

Elmore  
Community  
Services



# Annual Review

2016-17



*Flexible support for people in complex situations*

# Contents

Who we are .....	3
Our mission .....	3
Feedback .....	4
The year at Elmore .....	5
Elmore Community Services.....	6
Complex Needs Team .....	8
Mental Health Team .....	10
Tenancy Sustainment Team .....	12
Independent Trauma Advisor (ITA) Team .....	14
Assertive Outreach Substance Misuse Team.....	16
Adult Survivors of Child Sexual Exploitation Team .....	18
Involving clients .....	20
Developing staff.....	21
Finances.....	22
Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership .....	23

## 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.



*“Thank you for everything you’ve done for me”*

COMPLEX NEEDS TEAM CLIENT

*“Elmore and my support worker have been exceptional”*

MENTAL HEALTH TEAM CLIENT

*“You’ve gone above and beyond your duties”*

MENTAL HEALTH TEAM CLIENT

*“You’ve been amazing, a rock”*

MENTAL HEALTH TEAM CLIENT

*“My worker did her best in everything she did for me”*

MENTAL HEALTH TEAM CLIENT

*“Just wanted to say thank you for all your help and kindness over the years”*

MENTAL HEALTH TEAM CLIENT

## The year at Elmore

**This is my first year as Chair of Elmore and I am pleased to present our annual report on behalf of the team who worked so hard to make this another successful year for Elmore, despite the many challenges faced across the voluntary sector.**

*... another successful year for Elmore, despite the many challenges faced across the voluntary sector*

On arriving at Elmore in January, I have found a warm welcome, a dedicated and talented staff team, capably led by Tamsin our CEO, and have had the pleasure of learning more about the initiatives and services that make such a difference to the lives of their clients. Elmore, as I am discovering, certainly lives up to its well deserved reputation throughout the sector for quality client services. I trust that next year’s report will contain even more evidence and examples of the impact to the lives of those we serve.



**Lyn Waddington**  
Chair of Trustees  
Elmore Community Services

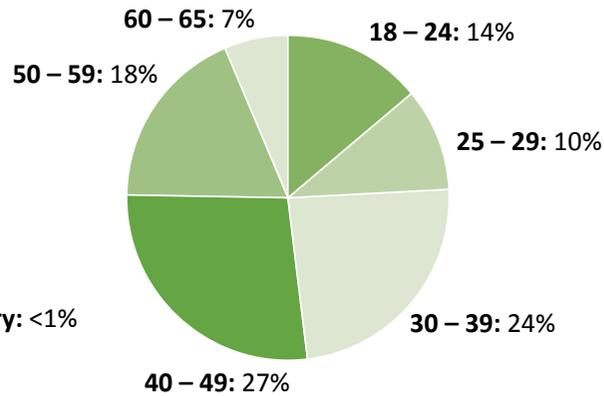
# Elmore Community Services

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

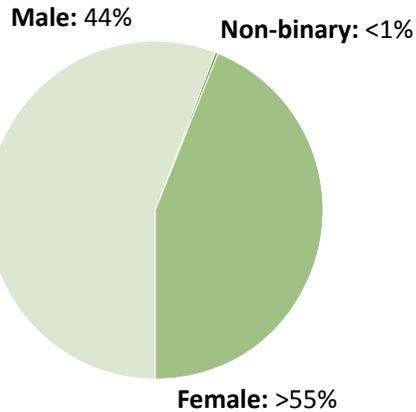
## Number of clients

396

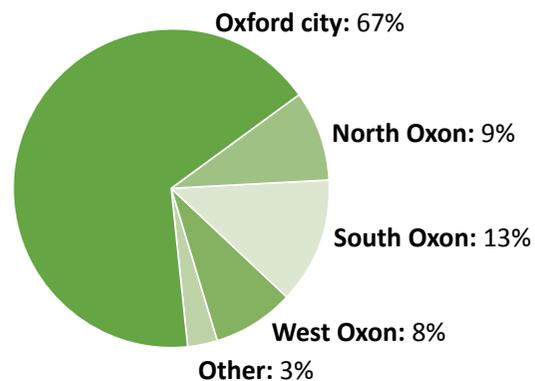
## Age range



## Gender



## District of origin



## Ethnicity



*“You guys truly saved my life, I think you and the rest of the team are amazing. THANK YOU!”*

ITA TEAM CLIENT



# Complex Needs Team

Elmore supports people with multiple, complex needs, including mental health issues, 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

