM cards to be distributed to clients.

4 Charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds	Unrestricted funds
	2025	2024
	£	£
Charitable income: service contracts		
Buckinghamshire County Council	1,514,736	1,621,416
Cherwell District Council	416,163	307,652
Milton Keynes Council	1,143,358	1,413,547
Oxford City Council	949,780	746,367
Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust	462,123	490,586
Oxfordshire County Council	2,211,655	1,853,090
South Oxfordshire District Council	-	15,129
South Staffs and Shrops Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	61,000	54,212
Thames Valley Police	59,751	165,181
Vale of White Horse District Council	-	13,110
Other contract income	1,626	5,031
Other charitable income:		
Housing income	2,340,413	1,219,116
Payment services for private clients	40,429	37,154
Recharge expenditure	1,105	14,529
	<u>9,202,139</u>	<u>7,956,120</u>
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds - general	9,141,358	7,894,779
Restricted funds	60,781	61,341
	<u>9,202,139</u>	<u>7,956,120</u>

5 Income from investments

	Unrestricted	Unrestricted
	funds	funds
	2025	2024
	£	£
Income from listed investments	5,126	5,039
Interest receivable	10,366	11,463
	<u>15,492</u>	<u>16,502</u>

Connection Support

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

6 Expenditure on Raising Funds

	Unrestricted funds general 2025 £	Unrestricted funds general 2024 £
Raising funds		
Website & publicity	2,656	161
Staff costs	53,531	49,163
Travel	427	515
Investment management	1,383	1,369
	<u>57,997</u>	<u>51,208</u>

Connection Support

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

7 Charitable activities

	Homelessness and housing support	Mental health support	Families and independence	Young people	Refugees and asylum seekers	Total 2025	Total 2024
	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025		
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Depreciation and impairment	36,356	-	-	11,611	-	47,967	36,790
Staff costs	3,442,361	996,206	1,148,170	431,968	536,001	6,554,706	5,659,904
Housing costs	1,512,723	-	-	429,304	32,069	1,974,096	1,355,223
Direct client support	188,495	1,331	9,039	12,914	156,763	368,542	390,824
	<u>5,179,935</u>	<u>997,537</u>	<u>1,157,209</u>	<u>885,797</u>	<u>724,833</u>	<u>8,945,311</u>	<u>7,442,741</u>
Share of support costs (see note 8)	486,038	156,850	120,535	65,940	92,216	921,579	870,487
Share of governance costs (see note 8)	8,323	2,709	2,364	997	1,507	15,900	12,900
	<u>5,674,296</u>	<u>1,157,096</u>	<u>1,280,108</u>	<u>952,734</u>	<u>818,556</u>	<u>9,882,790</u>	<u>8,326,128</u>
Analysis by fund							
Unrestricted funds - general	5,477,118	1,155,897	858,204	934,178	599,779	9,025,176	7,584,521
Restricted funds	197,178	1,199	421,904	18,556	218,777	857,614	741,607
	<u>5,674,296</u>	<u>1,157,096</u>	<u>1,280,108</u>	<u>952,734</u>	<u>818,556</u>	<u>9,882,790</u>	<u>8,326,128</u>

Connection Support
Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)
 For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

7 Charitable activities

(Continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2024

	Homelessness and housing support	Mental health support	Families and independence	Young people	Refugees and asylum seekers	Total 2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Depreciation and impairment	17,049	-	-	19,741	-	36,790
Staff costs	2,733,612	1,196,045	1,021,427	362,794	346,026	5,659,904
Housing costs	833,491	-	-	498,482	23,250	1,355,223
Direct client support	171,194	14,378	101,738	15,506	88,008	390,824
	<u>3,755,346</u>	<u>1,210,423</u>	<u>1,123,165</u>	<u>896,523</u>	<u>457,284</u>	<u>7,442,741</u>
Share of support costs (see note 8)	444,013	184,541	112,918	55,028	73,987	870,487
Share of governance costs (see note 8)	6,815	2,612	1,860	687	926	12,900
	<u>4,206,174</u>	<u>1,397,576</u>	<u>1,237,943</u>	<u>952,238</u>	<u>532,197</u>	<u>8,326,128</u>
Analysis by fund						
Unrestricted funds - general	4,043,912	1,384,535	871,987	937,801	346,286	7,584,521
Restricted funds	162,262	13,041	365,956	14,437	185,911	741,607
	<u>4,206,174</u>	<u>1,397,576</u>	<u>1,237,943</u>	<u>952,238</u>	<u>532,197</u>	<u>8,326,128</u>

