

Annual Review

2015-16



Elmore
Community
Services



Flexible support for people in complex situations

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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

I am pleased to be presenting the 2015–16 Annual Report and Accounts for Elmore Community Services at the end of a very productive and successful year.

This has been a year of change with our new CEO, Tamsin Jewell, joining us and leading Elmore into three new contracts and also coordinating our move into new premises: she has taken responsibility for our development within the exciting Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership to provide co-ordinated and effective services, ensuring that we continue to reach out to those with complex needs. Many thanks, Tamsin, for providing top quality leadership to Elmore, demonstrating its values, and supporting our staff to have the skills, time, and flexibility to respond to the different needs of each of our clients.

We are very proud of our skilled teams, who really make a difference to peoples' lives through listening and engaging...

There are an increasing number of people experiencing multiple problems such as mental ill health, homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse, human trafficking, offending and family breakdown: without appropriate support, they would find themselves in a difficult place living in chaos and poverty. We are very proud of our skilled teams who really make a difference to these peoples' lives through listening and engaging, helping with practical concerns and building

relationships to improve outcomes. This year we have been committed to building the capability and skills of our staff through courses and qualifications, and have supported training in mental health 'clustering', Motivational Interviewing, and recovery. Within the Partnership we are leading on service user involvement which we believe is important to enable us to provide an informed and inclusive service to our clients.

This year we have been committed to building the capability and skills of our staff through courses and qualifications

We have been working on quality assurance and improvement planning and want to build on some of this work now to develop and share good practice. We will be looking to explore the evidence about what works for people with complex needs and hope to provide our commissioners with an improved understanding of their requirements. As we look ahead I should like to thank our CEO, staff, committed Board members, Commissioners and partners, without whom, the work we do would not be possible.



Patricia Wooding
Chair, Elmore Community Services

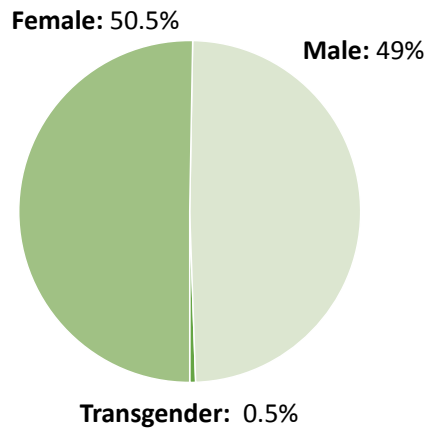
Elmore Community Services

Elmore has worked with many people this year, from a wide range of age groups and ethnicities.

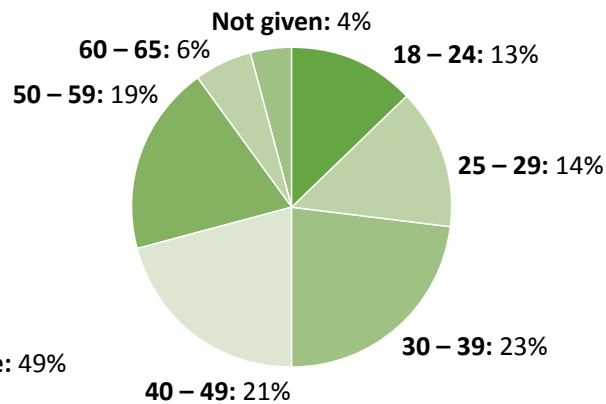
Number of clients

481

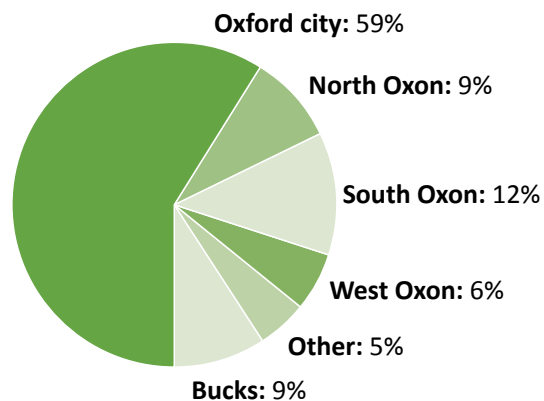
Gender



Age range



District of origin



Ethnicity



“From our first meeting up until our most recent one, you have gone above and beyond with your support, advice and patience, especially the time I had some kind of breakdown. You are a credit to yourselves, you should be so proud.”