188

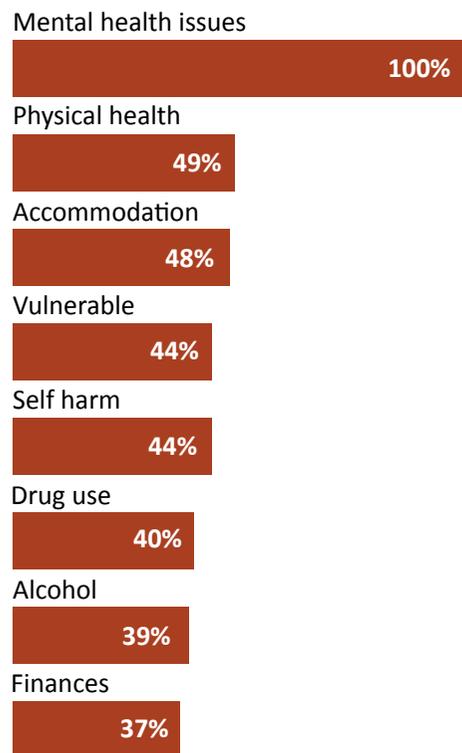
## Number of referrals

172

## Referral outcomes

89: Client
52: Advice/information
10: Elmore transfer
21: Outcome pending

## Main needs



# Jane's story



Jane was referred to Elmore's Complex Needs Team by her housing officer.

She was living with her partner who was violent and abusive. However, she reported that she was financially dependent on her partner and did not want to end the relationship. She was experiencing anxiety and depression and described a number of historical losses including divorce, the loss of her home and estrangement from her children. Her low mood was accentuated by her physical ill-health – she has lung disease and is unable to walk far. Her alcohol use had also become a problem.

At the point of referral, Jane was in full-time employment. However, she was frequently off work due to her physical illness and was subject to her employer's disciplinary process.

*We have enabled her to access the benefits to which she is entitled.*

We encouraged Jane to address the decline in her physical health. Recognising that she was no longer able to work due to reduced lung capacity was a real setback, and she grieved for the loss of this role. However, with support from Mind's *Benefits for Better Mental Health* service, we have enabled her to access the benefits to which she is entitled, including the full-rate Personal Independence Payment. We also supported her to access a Blue Badge Parking Permit to increase her independence. We are currently working with Jane to explore possible new activities to provide a sense of meaning and purpose to her life. These include voluntary work, and also exercise groups for those with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, to improve her sense of wellbeing and connect with others facing similar challenges.

We liaised with Thames Valley Police's Domestic Violence Unit to address Jane's issues with her partner. In addition to working with Elmore's Lead for Domestic Violence, she was introduced to the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service who identified possible options for supporting her. Jane remains a client, and we are continuing to work with her.

RFStock/istockphoto.com

# Mental Health Team

## Ted's story

**Mental health issues such as depression or social anxiety can make it very difficult for people to seek help. We support our clients to access specialist services and provide the longer-term practical and emotional support 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

135

### Number of referrals

99

### Referral outcomes

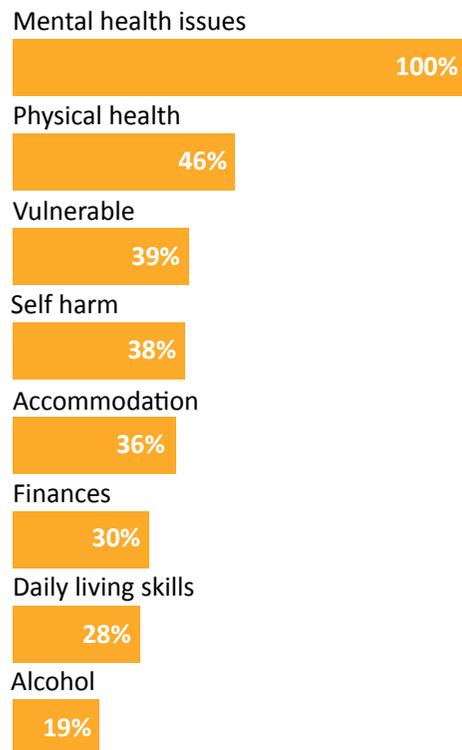
48: Client

34: Advice/information

13: Outcome pending

4: Elmore transfer

### Main needs



**Ted (pictured below, left, with his Elmore workers) was referred to Elmore by the Adult Mental Health Team. He could not leave his house due to crippling social anxiety, depression and OCD. He described “moving one step forward and three steps back” for years after coming out of prison, and lacked any hope for his future.**

Elmore worked consistently with Ted to build his self-worth, and to challenge his anxiety. Our first goal, agreed with Ted and achieved after several months, was to enable him to leave the house to walk his dog.

