

Elmore
Community
Services



Annual Report

April 2014 – March 2015

www.elmorecommunityservices.org.uk

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Who we are

Elmore Community Services (Elmore) is a registered charity governed by a Board of Directors. It provides high quality services for marginalised and disenfranchised people in Oxfordshire. Elmore was established in 1989 after an Oxford research project studied the weaknesses of service provision for people deemed "difficult to place". The result was a three-year pilot project for people who have complex needs. Since then, Elmore has grown and developed innovative solutions to support clients with a wide range of needs, including personality disorders, mental health problems, learning disabilities, offending behaviour, anti-social behaviour, teenage pregnancy and child protection, homelessness, sex working, drug and alcohol problems, and relationship breakdown.

Our mission

Elmore Community Services aims to work with people with complex needs, including mental health problems, who do not easily fit into existing service provision or who need support to access services in their local community. We aim to identify gaps and barriers in current provision and to create and implement models of working that address these issues. We work directly with people on the margins of society and aim to enable such individuals to enjoy their basic rights.



The year at Elmore

This year has been another difficult year for the sector, with public sector funding continuing to shrink, uncertainty over contracts, and the consequent difficulty in anticipating how our work with vulnerable people might be funded. It has not only been difficult for us as a charity but also difficult for our clients, as the pressure on their day-to-day existence becomes increasingly tough.

We are grateful to all our funders, without whom the world for our clients would be tougher still. The reason we are able to continue to provide the excellent service that we do, always striving to go one step further to support our clients, is because our funders have confidence in our ability to provide that support. We enable our clients to lead better lives and hit crisis points less often, and thereby reduce the strain on already over-stretched public services.

In a difficult financial climate we must be innovative in finding new ways of attracting funding for particular initiatives, and we must at the same time adopt a robust approach to ensure that we are performing our legal duties, fulfilling our responsibilities, and maintaining a good reputation.

In true Elmore spirit we got stuck into a variety of different projects, looking, learning and adapting our work to make a positive impact on people's lives.

We looked at new ways of working:

- We explored the possibility of a merger with another charity and following a thought provoking time, we ended the year in a consortium agreement with them. We also developed a joint project with them in Buckinghamshire, working with people with complex mental health needs to stabilise their lives and thereby reduce their demands on crisis services;
- We developed the new role of Independent Trauma Adviser to work alongside Thames Valley Police to identify and support victims of exploitation and trafficking. Towards the end of the year, we were delighted to be awarded further funding to develop this work including a research element and plans to develop a best practice toolkit to roll out to other forces across the country;

We enable our clients to lead better lives and hit crisis points less often, and thereby reduce the strain on already over-stretched public services

- We ran a project for the Ministry of Justice on working with offenders with communication difficulties, and it had a very positive independent evaluation;
- We bid for and won new work with Turning Point in Oxfordshire and are now developing a new substance misuse service, working with clients who are hard to reach and supporting them to engage with drug and alcohol services;

By the end of the year, we had entered into a ground-breaking Mental Health Partnership with Oxford Health and four other third sector agencies: Restore, Response, Mind and Connection, to provide mental health services across Oxfordshire.

As we developed new services, new partnerships and new ways of working, our commitment to research and evaluation remained strong. We invested in an independent evaluation of our service and progressed the recommendations. This positive evaluation confirmed our success in supporting people with multiple and complex needs to move from chaotic high risk circumstances towards sustained stability and through cost-benefit analysis, further suggested that Elmore contributes to making a minimum average public saving of £15,520 per client per year.

There's no doubt that it was a difficult year for our staff, faced with uncertainty about future contracts and the possibility of a merger with another charity... but throughout the year they carried on with a first class job. We must especially thank our three team managers, Simon, Liz and Adrian, who, between them, performed the functions of CEO to keep the organisation on an even keel through turbulent times, while we explored the best options for the future and held off appointing a CEO whilst we did so. We also thank Huseyin Djemil for his fantastic work with our team managers and Alice Copping who provided excellent support as interim CEO for 4 months. As for the future, Elmore will need to be dynamic and adaptable, ready to respond flexibly to risks and opportunities. I am confident that with our expert staff, our new CEO who joins in April 2015, and volunteers; and with the commitment and expertise of our trustees, old and new, we will continue to be at the forefront of developments to transform the lives of vulnerable people.



Patricia Wooding

Chair, Elmore Community Services

Elmore contributes to making a minimum average public saving of £15,520 per client