Feedback from one of our Bucks Empower clients

Complex Needs Team

Lucy's story



Elmore supports people with multiple, complex needs, including mental health, substance use, offending, accommodation, and finances.

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 of 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.

Number of clients

190

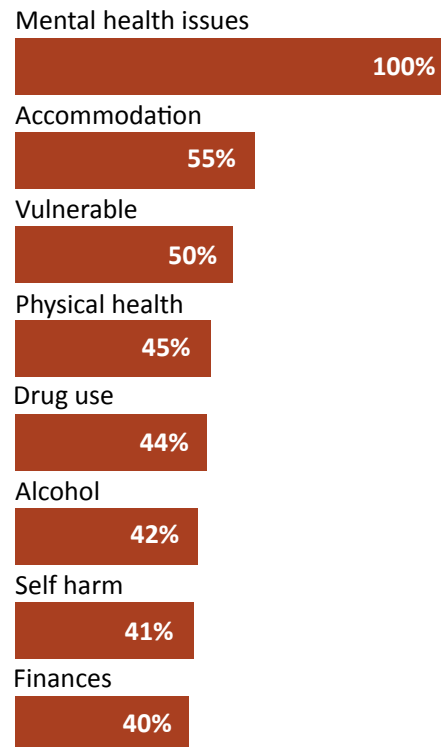
Number of referrals

184

Referral outcomes

98: Client
69: Advice/information
17: Outcome pending

Main needs



Lucy is a chronic alcoholic, with multiple physical and mental health issues, including cirrhosis of the liver, diabetes, post-traumatic stress disorder and schizophrenia. Due to her chaotic behaviour, Elmore were the only organisation willing and able to work with her.

Lucy's health was severely compromised by her drinking and poor control of her diabetes – she struggled with the management of her medication regime. Although eligible for Disability Living Allowance and Income Support, she had further difficulties in managing her finances, allowing a friend to 'look after' her money. This vulnerability extended to her living arrangements... she lived in a council bungalow which had been adapted to meet her physical health needs, but her home had been taken over by a group of exploitative individuals she mistakenly regarded as friends.

Elmore worked in close partnership with the police, mental health and medical teams in order to intervene. Lucy was admitted to hospital to undergo a residential detox, after which she returned to her home. The problems with other people in her home persisted, and her health deteriorated further, resulting in a stroke and re-admission to hospital. Although her deteriorating health was unfortunate, it supported a proposal by Elmore to get her case considered by the council panel who look at re-housing vulnerable people. Throughout this time, Elmore was actively engaged in encouraging Lucy to consider the benefits of alternative accommodation options.

Due to her chaotic behaviour, Elmore were the only organisation willing and able to work with her.

During her stay in hospital Elmore continued to advocate for Lucy, and led a strategy meeting regarding her on-going support needs. The unwelcome individuals were evicted from her home, and the locks were changed. Lucy began to present as medically fit, and was receiving physiotherapy for mobility issues, including some loss of use of her left hand. With encouragement and support from Elmore, Lucy agreed to move into temporary respite care from hospital, while a permanent change of address to a more suitable property was investigated.

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Mental Health Team

Jessica's story



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.

Our 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 healthcare and other services, including specialist counselling. We offer one-to-one emotional support, meeting clients wherever they feel most comfortable. Our "traffic light" system enables us to highlight concerns, ensuring that the whole team is alerted when we feel a client is at risk.

Number of clients

167

Number of referrals

116

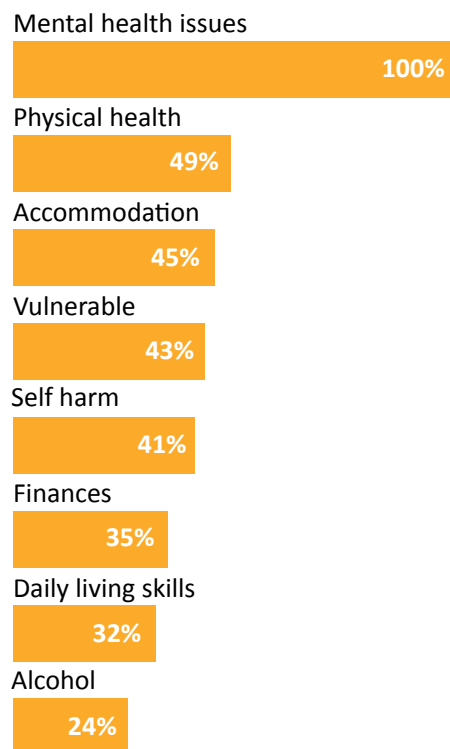
Referral outcomes

56: Client

49: Advice/information

11: Outcome pending

Main needs



Jessica explains the positive impact of her involvement with Elmore...