We supported him to apply for social housing, and secure his own flat (a development which had previously been avoided by other agencies who were concerned about potential risks). This was a turning point for Ted, and highlights the importance of secure and stable housing for clients' self-esteem, and their identity as a valued member of society.

Ted is now managing his own tenancy, and is leaving his flat regularly. He has made new friends, and has become a part of his local community. Most importantly, he has hope for his future. He has started Boxercise classes, with a view to gaining qualifications as his confidence builds.

*Elmore worked consistently with Ted to build his self-worth and to challenge his anxiety*



# Tenancy Sustainment Team

## Laura'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

25

#### Number of referrals

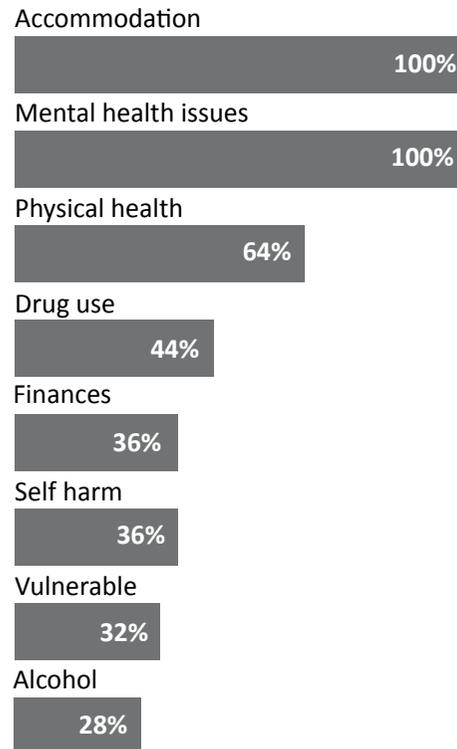
12

#### Referral outcomes

9: Client

3: Advice/information

#### Main needs



### Following concerns raised about the conditions of her home, and the associated risks this was posing to her young child, Laura was referred to Elmore by the Tenancy Sustainment Team at Oxford City Council.

When we started working with Laura, she was experiencing psychotic episodes and mood disturbances. She had no clear understanding of her mental health, and had been given various diagnoses over the course of her life. Children's Services had also become involved due to concerns regarding the safety of her daughter.

Laura appeared to have become disempowered and passive in her treatment. Elmore encouraged her to take more control of her situation. Laura's worker supported her to explore her triggers, patterns in mood, and also to discover what helped when she was experiencing distressing symptoms and was resorting to self-harm. Elmore advocated for Laura within the Mental Health Partnership, which led to a formal diagnosis and a new treatment plan which helped her to feel more in control of her mental health.

Laura and her worker created a bespoke wellbeing and crisis plan that was shared with all family members and agencies that worked with Laura. This enabled agencies to work in a consistent way with her. As a result Laura no longer relies on crisis teams, and says she now "feels more like my old self". She plays an active role in her local dance club (alongside her daughter), is looking to go back to work, and no longer needs support from Children's Services or the Tenancy Sustainment Team at Oxford City Council.

*Elmore supported Laura to take control of her situation*

FatCamera/istockphoto.com

# Independent Trauma Advisor (ITA) Team

## Justin's story



### Our ITA team continued to address modern slavery this year.

The term 'modern slavery' encompasses trafficking and slavery, and covers a whole range of exploitation types, many of which occur together. These include (but are not limited to): sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced labour and criminal exploitation, as well as forced begging, forced benefit fraud, forced marriage, and even organ removal. Over the year, the team provided advice and support to 22 victims. Some of them chose to enter the National Referral Mechanism (a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking or modern slavery to ensure they receive the appropriate support, including urgent transfer to a safe house in another part of the country) but most preferred to remain in their local area.