Connection Support

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

8 Support costs allocated to activities

	2025 £	2024 £
Depreciation	39,937	36,396
Travel and subsistence	188,238	162,416
Office costs	325,418	311,086
Insurance	43,796	32,986
Consultancy and legal fees	33,077	33,429
IT and communications	275,437	279,842
Bank charges	6,341	5,387
Other costs	12,123	8,945
(Profit)/Loss on sale of fixed assets	(2,788)	-
Governance costs	15,900	12,900
	<u>937,479</u>	<u>883,387</u>
Analysed between:		
Homelessness	494,361	450,828
Mental health support	159,559	187,153
Families & independence	122,899	114,778
Young people	66,937	55,715
Refugees and asylum seekers	93,723	74,913
	<u>937,479</u>	<u>883,387</u>

Governance costs includes payments to the auditors of £15,900 (2024- £12,900) for audit fees.

9 Net movement in funds

	2025 £	2024 £
The net movement in funds is stated after charging/(crediting):		
Fees payable for the audit of the Charity's financial statements	15,900	12,900
Depreciation of owned tangible fixed assets	114,380	73,186
(Profit)/loss on disposal of tangible fixed assets	(2,788)	4,287
Operating lease charges	1,423,529	1,090,265
	<u>1,423,529</u>	<u>1,090,265</u>

10 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2025 Number	2024 Number
	<u>219</u>	<u>198</u>

Connection Support

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

10 Employees	(Continued)	
Employment costs	2025	2024
	£	£
Wages and salaries	5,665,133	4,926,130
Social security costs	509,306	401,186
Other pension costs	244,433	173,958
Training	66,568	46,727
Recruitment	42,392	36,951
Agency fees	14,106	87,025
Other staff costs	66,452	42,578
	<u>6,608,390</u>	<u>5,714,555</u>

Redundancy and termination payments totalling £30,927 (2024: £48,941) were made in the reporting period. This consists of £14,346 redundancy payments, plus termination payments and payments in lieu of notice totalling £16,581.

Other than 1.2 full time equivalent staff members dedicated to fundraising activities during the year ended 31 March 2025, all employees were involved in the delivery of the Charity's objects. (2024 - all employees involved in charitable activities, other than 1.2 full time equivalent fundraisers.)

The number of employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000 is as follows:

	2025	2024
	Number	Number
£60,001 to £70,000	2	1
£70,001 to £80,000	1	-
£80,001 to £90,000	-	1
£90,001 to £100,000	1	-
	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>

Remuneration of key management personnel

The remuneration of key management personnel was as follows:

	2025	2024
	£	£
Aggregate compensation	<u>337,024</u>	<u>340,313</u>

The key management personnel of the Charity comprise the Trustees, the Chief Executive Officer, the Deputy Chief Executive Officer, the Business Services Director and the Finance Director. The Trustees receive no remuneration.