"I was referred to Elmore by my Independent Domestic Violence Advocate. I had separated from my partner, and was about to move house so that he couldn't find me. I was tearful all of the time, and suicidal – ending up in hospital after attempts to end my life. I had no friends, and following the death of my mother, to whom I was very close, I would spend all of my time alone in my flat.

"Elmore changed my life"

Elmore changed my life. At first I felt scared as I didn't know what to expect, but soon I formed a bond with my Elmore worker, calling her when I was feeling down. She would give me confidence, advice and a lot of support to get me through difficult situations. She would often help me to see the other other people's perspectives. She also helped me to find therapy, referring me for bereavement and sexual abuse counselling. I had issues with budgeting and spending too much money, and with Elmore's support, I switched my bills to direct debits, cancelled a catalogue subscription, and paid off my debts. We attended a budgeting course together, and I am now living within my means and regularly saving money.

I was also referred to local mental health charities, and was supported at initial meetings, and also if I felt too anxious to attend. I have learned knitting, which I love, and donate what I make to charity. I am supported by the Learning Disability Team, and Elmore has worked closely with them and helped me to advocate for myself in meetings. I have also been an active member of the Elmore Members' Association, and enjoy meeting people, and discussing issues together.

My life has changed since I started to work with Elmore. I have a new partner who is kind to me, and also a kitten (which Elmore helped me to find!) I have friends and activities to occupy my time, and through voluntary work I am able to give back. I feel that I know and trust Elmore workers, as they have always gone out of their way to help me. I have had the support that I needed, and they have always been at the end of the phone when I needed them."

iprogressman/istockphoto.com

Tenancy Sustainment Team

Jake's story



Elmore receives funding from Oxford City Council to work with vulnerable council residents to help them maintain their tenancies. This can include support around their mental health, but also practical matters such as helping them apply for (and stay on) the benefits they are entitled to. Elmore also attends a monthly council meeting which looks to identify and support individuals who are at risk of losing their tenancies.

Number of clients

19

Number of referrals

21

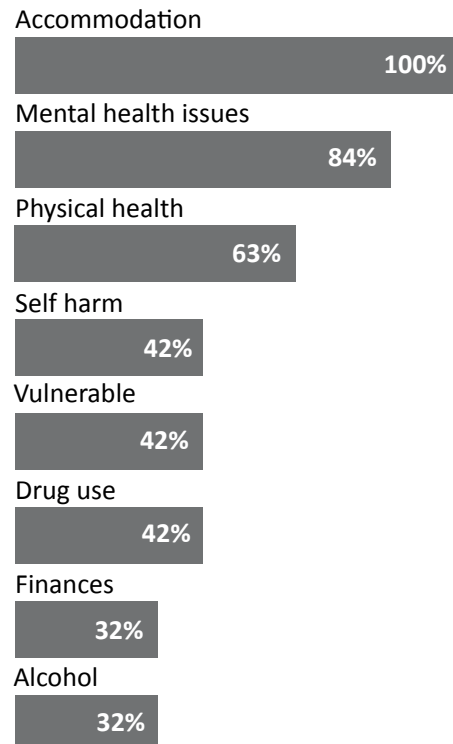
Referral outcomes

1: Advice/information

19: Client

1: Outcome pending

Main needs



Jake was referred to Elmore's tenancy sustainment team by his Oxford City Council tenancy sustainment officer at the point of potential eviction due to high rent arrears and failure to comply with a court rent default order.

At the time, Jake was experiencing poor mental wellbeing in addition to deteriorating chronic health problems which were impacting upon most aspects of his life. Shortly before being referred to Elmore, Jake lost his job, and was one of the first people in Oxfordshire to be put onto Universal Credit in 2015.