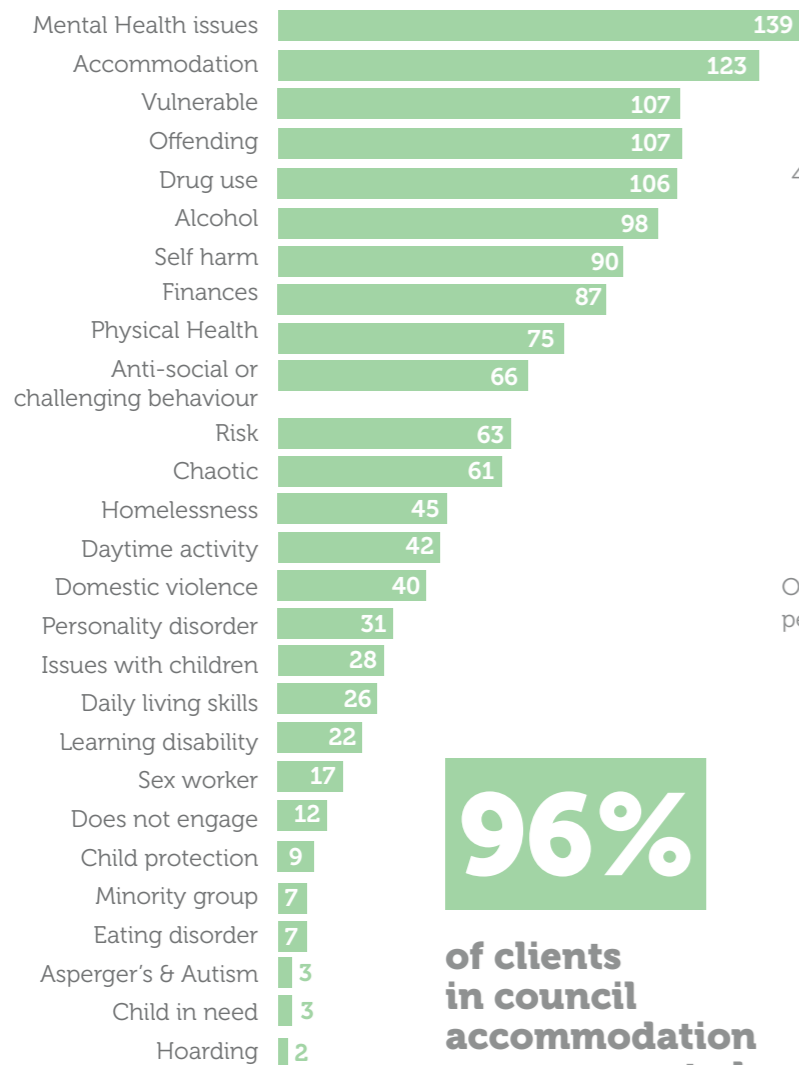
Building trust

The Complex Needs Service

Elmore supports people with multiple, complex needs, including problems with accommodation, physical and mental health, drug and alcohol misuse, self-harm, offending behaviour and child protection issues.

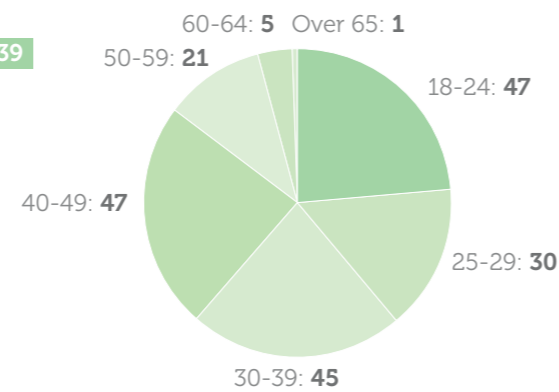
Many of our clients have chaotic lives and suffer from emotional difficulties and stress. Elmore's flexible approach enables us to engage with people who may have slipped through the net provided by mainstream services, and to make a positive and lasting impact on their lives. We enable our clients to stabilise their lives by linking them with the local services they need, such as health, housing and legal services. We also provide emotional support – helping individuals in crisis to gain self-confidence and independence, and working with them for as long as they need us.

Breakdown of needs (of 198 clients)

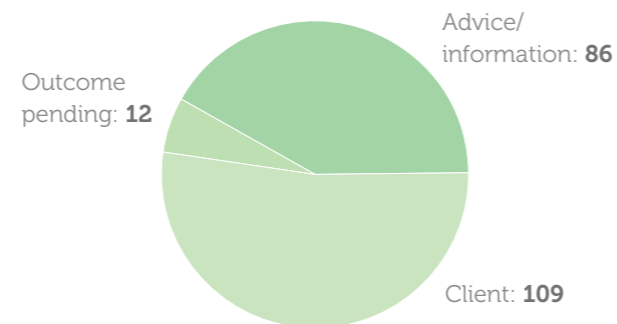


96%
of clients in council accommodation were supported to sustain their tenancies

Age range of clients



Outcome of referrals (from 207 referrals)



"I am so grateful you helped me with my arrears. I hope to be a great client to the service and progress with my workers."

Steven's story

When Steven was referred to Elmore he was having tests on his stomach, as he had lost five stone in the previous year due to not eating. Prior to this, his only support had been clinical, with only regular contact from his community psychiatric nurse (CPN).

Steven had a severe phobia that he would soil himself in public, which led to him having anxiety about using public toilets; this got to the point where he could only go to the toilet in his own home. It was clear that this was the root cause of his problem with eating. He suffered constantly with stomach pains and anxiety, and took antidepressants daily. He had even lost friends because of the situation. Steven said that he felt fine in himself and was not depressed, although this was later established not to be entirely accurate.

Since engaging with Elmore, Steven has made some remarkable progress. He no longer has support from his CPN, and he says that he prefers the more holistic approach offered by Elmore.

Steven has begun to put on weight and gain in confidence. This has in turn led to renewed friendship



Since engaging with Elmore, Steven has made some remarkable progress...

circles. He recently took and passed his driving test. The psychological barriers are still there but diminished. He regularly goes out with his friends and stays overnight in hotels – this is something

that would have been unthinkable to him eighteen months ago.