Connection Support

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

11 Gains and losses on investments

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £
Gains/(losses) arising on:		
Revaluation of investments	2,205	10,056

12 Taxation

The Charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

13 Tangible fixed assets

	Buildings £	Leasehold improvements £	Assets under construction £	Accommodation furnishings & office equipment £	Computer Equipment £	Total £
Cost or valuation						
At 1 April 2024	524,690	38,050	27,756	206,555	189,077	986,128
Additions	-	14,578	-	119,102	68,655	202,335
Disposals	-	-	-	(74,566)	(38,469)	(113,035)
Transfers on completion	-	27,756	(27,756)	-	-	-
At 31 March 2025	524,690	80,384	-	251,091	219,263	1,075,428
Depreciation and impairment						
At 1 April 2024	40,861	7,610	-	122,095	109,164	279,730
Depreciation charged in the year	10,494	16,077	-	50,667	37,142	114,380
Eliminated in respect of disposals	-	-	-	(73,669)	(38,469)	(112,138)
At 31 March 2025	51,355	23,687	-	99,093	107,837	281,972
Carrying amount						
At 31 March 2025	473,335	56,697	-	151,998	111,426	793,456
At 31 March 2024	483,828	30,440	27,756	84,460	79,915	706,399

Land and buildings with a carrying amount of £466,174 were revalued at 14th March 2023 on the basis of market value.

At 31 March 2025, had the revalued assets been carried at historic cost less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses, their carrying amount would have been approximately £322,500 (2024 - £337,500).

The revaluation surplus is disclosed in Note 20.

Connection Support
Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

14 Stock		2025 £	2024 £
Donated goods		-	3,000
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
15 Debtors		2025 £	2024 £
Amounts falling due within one year:			
Grants due		790,023	641,478
Housing income due		211,605	153,763
Prepayments and other debtors		268,332	165,537
		<u>1,269,960</u>	<u>960,778</u>
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
16 Current asset investments		2025 £	2024 £
Listed investments		-	239,426
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
17 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year		2025 £	2024 £
	Notes		
Other taxation and social security		125,129	87,570
Deferred income: grants	18	80,400	110,221
Trade creditors		173,338	265,405
Other creditors		41,498	36,669
Accruals and deferred income		194,754	198,348
		<u>615,119</u>	<u>698,213</u>
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Other creditors includes £35,271 (2024: £33,243) in respect of pension commitments.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

18 Government grants

Grants have been deferred when they have been received before the year end but are for a specific purpose and time period after the year end.

Deferred income is included in the financial statements as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Deferred income is included within:		
Current liabilities	80,400	110,221
	<u>80,400</u>	<u>110,221</u>
Movements in the year:		
Deferred income at 1 April 2024	110,221	347,396
Released from previous periods	(110,221)	(318,978)
Resources deferred in the year	80,400	81,803
	<u>80,400</u>	<u>81,803</u>
Deferred income at 31 March 2025	<u>80,400</u>	<u>110,221</u>

Connection Support

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

19 Restricted funds

The restricted funds of the Charity comprise the unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used.

	At 1 April 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 March 2025 £
Rough Sleeper Accommodation	12,331	-	(5,120)	7,211
Ex-Offender Accommodation	26,583	60,000	(40,443)	46,140
Buckinghamshire NRPF service	12,737	19,902	(21,538)	11,101
OHM NRPF Project 2024-2025 Support	-	119,252	(117,428)	1,824
OHM NRPF Project 2024-2025 Subsistence	-	38,081	(41,891)	(3,810)
OHM NRPF Project 2024-2025 Housing Management	-	40,054	(36,761)	3,293
Thrive family support service	1,397	356,244	(353,980)	3,661
Charities together service	-	62,800	(55,955)	6,845
Homelessness prevention services	12,000	7,280	(12,685)	6,595
Grants supporting client living costs and welfare	33,897	90,874	(112,016)	12,755
Client training support	4,065	-	(2,030)	2,035
Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance training fund	30,000	-	(199)	29,801
Volunteering activities to support services	6,970	47,728	(50,281)	4,417
Donations to support client living costs and welfare	26,127	253	(2,629)	23,751
Gifts in Kind - SIM cards for clients	3,000	-	(3,000)	-
Banbury Beacon drop in service	-	63,254	(1,658)	61,596
	<u>169,107</u>	<u>905,722</u>	<u>(857,614)</u>	<u>217,215</u>