#### Number of clients

22

#### Number of referrals

16

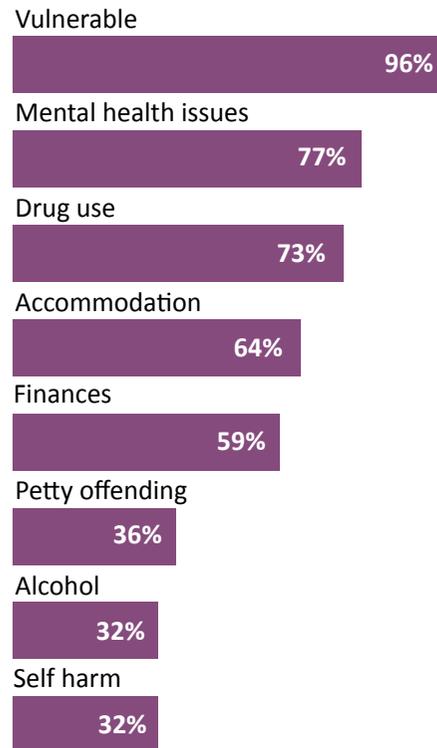
#### Referral outcomes

11: Client

4: Advice/information

1: Elmore transfer

#### Main needs



**At the time of referral, Justin, a 31 year old father of two, was too terrified to leave his house. He was being criminally exploited and felt his life was at risk, but was too mistrustful of authorities to ask for help. He was also feeling guilty, reflecting on past decisions which he felt had led him to the current danger and having put his family at risk.**

He was initially very tentative about sharing information with us, but it rapidly became clear that he might be a victim of modern slavery. We talked to him about the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), through which – if accepted – he could move to a safe house in another part of the country. This would be the first essential step towards escaping his exploiters. The NRM application needed to be signed by the police, but as he was already known to the police and had a criminal record, Justin would not agree to us speaking with them because he felt he would not be believed.

We kept on talking with Justin and eventually he agreed to speak anonymously to the police on the phone. The police officer explained the NRM process to him, patiently answered his questions and addressed his concerns. This positive experience led to Justin being ready to trust us and the police enough to start the NRM process. We filled in the NRM form with him, and accompanied him to the police station to tell his story. It was a very tense meeting; Justin was still terrified and anxious about whether he really could trust us all. However, the events that he described and people that he named were already known to the police in connection with Modern Slavery crimes. The NRM form was signed and we liaised with the Salvation Army to move Justin to a safe house.

Justin slept for 18 hours on his first night in the safe house, right through a fire alarm. He told us how strange it felt to be able to go out without fearing for his life. He still struggled with trust and needed a lot of support from us to remain engaged with the NRM process, through which he had been confirmed as a victim of modern slavery. Justin does not want to pursue a criminal case against his exploiters, but is working at rebuilding his life in another part of the country, and reconnecting with his family. He hopes that the information he has provided will be helpful to the authorities in understanding Modern Slavery, and in protecting others.

*“Justin hopes the information he has provided will be helpful... in protecting others”*

Rostislav Sedlacek/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.

This contract sadly came to an end in Autumn 2016, as Turning Point redirected their resources towards service users who were closer to achieving abstinence. However, until the service ended, we provided assertive outreach to complex clients (the majority of them were homeless), directing them to Turning Point treatment hubs, and providing holistic support to enable them to sustain engagement with the 'mainstream' service. In addition to issues with substance misuse, the majority of these individuals also had mental health difficulties (74%) and accommodation problems (65%).

## Number of clients

34

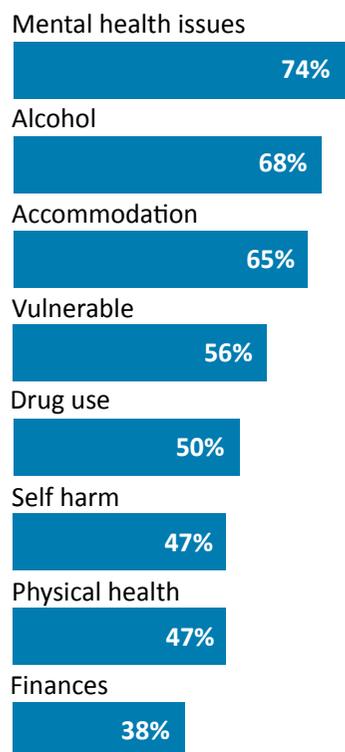
## Number of referrals

3

## Referral outcomes

- 1: Client
- 1: Advice/information
- 1: Outcome pending

## Main needs



## Dave's story



A referral was made to the team by Dave's probation officer, after he had committed various offences to fund his drug use. During the assessment it became apparent that Dave had many learning difficulties that had never been formally diagnosed, and he was keen for this to happen.

The initial piece of work with Dave involved liaising with various professionals to obtain a clearer picture of his difficulties. Dave welcomed this support, and it helped him to build up a rapport with his Elmore workers and develop trust in them.