Steven has also been volunteering with the Blue Cross and has started an online course in film making.

The Complex Needs Service is funded by:

Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council

Reaching out

"Thank you very much for all you have done for me. It's really appreciated."

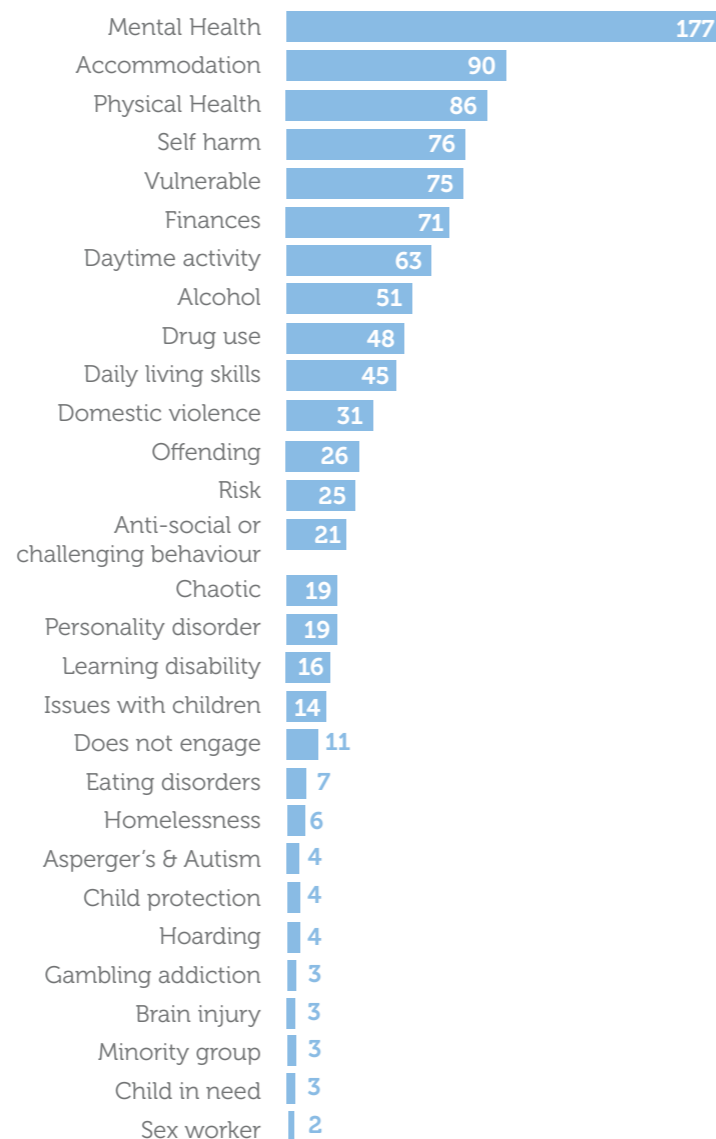
The Mental Health Team

Mental health issues such as depression or social anxiety can make it very difficult for people to seek help. We give our clients the long-term practical and emotional support and access to specialist services that can help them improve their lives.

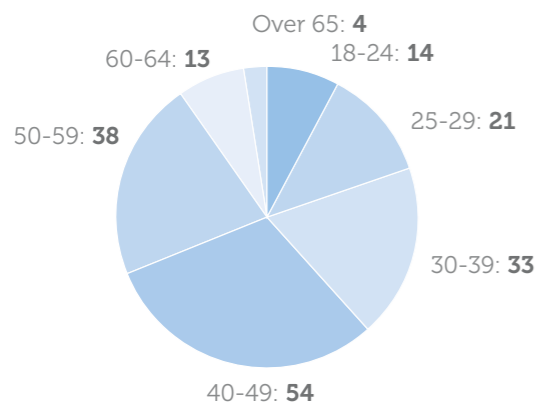
Elmore's team approach means we can pool our skills and experience to offer clients a wide range of support to help their recovery. This includes practical help with housing, benefits, bills and debts, or to deal with police or solicitors. We also help our clients gain access to health care and other services, including specialist counselling. And we offer one-to-one emotional support, meeting clients wherever they feel most comfortable, be it at home, at a café or in the park. Our "traffic light" system enables us to highlight concerns and to ensure that the whole team is alerted when we feel a client is at risk.

Breakdown of needs

(of 177 clients)

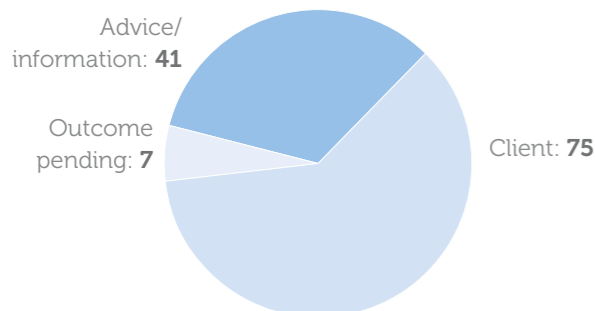


Age range of clients



Outcome of referrals

(from 123 referrals)



92%

of supported clients were in stable accommodation for the whole of this year

Wendy's story

The following case study has been written by Wendy...

The Adult NHS Mental Health Team referred me to Elmore. I was suffering from profound anxiety after being bullied at work. I was finding it difficult to leave my house, even to go out into my own garden.