Connection Support

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

19 Restricted funds	(Continued)			
Previous year:	At 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 March 2024 £
Rough Sleeper Accommodation	28,686	11,240	(27,595)	12,331
Ex-Offender Accommodation	57,340	50,100	(80,857)	26,583
Buckinghamshire NRPf service	14,331	10,000	(11,594)	12,737
OHM NRPf Project 2023-2024 Support	-	103,893	(103,893)	-
OHM NRPf Project 2023-2024 Subsistence	-	38,651	(38,651)	-
OHM NRPf Project 2023-2024 Housing Management	-	27,075	(27,075)	-
Thrive family support service	-	223,269	(221,872)	1,397
Charities together service	-	130,922	(130,922)	-
Refugee Support service, Oxfordshire	-	3,700	(3,700)	-
Homelessness prevention services	-	12,000	-	12,000
Grants supporting client living costs and welfare	35,855	32,180	(34,138)	33,897
Client training support	7,459	-	(3,394)	4,065
Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance training fund	30,000	-	-	30,000
Volunteering activities to support services	-	39,787	(32,817)	6,970
Donations to support client living costs and welfare	17,647	14,079	(5,599)	26,127
Gifts in Kind - SIM cards for clients	-	22,500	(19,500)	3,000
	<u>191,318</u>	<u>719,396</u>	<u>(741,607)</u>	<u>169,107</u>

19 Restricted funds**(Continued)****Rough Sleeper Accommodation**

Funds to cover deposits and rent in advance, enabling rough sleepers to move into a rented home

Ex-Offender Accommodation

Funds to cover deposits and rent in advance, enabling ex-offenders to move into a rented home

Buckinghamshire NRPF service

Supporting people who do not have access to state-funded benefits or housing in Buckinghamshire

OHM NRPF Project 2023-2024 Support

Supporting people who do not have access to state-funded benefits or housing in Oxfordshire

OHM NRPF Project 2023-2024 Subsistence

Direct subsistence and local travel support for people with no access to state-funded benefits or housing in Oxfordshire

OHM NRPF Project 2023-2024 Housing Management

Housing management support for people with no access to state-funded benefits or housing in Oxfordshire

Oxford Community Foundation

Funds to support the Oxfordshire project to support clients with No Recourse to Public Funds

Thrive family support service

Initiative working alongside families in Buckinghamshire to support parenting and family wellbeing

Charities Together service

Joint initiative in Buckinghamshire, working with community groups to support people affected by financial insecurity

Refugee Support service, Oxfordshire

Providing household items and activities for refugee families

Homelessness prevention services

Providing life tools and support to rough sleepers, so they can live independently in their own rented home

Grants supporting living costs and welfare

Funding to support individuals with essential household costs

19 Restricted funds

(Continued)

Client training support

Funding for training courses and counselling for people recovering from addiction

Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance training fund

Fund held on behalf of the Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance to support training for group members

Volunteering activities to support services

Supporting volunteering activities and client involvement with the development of Connection Support's services

Donations to support client living costs and welfare

Donations to support individuals with essential household costs

Gifts in Kind - SIM cards for clients

Mobile phone SIM cards held for distribution to clients

Banbury Beacon drop in service

Funds to support the running of the Beacon Centre in Banbury, which serves as a drop in centre for homeless and isolated people

20 Designated funds

The unrestricted funds of the Charity comprises the unexpended balances of donations and grants which are not subject to specific conditions by donors and grantors as to how they may be used. These include designated funds which have been set aside out of unrestricted funds by the Trustees for specific purposes.