After discussions with various professionals, it was clear that it would not be possible for Dave to have an assessment of his learning needs while still using class-A drugs; but this allowed us to start speaking to him about reducing his usage, so that he could get the assessment he wanted.

Following this development, Dave's health deteriorated due to his drug use and he needed prolonged hospital treatment. His Elmore worker liaised with the hospital staff to make sure that a methadone script was in place for him, to reduce the risk of him self-discharging against medical advice.

When Dave was finally discharged from hospital, he was more open to the idea of reducing his drug use. He was supported to access community drug and alcohol services, and started to engage with them and attend groups. After several months, funding was secured for him to go to a residential rehabilitation centre out of county. His Elmore worker went with him on the train as Dave did not feel he could travel by himself.

Dave settled in quickly, and was continuing to do well when his case was closed.

*Dave developed a rapport with his Elmore workers and developed trust in them*

Cineberg/istockphoto.com

# Adult Survivors of Child Exploitation Team

## Sam's story



**We were very pleased to win a three-year contract through competitive tendering to continue our work with Adults Survivors of Child Sexual Exploitation.**

During this period, the small team (two case-workers) supported 17 clients, all of whom had mental health issues – as may be expected given their traumatic pasts. This included overnight support during criminal trials which can be very distressing for victims.

### Number of clients

17

### Number of referrals

21

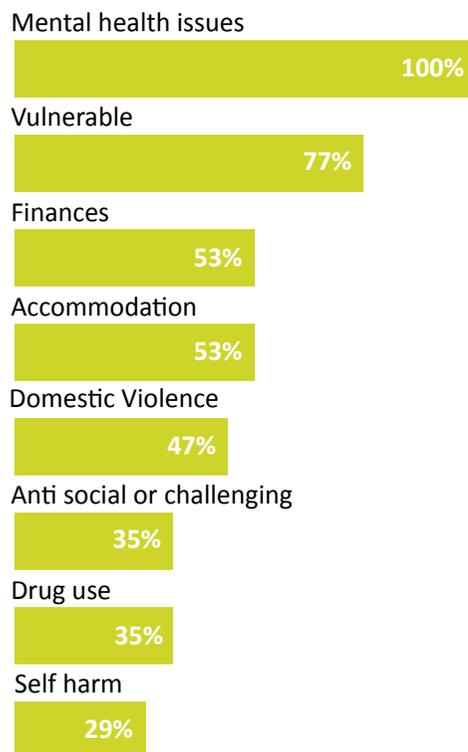
### Referral outcomes

17: Client

3: Advice/information

1: Outcome pending

### Main needs



**Sam was referred by the Kingfisher Team as an adult survivor of child sexual exploitation.**

Sam was ambivalent about accepting our support, often missing appointments or not feeling able to talk to us when we did meet. But we stuck with it and gradually built up her trust. Our weekly meetings with Sam are both practical (for example advising on benefits) and offer emotional support, giving her the space to express her feelings and thoughts around the historical abuse investigation.

At referral, Sam's mental health was declining and she was experiencing suicidal thoughts. We encouraged and supported her to visit her GP, and she was prescribed anti-depressants to help her through this difficult time. Initially Sam struggled with the medication but with our encouragement to continue taking it, she has found it to be helpful.

For many years, substance abuse had been Sam's chosen method of managing the trauma around her abuse, but with support she felt ready to enter into a residential rehabilitation centre. The team remained in regular contact with the centre to ensure Sam was progressing in the right direction, and after completing the programme, she has now been abstinent from all substances for over a year.

Initially Sam had been staying in a room in a shared house which was linked to her foster family. She found living in a family environment difficult and struggled with the pressure of being expected to provide substantial care to an elderly fellow resident. Increased tensions led to her moving out and living in a tent. Unfortunately, the local council would not accept her as homeless, deeming her to be adequately housed, despite our advocacy that her situation was seriously detrimental to her mental health and impeding her recovery. However, after Sam left the rehab centre, she presented to the local council again, and this time she was provided with temporary accommodation. After a year of successfully maintaining this accommodation, and becoming a stable and nurturing mother to a baby girl, she has been provided with a permanent family home. Sam continues to move forward positively in her life with support from Elmore.

*Sam continues to move forward positively in her life with support from Elmore*

Jason Doly/istockphoto.com

# Involving clients

**At Elmore, we believe that meaningful and genuine service user involvement is essential. In 2014, the Elmore Member's Association was established by staff and Elmore service users, past and present, to support this goal. The aims of the group are to increase the member's control over their own care and to build the skills and confidence of the participants.**

Feedback given by recent attendees of the Elmore Member's Association was very positive...