My arms and legs would not work, and I would shake and sweat and put my arms up to guard my head. I found it hard to breathe and it felt like I was being attacked. It was like I was stuck in a lift and there was no door to get out. The only place I felt safe was my bed.

I didn't want for my sons to see me like that. I have always been strong for them, and wanted things to be right. One of my sons was getting married and I wanted desperately to be there.

Together with my Elmore worker, I practised going out, and she also taught me relaxation techniques. We gradually met further away from my home, and eventually I started to return by myself. We practised ordering coffee in cafés, and going to shops. I used to buy myself a treat from the shop as a reward to take back home. I was referred to counselling by the mental



"Elmore has supported me back to independence."

health team, and went to Mind to slowly get more comfortable being around other people.

My neighbour was moving house. We used to be good friends and it upset me that I wouldn't see her before she left. I used to hide if she came to the door, and she stopped coming as often. My Elmore worker suggested that I wrote her a letter, and we composed and sent it together. I received a nice letter back and we started seeing each other again.

After two years of absence, I was under pressure to return to work, or it

was made clear I would lose my job. My Elmore worker referred me to an employment coach at Restore, and I was represented by an advocate. I am now back at work and gradually building up my hours.

I managed to go to my son's wedding, which meant the world to me. I have now even started looking forward to going out. I still find work challenging, but my Elmore workers have given me strength. I feel I am not alone, and it is comforting to think that they understand and are only a phone call away. **Elmore has supported**

The service is funded by: Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Bridging the gap

The Anti-social Behaviour Team

This team worked with people with complex and multiple support needs who were involved in anti-social behaviour; the approach provided a crucial bridge between enforcement and support. This service ran until June 2014.

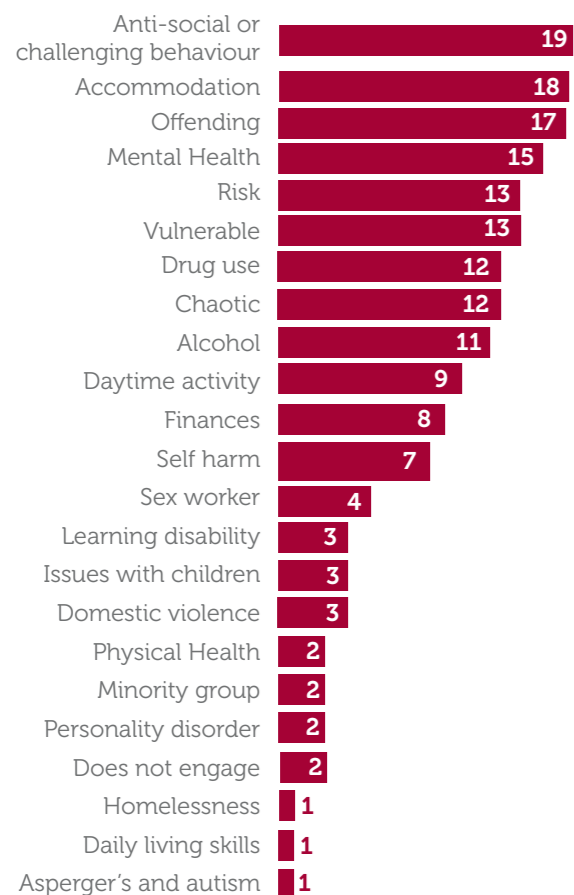
Elmore provided intensive support to people involved in anti-social behaviour (ASB) processes, including early identification and warning. The team worked with people who had Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs), Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), and Criminal Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (CrASBOs). We also worked with people who were in prison for breaching their orders. The service provided advice and information, accompanied clients to meetings if needed, and acted as an advocate on their behalf in various setting – include custody and courts. The team aimed to enable clients to recognise the patterns of their behaviour and its impact on others, while also supporting them to develop self-management skills. A holistic approach was employed, with support offered to cover wider issues in clients' lives, such as by connecting them up with statutory health care services or other appropriate resources.

84%

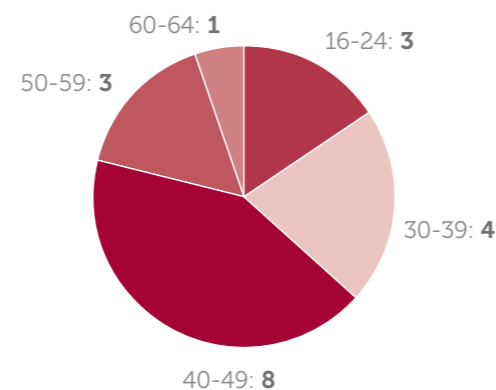
of clients were accepting support to address their anti-social behaviours when the project ended

Breakdown of needs

(of 19 clients)



Age range of clients



"Thank you for all you have done and being there for me over the years. You are so special in so many ways. You make the world a better place and I'm proud to have you in my life."

Katie's story

When Katie first referred herself to Elmore, she was homeless and walking the streets with black bags.

She had been raised in children's homes after been sexually abused as a child, and had been a class A drug user and sex worker since her teens. Katie had served time in prison, and had never had a legal job. Katie was using crack daily and was on a methadone script, but was still using heroin on top of this. She was ambivalent about giving up drugs, and had never experienced adult life without them. The police had warned her that she was at risk of getting an ASBO because of her sex-working.



