

Elmore
Community
Services



Annual Review

2017-18



Flexible support for people in complex situations

Contents

Who we are	2
Our mission	2
The year at Elmore	3
Elmore Community Services.....	4
Complex Needs Team	6
Mental Health Team	8
Tenancy Sustainment Team	10
New Beginnings.....	12
Independent Trauma Advisor (ITA) Team.....	14
Ongoing research	15
Involving clients.....	16
Finances.....	18
Thank you to funders	19
Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership	19



Who we are

Elmore Community Services is a registered charity and charitable company governed by a Board of Trustees/Directors, which was formed in 1989 after a research project studied the weaknesses of service provision for people deemed “difficult to place”.

Our mission

Elmore aspires to a society in which people with multiple and complex needs are supported by effective, coordinated services and are empowered to lead sustainably better lives.

Elmore works directly with people falling through the gaps of existing services, supporting them to tackle their problems, improve their lives, and feel part of their communities. We also identify gaps and barriers in current services and work with individuals and systems to address these. This can include individual and collective advocacy alongside clients, as well as research, lobbying, partnership-building and piloting new initiatives and projects to benefit our client group.

Within our services, we support people aged 16+ with multiple and complex needs arising from combinations of issues, who are struggling to engage with other services and have significant unmet needs. Issues include mental health, homelessness, addictions, learning and communication difficulties, domestic violence, exploitation, physical health, brain injury, social isolation, offending and anti-social behaviour, child protection and family breakdown.

The year at Elmore

We have had both an exciting and challenging year.

We have continued to deliver the high quality services we are known for, whilst developing new initiatives, some of which will come on-stream next year. We embarked on a strategic planning process and consulted widely with stakeholders. This year’s new projects included research to understand the extent of modern slavery in Oxford, and the ‘Oxford Safe Haven’ for people in mental health crisis on weekend evenings, as an alternative to A&E, in close partnership with Oxfordshire Mind. Amongst many successes this year, we are especially proud of our service to support survivors of child sexual exploitation, who found the courage to face their abusers in court, resulting in numerous criminal convictions.

In common with all those in the sector, there are increased funding pressures and an uncertain funding future. It is within this context that we managed to support 8% more clients this year, while observing increased numbers of clients presenting with more complex needs. Yet we are very concerned about the increase in our waiting list, and time taken to see clients for the first time. We carefully considered freeing up resources by reducing duration of support for existing clients, but concluded that this approach would prove counter-productive for our complex client group who often take a long time to engage in the first place. Our clients need and deserve a commitment to quality services to produce quality outcomes.

So we enter the next year aware that there will be further challenges, knowing that without additional sources of income, we are facing a budget deficit. It is worth recalling that an independent evaluation in 2014 found that the modest cost of Elmore support saved the ‘public purse’ at least £12,000 per person per year. I am constantly impressed by the skill and dedication of Elmore staff, and despite financial uncertainty, I am confident that our services will remain high quality, and continue to offer value for money and provide good outcomes for our clients.

Lyn Waddington
Chair of Trustees
Elmore Community Services

Amongst many successes this year, we are especially proud of our service to support survivors of child sexual exploitation