*"My Elmore workers were supportive and went above and beyond"*

*"My Elmore worker was brave and never gave up"*

In its current incarnation, the Association meets in alternate months. The first hour of the meeting addresses business related to Elmore Community Services (and, more broadly, the Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership) including updates and service issues. The members have recently had useful conversations about the support they receive and have discussed what they would hope for from forthcoming service user event, *Celebrating Our Lives*.

The second hour of the meeting is used for education, training and information sharing. In 2017, this has included sessions on Recovery (involving participants from Oxfordshire Complex Needs Service's STARS and Mind) and "Being on an interview panel". The latter was led a staff member from Oxford University and was intended to empower any service-users to become usefully involved in Elmore's recruitment process. We envisage this as a step towards establishing a group of service users who would be happy to sit on Elmore interview panels.

Service users have suggested that future sessions might explore physical health, budgeting and meaningful activity.

# Developing staff

Elmore continued its contribution to the professional development of social workers and occupational therapists by providing student placements, linking with Oxford Brookes University, Bucks New University and Ruskin College Oxford. We also worked with Oxfordshire County Council to deliver the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) for newly qualified social workers, with three of our staff completing the programme this year. While we do not require our staff to have a professional qualification such as social work or occupational therapy, these qualifications provide an excellent basis for our support work, and we are committed to ensuring the continuing professional development of our staff.

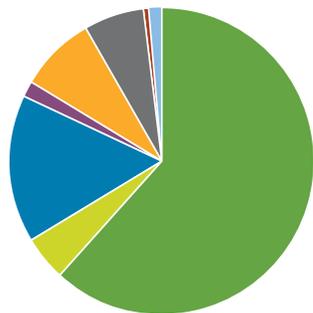
Elmore was delighted that two of its workers were chosen to participate in the Lankelly Chase Foundation's *Systems Changers* programme from September to December 2016. The programme sought to enable frontline workers to contribute to and create system change, recognising that *"frontline workers form the lifeblood of the systems which support those experiencing complex and multiple disadvantage... yet their perspectives rarely form part of developing the policies and services they deliver and their insights are rarely included in efforts to reform the multiple systems they work in."* Our staff greatly enjoyed this opportunity, developing skills, knowledge and networks that they brought back into the team.



# Finances

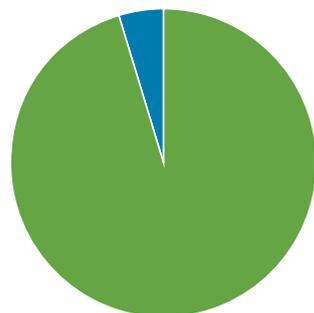
Total expenditure for the year was £732,685, a decrease of £8,557 compared to the previous year. Total income was £757,193. The surplus of £25,477 was added to reserves and will be used according to Elmore's reserves policy, to safeguard our core services for as long as possible through periods of risk 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 2016-17: £757,193**



- Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership: **£468,025**
- Oxford City Council: **£35,630**
- Thames Valley Police and Crime Commission: **£118,620**
- Secondment income: **£11,308**
- Oxfordshire County Council: **£62,184**
- Turning Point: **£47,500**
- Student placement and training income: **£4,800**
- Other: **£9,126**

**Expenditure in 2016-17: £732,685**



- Charitable activities (delivering services): **£699,783**
- Cost of generating contracts, donations and legacies: **£32,902**

Our detailed accounts are publically available on the Charity Commission website, or you can email [info@elmorecommunityservices.org.uk](mailto: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 provided support and/or funded our clients' essential items and much needed welfare in crisis situations:

- Banbury Charities
- City of Oxford Charities
- OxFAP – Oxford Friends Action on Poverty
- OxPAT – Oxford Poverty Action Trust
- Peter Manford, Higgs & Sons Solicitors
- Response Giving
- St Michael's and All Saints' Charities
- Stanton Ballard
- The Besom in Witney
- The Salvation Army
- The Witney Town Charity
- Vicar's Relief Fund

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 2016/17.



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](http://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](http://www.connectionfs.org)
- **Elmore Community Services:** [www.elmorecommunityservices.org.uk](http://www.elmorecommunityservices.org.uk)
- **Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust:** [www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)
- **Oxfordshire Mind:** [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)
- **Response:** [www.response.org.uk](http://www.response.org.uk)
- **Restore:** [www.restore.org.uk](http://www.restore.org.uk)

Elmore  
Community  
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