© Igor Skrbic / istockphoto.com

Katie referred herself to Elmore hoping for help to find housing. However, her life was chaotic; she had no address and never managed to hold onto a mobile phone for very long. From time to time her worker managed to get messages to her, or just came across her by chance in the community. Time and again she expressed how much she needed help and promised to come to appointments, but then failed to turn up. Katie missed six assessment appointments in total before finally meeting with a worker.

Katie was supported to sort out her benefits, and began to talk about reducing her drug use.

Katie's engagement continued to be sporadic. When she did engage, she was often heavily under the influence of drugs and alcohol. She was supported to sort out her benefits, and began to talk about reducing her drug use. Her worker began to talk to her about going into a residential detox unit. After a great deal of work, she agreed to this. While she was there, her

worker continued to visit her and take her to medical appointments.

Katie has now not used drugs or drunk alcohol for a year, and is no longer sex working. Her physical health has improved greatly, and she is waiting for a course of treatment for Hepatitis C. She also volunteers in a medical study looking at depression.

Model used for representation purposes only and to preserve anonymity.

The service was funded by: Lankelly Chase Foundation, Henry Smith Charity and Oxford City Council

Communication support

MOJ Project

In May 2014, Elmore was commissioned and funded by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) National Offender Management Service (NOMS) to carry out an 'improving outcomes for offenders with communication difficulties' project.

The project aimed to work with offenders with communication difficulties (including hearing/sight impairments, acquired brain injuries, and learning difficulties) to improve their communication experiences with probation staff. This included assessing their communication needs, making referrals to specialist services if appropriate, and/or doing direct work with them (including using visual aids).

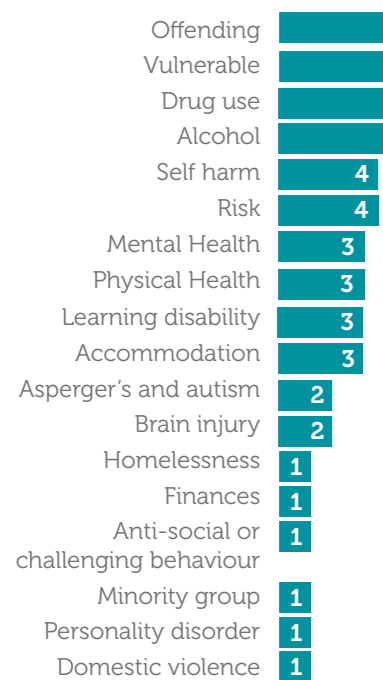
While this was a small cohort, a small evaluation and ran over a short time period, there were some tangible and positive results for some clients and probation staff, including a perception (by clients) of reduced re-offending and improved engagement with services and support networks. There was also a positive shift in the relationship between some clients and their probation workers.

The project ran to March '15. As a final piece of work, a handbook was produced which detailed all the specialist communication resources accessed during the life of the project – this was shared with probation services.

"Left on my own I wouldn't make it – she's propelling me. It's a different relationship, she's on my side, she spends as much time with me as I need."

Breakdown of needs

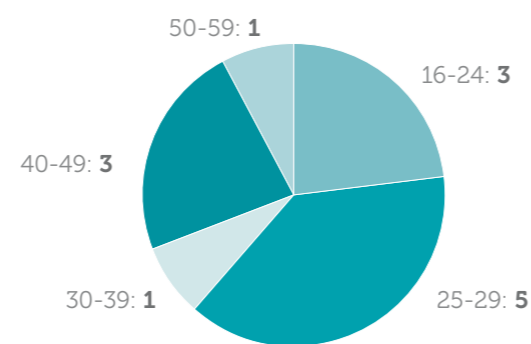
(of 13 clients)



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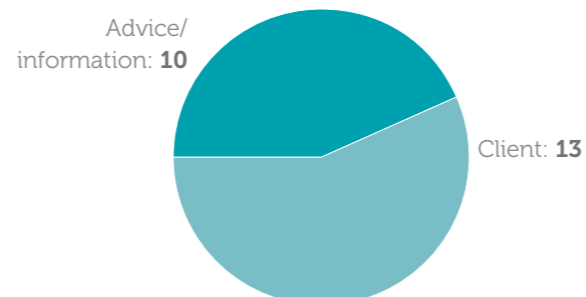
number of individuals supported by the project recalled to prison

Age range of clients



Outcome of referrals

(from 23 referrals)



Toby's story

Toby was referred to the MOJ project by his probation worker. He had received a lengthy custodial sentence for drug-related offences, but shortly before going to prison he suffered a massive stroke. This had adverse effects on his physical, cognitive, and emotional functioning. Despite this, Toby was able to make positive steps towards his recovery while in prison by fully committing to a healthy lifestyle, and regularly doing all the exercises and activities he had been advised to do by his health specialists.