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Transfers £	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
Support for systems development in 2024-25	138,250	-	138,250	(27,848)	-	110,402
Planned service expenditure	-	26,400	26,400	(26,400)	22,185	22,185
Laptop and mobile phone replacement	-	48,000	48,000	(48,000)	-	-
Office building works	-	10,000	10,000	(10,000)	-	-
Revaluation reserves	130,000	-	130,000	-	-	130,000
Fixed assets	-	-	-	-	320,122	320,122
	<u>268,250</u>	<u>84,400</u>	<u>352,650</u>	<u>(112,248)</u>	<u>342,307</u>	<u>582,709</u>

21 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £
At 31 March 2025:			
Tangible assets	793,456	-	793,456
Current assets/(liabilities)	2,055,945	217,215	2,273,160
	<u>2,849,401</u>	<u>217,215</u>	<u>3,066,616</u>
	<u><u>2,849,401</u></u>	<u><u>217,215</u></u>	<u><u>3,066,616</u></u>
	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
At 31 March 2024:			
Tangible assets	706,399	-	706,399
Current assets/(liabilities)	2,048,673	169,107	2,217,780
	<u>2,755,072</u>	<u>169,107</u>	<u>2,924,179</u>
	<u><u>2,755,072</u></u>	<u><u>169,107</u></u>	<u><u>2,924,179</u></u>

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

22 Operating lease commitments

At the reporting end date the Charity had outstanding commitments for future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases, which fall due as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Within one year	874,926	478,538
Between two and five years	512,498	315,335
	<u>1,387,424</u>	<u>793,873</u>

Amounts recognised as an expense during the period in respect of operating lease arrangements are £1,423,529

23 Funding received as agent for clients

Connection Support received charitable grant funding as agent on behalf of clients to support welfare purchases. Funds are held on behalf of clients as below.

	2025	2024
	£	£
Balance at 1 April	3,426	10,942
Historical balances repaid or transferred to welfare in year	(4,532)	(5,506)
Receipt of client funds	42,837	37,088
Payment of client funds	(35,371)	(39,098)
Balance at 31 March	<u>6,360</u>	<u>3,426</u>

24 Trustee Remuneration, Key Management Personnel & Related Party Transactions

No member of the Board of Trustees received any remuneration during the year.

The Trustees were not paid or received any other benefits from employment with the Charity in the year (2024: Nil).

One Trustee was reimbursed for travel expenses during the year £1,992.10 (2024: Nil).

No Trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the Charity (2024: Nil).

One trustee made total donations of £348.27 to the Charity in the year (2024: One trustee made a £350 donation).

No Trustee or other person related to the Charity had any personal interest in any contract or transaction entered into by the Charity during the year.

25 Analysis of changes in net funds

The Charity had no material debt during the year.

Connection Support

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

26 Cash (absorbed by)/generated from operations	2025 £	2024 £
Surplus for the year	142,437	273,717
Adjustments for:		
Investment income recognised in statement of financial activities	(15,492)	(16,502)
(Gain)/loss on disposal of tangible fixed assets	(2,788)	4,287
Fair value gains and losses on investments	(2,205)	(10,056)
Depreciation and impairment of tangible fixed assets	114,381	73,186
Movements in working capital:		
Decrease/(increase) in stocks	3,000	(3,000)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(309,182)	83,777
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(53,273)	160,728
(Decrease) in deferred income	(29,821)	(237,175)
Cash (absorbed by)/generated from operations	<u>(152,943)</u>	<u>328,962</u>

Appendix

Overview of Our Services

Homelessness and Housing

Adult Homeless Pathway (Oxfordshire) - Providing accommodation and support to single homeless people over 18 across Cherwell, West Oxfordshire, and Oxford City. We have 80 rooms in a mixture of shared houses in Oxford, Witney, and Banbury, in which we can support clients to help them build skills and move on to long-term independent living. When moving on from the pathway, 12 weeks of resettlement support is also offered to support people with the transition and settle them into their new homes.

Banbury Beacon (Oxfordshire) - The Beacon Centre in Banbury is a safe, warm, and non-judgmental space for homeless and isolated people in Banbury and the surrounding area. We provide food and hot drinks, as well as the chance to meet other people who are experiencing similar circumstances. Our Support Workers are on hand to provide a listening ear, as well as practical advice and support. There are regular visits from other support agencies to discuss housing, drug, and alcohol issues.