This change-over in benefit greatly impacted Jake's income: the new system was very difficult for him to navigate without support. As a result, he was without the income he was eligible for (standard allowance and housing payments) for several months which led to high rent arrears.

Over the first five months, Elmore worked intensively in partnership with both Jake and Oxford City Council to try and prevent eviction. Jake had historic issues with engaging and trusting people, therefore it was important that Elmore did not give up on him when he missed appointments, and focused on building a trusting relationship (whilst also addressing the immediate risk of eviction).

Elmore advocated for Jake when navigating the new Universal Credit system, which he found particularly difficult given his level of complex, interrelated issues. This resulted in a significant back payment of housing costs, Jake's rent being paid directly from Universal Credit to Oxford City Council (to prevent the issue from happening again), Jake receiving the correct benefits, and a court ordered repayment plan for the remaining arrears being agreed.

As a result of this support, Jake is no longer at immediate risk of losing his tenancy and ending up street homeless. Jake continues to pay off his rent arrears every month and is still working with Elmore on other parts of his life.

Elmore worked intensively in partnership with both Jake and Oxford City Council to try and prevent eviction

comejota/istockphoto.com

The Tenancy Sustainment team is funded by Oxford City Council.

Independent Trauma Advisor (ITA) Team and Adult Survivors of Child Sexual Exploitation Team

Our ITA team continued to address modern slavery this year.

They provided assistance to 58 victims of exploitation and trafficking, nine of whom chose to enter the National Referral Mechanism (a framework for identifying victims and ensuring they receive the appropriate support, including urgent transfer to a safe house). The project continued to refine the model of support, and to develop the pathways into support, in consultation with a wide range of agencies. We were pleased to be invited to join a new Exploitation and Trafficking subgroup of the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership, and to provide training to City Council and probation staff. With funding from Oxfordshire County Council we now also work with adult survivors of child sexual exploitation, who are often still enmeshed in the exploitative relationships that started in childhood, and dealing with the long-term consequences of severe and prolonged trauma.

Number of clients

18

Number of referrals

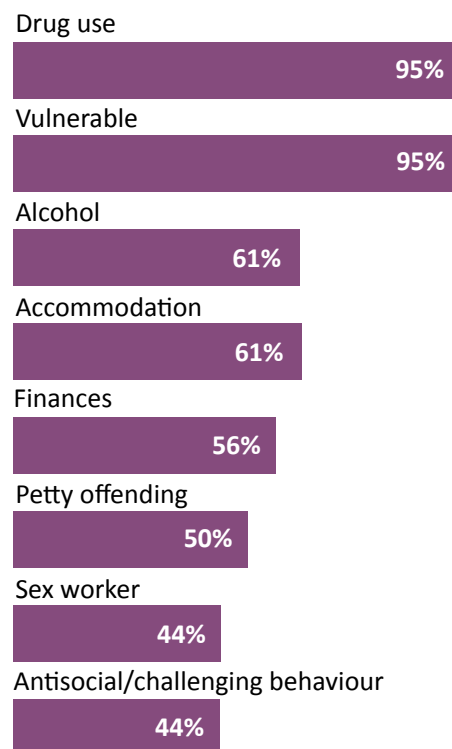
12

Referral outcomes

12: Client

The Independent Trauma Advisor Team is funded by the Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner. The Adult Survivors of Child Sexual Exploitation Team is funded by Oxfordshire County Council.

Main needs



Bob's story



Bob had suffered some of the worst abuse and exploitation we have ever known.

He had been subjected to threatened and actual physical violence; he was robbed of any money he had as soon as he received it; he was starved; he was deprived of sleep and rest; he was forced to commit crime and to suffer the consequences; he had to resort to begging, which completely destroyed his self-worth and dignity; he broke all ties with family members because he was ashamed of what he had become and because his abuser had threatened his family.