Despite the impact the stroke had on Toby's cognition, he was able to communicate surprisingly well; however, his speech was often tangential and occasionally he struggled to find the correct word and pronunciation. It was difficult to ascertain whether some of the difficulties with communication he experienced were as a direct result of the stroke, or whether they existed prior to this. During his initial assessment by Elmore, Toby was able to identify several things which helped him communicate more effectively. These included being given important documents in large print (due to poor eyesight), meeting somewhere quiet to minimise distractions, avoiding overly-complicated language or jargon, and giving him plenty of time to respond to questions. Elmore worked with Toby on his release from prison to explore creative and effective ways of helping support his communication



During his initial assessment, Toby was able to identify several things which helped him communicate more effectively.

needs, and also worked with his probation worker to offer support and guidance on how to communicate with him more effectively. We were able to refer him to, and engage him with, a specialist agency for individuals who had suffered an acquired brain injury (ABI). We also linked him to local charity resources so that he could gain work experience. Toby was especially

interested in meeting other individuals who had suffered a stroke, as he had no-one in his immediate social group who understood the profound impact it had had on his life. At the end of Elmore's support, Toby was engaging well with both the ABI agency and the local charity, and had made many new friends in the community.

Model used for representation purposes only and to preserve anonymity.

Trauma intervention

Independent Trauma Advisor (ITA) Team

In collaboration with The Mustard Tree Foundation's RAHAB (Restoring all Hope and Belief) project, Elmore were successful in securing funding from the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for a 9-month, Independent Trauma Advisor (ITA) post. Additional funding was also provided by Oxford City Council (Oxford Safer Communities Partnership). The project went live on 1 August 2014.

The full-time Elmore post (split between 2 part-time workers) worked across Oxfordshire, while the RAHAB project worked across the Reading area. The main purpose of the ITA Post was to provide holistic support and crisis intervention after traumatic events to victims of sexual exploitation or human trafficking.

In the four months up to December 2014, the Oxford ITA team had completed 111 'victim identification checks', and provided support to victims during two police operations. They had given immediate emotional and practical support to 24 victims of modern day slavery, including victims of sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced labour, bondage debt and criminal exploitation. They had also referred three victims to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), of which two were accepted and returned home.

At the end of the year, a proposal was prepared and put to the PCC to continue this work, which included developing the service with an additional research and training element. An independent evaluation of the project going forward was included with the proposal, and we were delighted when further funding was approved.

"Just wanted to tell you thanks so so much for all that you have done, and are still doing for me. I am so grateful and thank you all. You should be called the wonder team. Much love to you all."

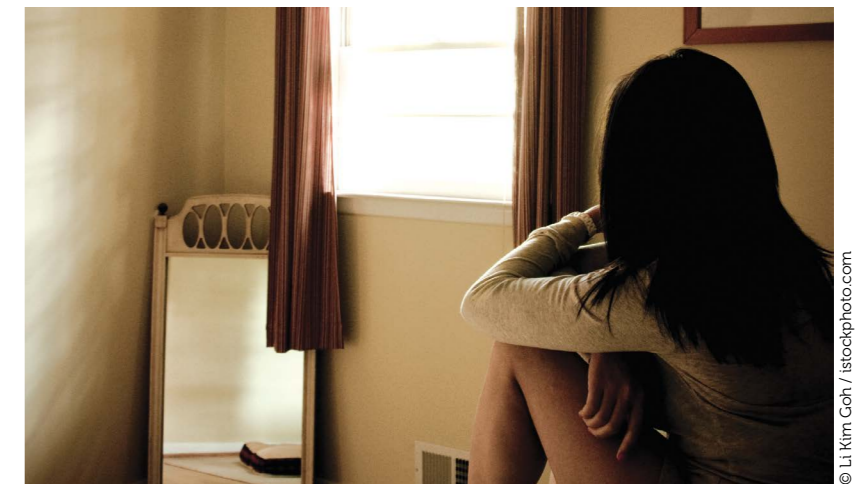


Naomi's story

At 15, Naomi was placed in care after being sexually exploited. She was then moved to another city, but was then exploited by a group of local men, and also a male care worker. In July 2014, after returning to Oxford aged 18, further exploitation began, instigated by a local man who Naomi explained was "nice to her", bought her alcohol and drugs, and on occasion had given her money. Each weekend, this man drove her to other cities, where she was sexually exploited by multiple men. She felt too scared to ask them to stop, was threatened with the distribution of compromising photographs, and even feared for her life.

Naomi was referred to Elmore's ITA Service by her social worker. We met with Naomi and completed the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) form, supporting her to meet with the police and only submitting the form when she was 100% sure that she was ready. We discussed ways of keeping herself safe, and possible ways of avoiding contact with the man who had been exploiting her. The NRM accepted that there were 'reasonable grounds' to suspect that she had been trafficked. Due to the level of risk that Naomi faced, a referral was made to a safe house in another city that had 24 hour support. Naomi spent a week at the safe house, but found the placement inappropriate, as the other residents spoke in the native language of her traffickers, which then triggered severe anxiety.

We met with her to discuss her housing situation, as she was reluctant to leave Oxford again. In the **absence of** safe house, she stayed with friends and family. We developed a strong safety



Sticking with the process... is testimony to her determination and resilience.

plan, maintained daily contact with her, and helped her to access housing, finances, and physical and mental health services.

We advocated on Naomi's behalf in making a homeless presentation at Oxford City Council, and following this it was decided that social services had a duty to house her. As Naomi had been severely abused on a weekly basis for five months, she was experiencing a range of health problems. We supported her to attend

GP appointments, made an urgent referral to mental health services for suspected Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and supported her to attend a full check-up at the sexual health clinic.