Bearbrook Place (Buckinghamshire) - Bearbrook Place offers supported accommodation to people who are either homeless, or at risk of becoming so. The service supports young people aged between 16 – 25 and adults aged between 18 – 55. We deliver holistic support so that residents can gain the skills and confidence they need to move on to independent living. Residents collaboratively identify goals with their Support Worker to create a personalised support plan. By setting SMART goals, each client is empowered to develop their skills, broaden their support network and achieve their full potential.

Benefits Specialist Service (Oxfordshire) - This service is for people who live in the city of Oxford – single people and couples without children who have previously slept rough. We provide support with claiming benefits and maximising income.

Embedded Housing Workers (Oxfordshire) - EHWs are located at Oxfordshire University and Oxfordshire Foundation Trust Hospitals to reduce the number of patients who have extended stays in hospital because, although they are medically well enough to be discharged, they either have no housing provision, or there are barriers to them returning to their own accommodation. They work with medical teams to identify and understand patients' housing issues, ensure presentations to local housing authorities are done in a managed way and monitor and report on outcomes. They also work with multiple teams and agencies to prevent repeated admission of rough sleepers.

Housing First (Oxfordshire) - Housing First provides a home and intensive support to former rough sleepers in the Cherwell District during their journey from rough sleeping to a more settled lifestyle within their own home and to improve their health and wellbeing.

Housing Support Service (Oxfordshire) - The service is delivered by floating support workers, using a person-centred approach, to enable clients who are at risk of homelessness maintain their tenancies and access services to avoid encountering homelessness. The team supports and equips clients with the tools to manage their money, navigate benefits, be independent and avoid homelessness.

Integrated Floating Support Service (Milton Keynes) - The Integrated Floating Support Service is designed to help single adults aged 18 and over who have a history of rough sleeping, or who are at risk of it, to move towards settled accommodation and a better quality of life. Combining our previous Housing First Model and Next Steps Accommodation Programme, the service supports people with a wide range of needs, from high to low. We offer tailored practical and emotional support to help people secure and maintain a tenancy, develop daily living and budgeting skills, resolve housing and benefit issues, attend appointments, and build social connections. Working in partnership with each person, we create a strengths-based action plan that focuses on building resilience, confidence, and independent living skills in a trauma-informed way.

One Recovery Bucks (Buckinghamshire) - ORB provides support with rented accommodation for people over the age of 18 who are doing well in their recovery from drug or alcohol addiction (they must have abstained for at least 3 months). Pre-tenancy support is provided, alongside guidance on sustaining a tenancy and help with budgeting, accessing benefits, paying bills, training opportunities and employment. We have 20 flats across the county.

Reset (Buckinghamshire) - Support for ex-offenders to access accommodation and make positive life choices to reduce the risk of them reoffending and returning to prison. The team provides support with finding accommodation, tenancy sustainment, accessing benefits, training, education, and employment opportunities, help with physical or mental health issues or substance abuse.

RESTART (Thames Valley) - Supporting ex-offenders to build a more stable and positive future in partnership with Aspire Oxfordshire and Thames Valley Partnership. This pilot project ended in October 2024.

Rough Sleeper Outreach and Rough Sleeper Initiative (Buckinghamshire) - Our Rough Sleeper Outreach Service helps people sleeping rough in Buckinghamshire build a better future beyond life on the streets. We support individuals to find settled accommodation and access the benefits they're entitled to. We also help them connect with health services, addiction support, and other services tailored to their needs. The service includes tenancy sustainment support, providing practical tools and guidance to help people live independently in their own rented homes. We assist clients with managing their finances — from rent payments and bills to budgeting and accessing benefits — as well as training, pathways into employment, and support for mental and physical health. A small amount of emergency accommodation is also available.