Bob agrees that he no longer needs our support

When Bob approached us for help, he was so ill he could barely walk. He was suffering from severe malnutrition and consequent stomach problems and muscle wastage. His mental health was atrocious, with high levels of anxiety and paranoia. We immediately removed him to a place of safety and referred him to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). He was quickly accepted and moved to a safe-house, which was not without its challenges, as his obvious vulnerability made him a target in that area. We continued to provide intensive support despite the considerable distance. Several weeks later, a decision was made on the area Bob wanted to settle in and we approached that housing authority with a request to accept him as priority homeless. The negotiation which ensued between ourselves, the new authority and his previous Housing Association was no easy task. He was accepted and given temporary supported accommodation while the housing officers looked for a suitable long-term tenancy. We were in daily contact throughout the entire proceedings and visited at least once a week. After several near misses and disappointments, he was matched to a house which was well worth the wait. We continued to support him for six months while he settled in and we linked him in to local support services.

Bob is now settled in an independent tenancy in a beautiful rural village. He has a dog which offers him company and security and his immediate neighbours are friendly and supportive. His physical health is excellent and his mental health is as good as it has ever been, due to having plenty of fresh air and exercise and a good diet consisting of home cooked fresh food. He has re-established contact with his family from whom he had been estranged for many years. We have recently closed the case as Bob agrees that he no longer needs our support.

Christine Glade/istockphoto.com

Assertive Outreach Substance Misuse Team

In April 2015, Elmore became a sub-contractor for the new drug and alcohol services across Oxfordshire, working with the prime provider, Turning Point.

Elmore has provided three Assertive Outreach Substance Misuse workers to work alongside Turning Point staff in Oxford and Banbury, with the aim of engaging complex clients (with substance use issues) with Turning Point services. This has included outreach work in various homeless shelters and hostels, and meeting people where they feel most comfortable (such as in cafes or GP practices). The Elmore support has been holistic and focused on engaging clients, including working with them on areas not always directly related to their substance use to build up a trusting relationship, such as supporting them in court and at Child Protection meetings. At the end of the year, 74% of clients were engaged with some form of treatment for their substance use.

Number of clients

62

Number of referrals

112

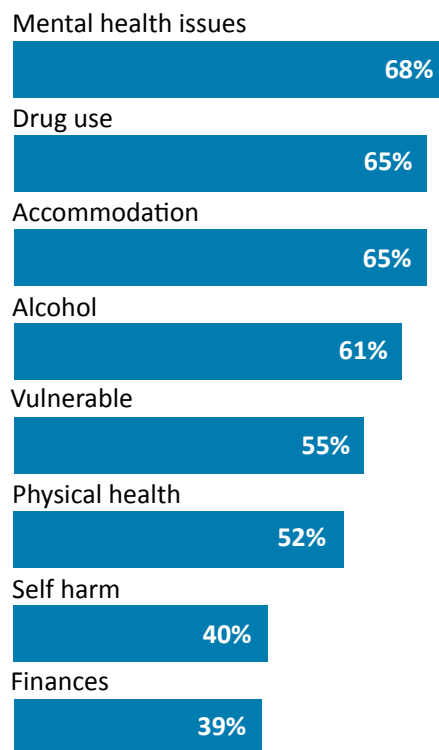
Referral outcomes

67: Client

36: Advice/information

9: Outcome pending

Main needs



Jimmy's story

When Elmore began working with Jimmy, he refused to engage at all. He was drinking very heavily and had abandoned places at three different homeless hostels.

There was a period where he was street homeless and using the drug and alcohol service building as a base. During this time, he was involved in an incident at the substance use service, where he spat at a visiting worker, and was subsequently asked not to attend the premises under the influence again. Jimmy stopped engaging with both Elmore and his substance worker, and disappeared.

He came to Elmore's attention again when he got a bed at a local night shelter. His Elmore worker began to meet him there, and he informed them that he was an alcoholic, and believed he would never get better. Through weekly contact, his Elmore worker spoke with him about why he felt he could not get better. Gradually, Jimmy started to reduce his alcohol intake, but was unable to engage with the substance abuse service again due to both shame and defiance about the spitting incident.

With support from Elmore and an alcohol nurse in the shelter, he stopped drinking. Jimmy managed this for a month, but then disappeared again. His Elmore worker negotiated an extension for keeping a place open for him at the shelter... he returned after two weeks and was given the next available bed. He has since moved to a next-stage hostel, and, at the time of writing, has been sober for 41 days. He is still unsure about going to 'relapse prevention' groups, but Elmore is working with him towards this goal.