We have encouraged Naomi to take control back over her own life; in her own words, she feels now that "the best revenge is success". Sticking with the process, despite the numerous hurdles that have come her way, is testimony to her determination and resilience.



The Elmore Members' Association

In 2014, a group of Elmore clients, ex-clients and staff set up a group called the 'Elmore Members' Association' (EMA). The aim of the group is to put clients at the heart of decision making at Elmore, and to build the skills and confidence of members, with the intention of the group eventually becoming client-run.

The group meets at least every six weeks, but more often if there are things that need to be discussed. The first half of each meeting addresses business related to Elmore and the EMA, and the second half involves a therapeutic activity, which is agreed during the previous meeting (such as wreath making and mince pies at Christmas).



Highlights of the EMA so far have included:

- Members took part in interview panels for new staff, including the selection of the new Elmore CEO. The EMA did exercises to explore desirable qualities and develop questions, which were used in the interviews.
- An ex-client spoke at the Elmore 25-year celebration, and the group made a tree with comments about Elmore written on leaves.
- Members contributed to the independent evaluation of the Elmore Complex Needs team.

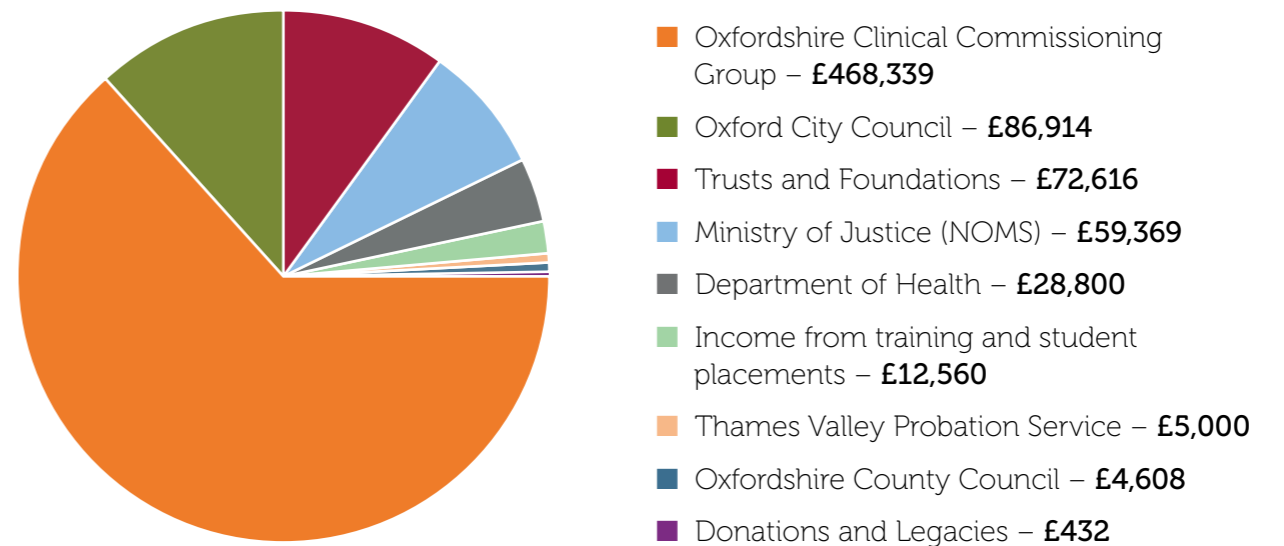
Over a series of meetings, the members agreed to start an 'EMA Fund', for which the EMA would fundraise for therapeutic activities for the group. Fundraising activities also have the added benefit of helping develop the confidence and skills of the members. For their first activity, the EMA have decided to organise a sponsored walk followed by a cream tea in November 2015. In order to attract sponsorship, they are also planning to hold a Halloween themed bake sale at Cowley Centre – baking and decorating cakes.

Other future plans include members to receive training, and start organising and chairing EMA meetings themselves. Members are keen to be involved more in key decisions, and would like to be trained so that they are better equipped to feedback on policy, and take part in official meetings.