Rough Sleeper Outreach (Oxfordshire) - The Oxfordshire Outreach Team covers the North, South & Vale and West districts of the county by verifying rough sleepers at their bedded down site and motivating and engaging with people to support them in finding suitable accommodation. The team offers support with improving their safety, and provides information to access benefits, housing options, tenancy rights, mental health services, medical, and substance misuse services. They also help them to develop practical life skills, to work towards living independently.

Somewhere Safe to Stay (Oxfordshire) – In partnership with St Mungo's, we provide emergency accommodation and housing management for people sleeping rough in Oxford City.

Step Down Housing (Oxfordshire) - Short-term housing for vulnerable patients who are medically ready to be discharged from the Oxfordshire University or Oxfordshire Foundation Trust Hospitals but lack suitable accommodation to continue their recovery. This includes people who are homeless, have a history of drug/alcohol misuse, people who have no recourse to public funds or issues with their immigration status, those fleeing domestic violence, or people with mobility issues. We appoint Embedded Housing Workers (see service above) into the hospitals to upskill medical staff and social workers about the complexities of housing these patients.

Tenancy Ready (Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire) - This project is to help tenants in Oxfordshire understand what the expectations are around managing and sustaining a tenancy either through social housing or the private sector. Renting a home of your own can be both exciting and a bit scary, but it can work really well. The key is to prepare for it properly. This means learning how to find somewhere you can afford, what your rights and responsibilities are and how to manage your money. This course helps you find out everything you need to know.

Tenancy Sustainment Service (Buckinghamshire) - Our Tenancy Sustainment Service provides life tools and support to rough sleepers in Buckinghamshire, so they can live independently in their own rented home. We will help clients manage their money – rental payments, pay bills, budgeting, access to benefits, training, routes to employment, and access to support for mental and physical health issues.

Mental Health

Mental Health Support Service (Oxfordshire) - As part of the Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership we provide focussed support for between 6 to 24 months to help people with severe and enduring mental health issues move forward. Offering support around housing, benefits and social inclusion, this supports recovery and enables the clients to live more independently. Some of the team are embedded in the Adult Mental Health Teams to identify and support those patients who present with housing needs straight away.

Mental Health Support Service (Milton Keynes) - We offer housing-related support to help clients with mental health needs to avoid homelessness or to sustain a tenancy and maintain their independence. It's a flexible service, which will meet with clients in the local community or in their home. Support moves with them wherever they go and the service complements and works in partnership with any statutory or voluntary agency where our support cannot wholly meet the needs of the individual. 'Windrush' is also part of this service – independent supported accommodation for clients with Autism.

Out of Hospital (Oxfordshire) - Our specialist support workers partner with a multi-disciplinary team of psychiatrists, social workers, and housing officers to support people with complex mental health who are homeless (or at risk of homelessness). They work to help people to move on from hospital to settled accommodation and prevent them returning to hospital in the future by solving housing and other linked issues to give them increased stability.

Prevention Matters (Buckinghamshire) - Prevention Matters supports people over the age of 18 who are struggling to remain independent in their own home, having difficulty getting out and about, recovering from an illness or feeling lonely, isolated or anxious. The Support Workers help them to regain their confidence and maintain their independence.

SafeHaven+ (Buckinghamshire) - Working alongside Buckinghamshire Mind, Citizens Advice Bucks, Oasis Partnership and Adult Mental Health Teams, this service provides support to adults with mental health issues and potentially complex needs. The project aims to avoid crisis and admission to hospital and improve overall mental health and wellbeing. Connection Support's role is to provide intensive support specifically related to housing.

Family Support

Direct Payment Support Services (Milton Keynes) - In some circumstances, social or health care users can be given money in the form of a Direct Payment from their local authority to commission their own services which enables disabled people to tailor their own care arrangements that suit their unique circumstances and lifestyle. Where local authorities may tend to offer, for example access to a day centre, individuals might prefer to meet friends for lunch, to go fishing, or attend a local gym, but need support to do so. This service supports the person to employ a carer or personal assistant directly by helping to find suitably qualified employees, providing comprehensive employment advice and offering a Payroll Service to process payslips and administrate HMRC responsibilities on the employer's behalf.