With support from Elmore, and an alcohol nurse in the shelter, he stopped drinking



Awakened Eye/istockphoto.com

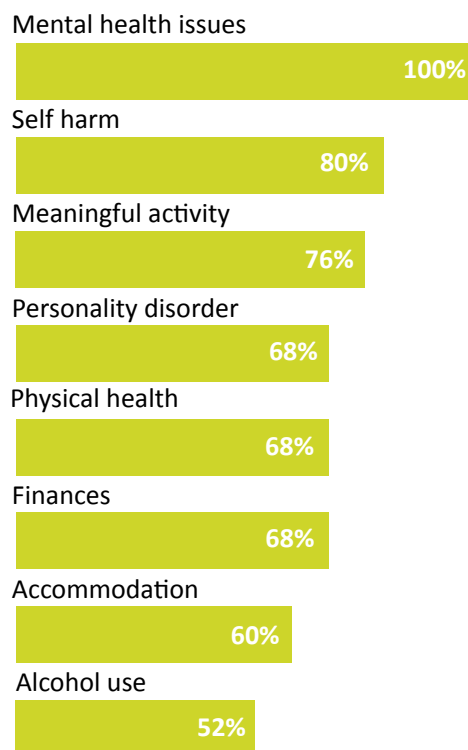


Bucks Empower is a service for people with mental health issues who have a particularly high reliance on emergency acute services (in particular, A&E) in Buckinghamshire. The pathway project was created to explore whether the provision of independent, intensive support can result in a reduced need for crisis intervention.

A partnership between Connection Floating Support, Elmore Community Services and Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, the service employs two Support Workers and a Development Manager. To be eligible for the service, there needs to be evidence that clients are frequently using emergency services, or were at risk of developing such usage.

Many clients presented with recurring patterns of self-destructive behaviour including self-harm and substance misuse. Many alluded to traumatic and unhappy experiences in childhood. The focus was to develop and support personal agency, within the client group. We offered practical support with housing, benefits, bills and debts that were often the triggers for self-harm and, ultimately, attendance at A&E. The service started in August 2015. After eight months of implementing the project, evidence is already emerging of decreased A&E admissions by Bucks Empower clients, and a reduction in use of ambulances and calls to the Police.

Main needs



Devansh was referred to Bucks Empower by the Psychiatric In-reach Liaison Service due to regular presentation at A&E, following cutting and overdoses.

He began working with Bucks Empower in August 2015, identifying the following as areas in which he needed support:

- To manage emotions
- To reduce his self harm
- To reduce his reliance on A&E
- To manage his finances and tenancy

Devansh met with Bucks Empower on a weekly basis and would often telephone the service between appointments, occasionally leaving out-of-hours messages if in a low mood. He brought bills, letters and other paperwork to his appointments – these had been identified as a stressor for him, and their arrival often prompted calls to emergency services. He was supported to set up standing orders to ensure his bills were paid, and to limit his anxiety in this area. He was also supported to set up payment plans to reduce or pay off his debts.

Devansh was supported at various meetings and appointments with doctors and Social Services regarding his estranged daughter. Bucks Empower raised a safeguarding alert following possible financial abuse which was followed up by police, and the issue was resolved.

Devansh spent time speaking to staff about his mood and things that caused him stress. He reported that he found it helpful to have someone to talk to when he was struggling, in order to manage his low mood and to prevent this from escalating. Devansh worked with staff to find ways of managing his low mood in ways that did not result in self harm or requiring hospital attention. He identified that phoning the Samaritans and Calm Zone could sometimes (but not always) be helpful, out of hours.

There has been a noticeable reduction in Devansh's self-harming behaviour and reliance on A&E – there were not any reported admissions from October 2015 while supported by the Bucks Empower team.

Devansh worked with staff to find ways of managing his low mood in ways that did not result in self harm

Involving clients

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 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.

The EMA has had a very successful year, and have been involved in a number of events. The EMA helped decorate cakes for a Halloween cake sale (see photo), and then sold these in the local shopping centre with Elmore staff. They took part in a sponsored walk from the office along the river (with one member raising £70 by themselves), and were also very involved in the office move. This included deciding on how to decorate the client meeting room, and choosing which photos to display. They have given constructive feedback on the look and content of the webpage, which has been taken on board, and have attended Oxford Health's Patient Experience workshops. A very busy year!



Developing social workers

Over the last year, Elmore has been working with Oxfordshire County Council to deliver the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) to some of our Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs).