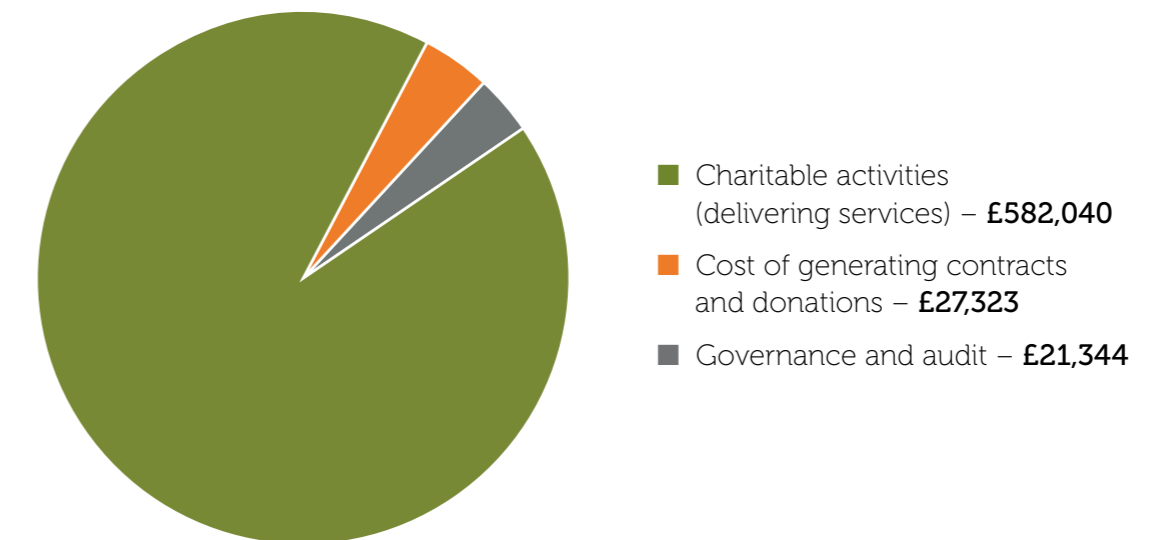
Finances

Total expenditure for the year was £630,707, a slight decrease of £1,698 compared to the previous year. Total income for the year was £738,638. The surplus was added to reserves and will be used to support an office move to more suitable premises and new IT to facilitate mobile working. After this expenditure, reserves sufficient to cover at least six months operating costs will remain.

Income: £738,638



Expenditure: £630,707



If you would like to see our detailed accounts, please email to info@elmorecommunityservices.org.uk or find them on the Charity Commission website.

Plans for the future

Elmore's strategy – Reaching the Unreachable and Changing Lives – describes our approach to meeting our organisational objectives for the period of 2014-2018.

It takes into account our specialist, creative approaches to working with individuals who are most marginalised from mainstream society, whilst appreciating the most difficult financial constraints and challenging external environments that this sector has faced in the past twenty five years. Our support can contribute to many outcomes, but particularly to help individuals have an improved level of wellbeing and recovery.

Our mission is to “reach the unreachable through providing flexible support in complex situations”.

We believe that we can do this through:

- Identifying gaps and barriers in current provision
- Creating and implementing models of working that address these issues
- Working directly with the people on the margins of society
- Promoting our clients' basic rights of society

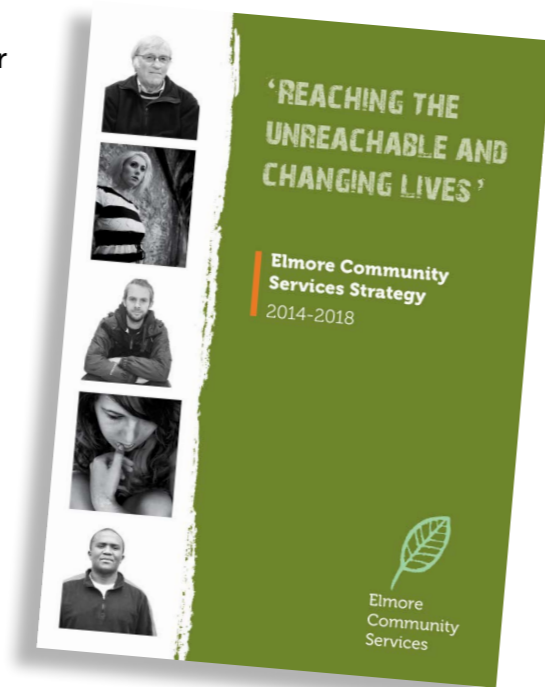
We do this as we really care about our clients.

Elmore's vision is based on its values and ethos and is most simply summarised as “reaching the unreachable and changing lives.” Elmore has developed five strategic objectives to build on our legacy and success of the last twenty five years. Our strategy will enable us to fulfil our vision.

The objectives are:

- Enhanced delivery
- People development
- Partnership working and influencing agendas
- Sustainability
- Innovation and the future

The full strategy can be found on our website: elmorecommunityservices.org.uk



We would like to thank everyone who has been involved with Elmore over the last 12 months. Without your support, generosity and kindness we would not be able to make huge differences to individuals who are living on the margins of society.

Our thanks goes to our funders:

- Henry Smith Charity
- Lankelly Chase Foundation
- Ministry of Justice
- Oxford City Council
- Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- Oxfordshire County Council
- Oxford Safer Communities Partnership
- St Michaels and All Saints Charity
- Thames Valley Probation
- Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner

To organisations that fund our clients essential items and much needed welfare in crisis situations:

- City of Oxford Charities
- OxFap
- Oxford Poverty Action Trust
- Oxford Sleep Out
- Response Giving
- St Michaels and All Saints Charity
- Stanton Ballard Charitable Trust
- Street Smart

A very big thank you to all our staff, volunteers, students and Trustees for their dedication and continued hard work in 2014/2015.

As part of the MOJ project, we commissioned an independent evaluator to speak to clients who had been supported by the project, as well as their probation workers. Here are some of the comments they made:

“Left on my own I wouldn't make it – she's propelling me. It's a different relationship, she's on my side, she spends as long as I need with me”

Client

“I can choose to see her – it maybe makes you want to instead of feeling you have to – and she's not always on my case”

Client

“It was great. They really supported my client to feel more confident within them self and how to access resources.”

Probation staff

“She helped (the client) reflect on the way difficulties were used to excuse behaviour – she held a mirror up to them better than I could because she understood the difficulties better.”

Probation staff

To protect the identities of our clients, all photos used in this report are for representative purposes only.

Elmore
Community
Services



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