Direct Payment Support Services (Oxfordshire) - Our Direct Payment and Employment Support Service in Oxfordshire works alongside people receiving a Direct Payment to provide information, advice and support in all aspects of using a Direct Payment and becoming an employer of personal assistants (PAs).

Thrive (Buckinghamshire) - Thrive provides support to families across Buckinghamshire. Delivered by a team of Family Liaison Workers, and supported by volunteer parenting mentors, peer mentors and family advocates, we work alongside families, supporting, encouraging and empowering them to build their skills, confidence, and parental wellbeing to create a stable positive environment for their children. We offer a tailored programme of support to each family, based on listening to their social, emotional, educational and health needs which include, but are not limited to, substance dependency, domestic violence, learning difficulties, social exclusion, and lack of parenting skills.

Young People

HITPad (Buckinghamshire) – Bringing together two long-standing projects - the Housing Interaction Trust (HIT) and Padstones – we support young people (aged 16–25) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to find safe accommodation, learn to live independently, and rebuild family relationships. We provide dedicated accommodation for those with nowhere else to go, offering a safe and stable environment where they can begin to move forward. Alongside housing, each young person is paired with a key worker for one-to-one support. Our team helps them develop essential life skills, from budgeting and running a home to maintaining their wellbeing and preparing for independent living. We also offer support with personal challenges, including repairing family relationships and managing emotional health. This service ended in September 2024.

Young People's Supported Accommodation (Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire) - YPSA provides supported accommodation in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire for young people (aged 16-25 years) leaving care. Young people referred to us by Oxfordshire County Council are provided with their own accommodation and regular visits from a Support Worker to help them gain confidence in living independently.

Refugee Resettlement

Homes for Ukraine (Oxfordshire) – Delivered in collaboration with [Refugee Resource](#), this service is dedicated to helping displaced Ukrainians who have come to the UK under the Government's [Homes for Ukraine scheme](#), helping them to gain the skills and confidence they need to live independently in the UK.

No Recourse to Public Funds (Buckinghamshire) - Providing support to people experiencing homelessness in Buckinghamshire who do not have access to state-funded benefits and housing. People in this situation are often not allowed to work, neither are they eligible for benefits, nor allowed to use public services except for basic health care. This leaves them at high risk of abuse and exploitation. The aim is to help people get their lives back on track. We help them access the support & advice they need to resolve their immigration status. This is often a very difficult process which can take several years.

No Recourse to Public Funds (Oxfordshire) - Helping people experiencing homelessness in Oxfordshire who have lost or don't have access to state-funded benefits and housing. This project is funded by the [Oxfordshire Homeless Movement](#), and the aim is to provide tailored support to allow these people to become self-sufficient and take practical steps to rebuild their lives. We work in partnership with [Asylum Welcome](#) to help this group of people move on from the trauma of homelessness. Working with local housing association SOHA and Edge Housing, we can offer these clients dignified accommodation, whilst they receive help and advice to resolve any legal matters including their immigration status and help them to get their lives back on track.

Refugee Resettlement (Oxfordshire) - This service is for refugees resettling in the UK as part of Government's sponsored resettlement schemes. The families supported live in the Cherwell District area of Oxfordshire, and we provide a range of emotional and practical support to help the families settle into everyday life. The team supports families mostly coming from the Middle East and Africa to manage the transition from living in camps and unsettled accommodation to making a home in Oxfordshire and helps them to adapt to different social norms and legal frameworks. We work with them through the whole process from airport pick up (or accompanied arrival to the property) to the point they can live independently and manage their tenancy without the need for support. The team connects the families to health services and mental health support, schools, English language classes, employment and volunteering opportunities and local community groups. Working alongside volunteers, they also provide information about culture and life in Britain to enable them to make those steps towards living a settled life in the UK.