The ASYE offers additional supervision and support to NQSWs with a reduction in caseload, to promote their development after qualifying as social workers. We had our first NQSW complete this programme in 2015, and currently have another three enrolled.

The following is a quote from the Local Authority ASYE Co-ordinator:

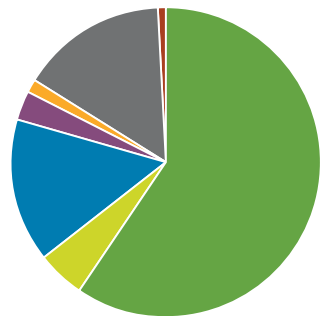
"Oxfordshire County Council has been offering an ASYE programme since March 2013. From the outset we have been working in partnership with Elmore to enable their newly qualified social workers to join our programme and Elmore have worked to ensure that their staff have an excellent first year in employment. This has been mutually beneficial. Elmore staff have the opportunity to access wider CPD opportunities with social workers from a variety of settings but the County's ASYE programme has also been enriched by their inclusion. The newly qualified social workers from Elmore are reflective and keen to learn and develop their practice. They are also extremely well supported in their first year with high quality reflective supervision. As a result they add an important additional perspective to discussions and workshops."

Elmore also offers its social work trained staff the opportunity to undertake training to become Practice Educators, and support student social workers throughout their placements. In this year, one member of staff completed PEPS1 (Practice Educator Professional Standards Stage 1), and started the final part of this training (PEPS2). Elmore continues to offer Social Work and Occupational Therapy placements, and is linked in with Bucks New University, Oxford Brookes University and Ruskin College.

Finances

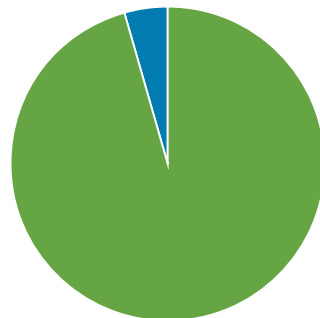
Total expenditure for the year was £741,242, an increase of £110,535 compared to the previous year. Total income was £786,217. The surplus of just under £45,000 was added to reserves and will be used according to Elmore's reserves policy, to safeguard our core services for as long as possible through periods of risk and uncertainty. Above a reserve level of six months operating costs, financial reserves may also be used for new project development, research and evaluation activities, and major investments where the benefits will be spread over a number of years.

Income in 2015-16: £786,217



- Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership: **£468,025**
- Oxford City Council: **£39,024**
- Thames Valley Police and Crime Commission: **£117,806**
- Secondment income: **£24,543**
- Oxfordshire County Council: **£11,877**
- Turning Point: **£120,000**
- Student placement and training income: **£4,942**

Expenditure in 2015-16: £741,242



- Charitable activities (delivering services): **£708,879**
- Cost of generating contracts, grants and legacies: **£32,363**

Our detailed accounts are publically available on the Charity Commission website, or you can email info@elmorecommunityservices.org.uk to request a copy.

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 a difference to individuals who are living on the margins of society.

In addition to the main funders shown in the Income pie chart, our thanks go to the following organisations and individuals who have funded our clients' essential items and much needed welfare in crisis situations:

- St Michael's and All Saints' Charities
- OxFAP – Oxford Friends Action on Poverty
- OxPAT – Oxford Poverty Action Trust
- City of Oxford Charities
- Stanton Ballard
- Response Giving
- Vicar's Relief Fund
- The family of Robert Elmore
- Dr Chris Lawes

We would also like to record a very big thank you to all our staff, volunteers, students and Trustees for their dedication and continued hard work in 2015/16.



To make it easier for people with mental health problems to get the best possible support when and where they need it, six mental health organisations from the NHS and charity

sector in Oxfordshire have formally come together (see www.omhp.org.uk). We have signed up to working much more closely with each other and with people who have mental health problems, to make it easier for people to get the best possible support when they need it.

- **Connection Floating Support:** www.connectionfs.org
- **Elmore Community Services:** www.elmorecommunityservices.org.uk
- **Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust:** www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk
- **Oxfordshire Mind:** www.mind.org.uk
- **Response:** www.response.org.uk
- **Restore:** www.restore.org.uk

Elmore
Community
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