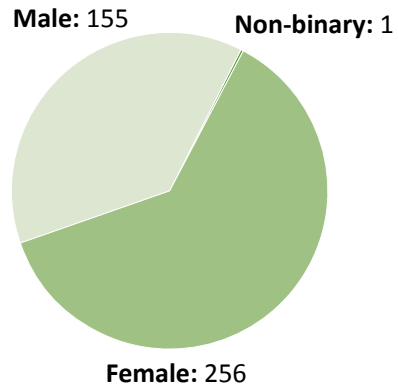
Elmore Community Services

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

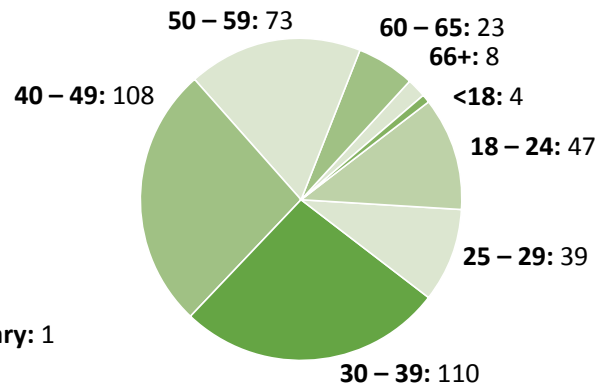
Number of clients

412

Gender

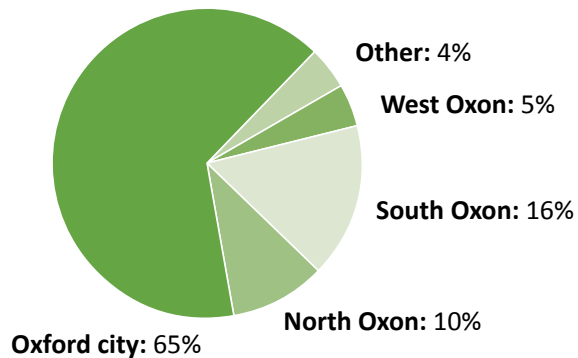


Age range



District of origin

(% based on 333 referrals)



Ethnicity



“I don’t know what I’d do without you – I really appreciate your help”

COMPLEX NEEDS CLIENT



* Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia

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

196

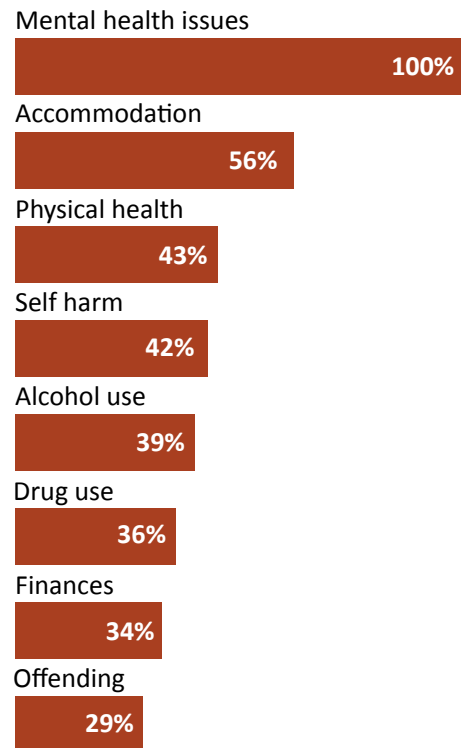
Number of referrals

119

Referral outcomes

67: Client
47: Advice/information
1: Elmore transfer
4: Outcome pending

Main needs



Neil's story



Neil was evicted from his property in 2014 following a decline in his mental health that meant that he had fallen behind with his rent. He was unable to prepare himself for the eviction – he had not arranged alternative accommodation or been able to make plans to move his possessions. Consequently, he was left with housing debts in excess of £6,000, primarily rechargeable costs associated with the removal and destruction of his possessions.

When Neil became an Elmore client he had been living in his van without cooking or washing facilities. Relationships with his friends and most of his family had broken down, his mental health had declined further, and he was abusing alcohol and drugs. Neil's basic living conditions were exacerbating his poor mental health and were impacting on his self-esteem. When Elmore started to work with him, he was unable to trust professionals and had a hostile attitude... he had started to lose hope that things could ever improve.

With continued support from Elmore, Neil's self-esteem has grown and he has started to work again

Elmore workers supported Neil to re-engage with potential housing providers to explore his options. Due to his significant housing debt, most housing providers would not consider his applications, but Elmore supported him and encouraged him to persist until he was successful. Having stable accommodation meant that he was able to meet his basic needs and his mental and physical health improved. He is also providing regular weekend support to his parents who are in poor health.

With continued support from Elmore, Neil's self-esteem has grown and he has started to work again. As his wages do not cover his expenses, Elmore workers have supported him to apply for Universal Credit and Neil has learnt computer skills so that he can access his online journal. Neil has taken responsibility for managing his money and maintaining his tenancy, and has recently started to address his debts.

RapidEye/istockphoto.com

Mental Health Team

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

152

Number of referrals

74

Referral outcomes

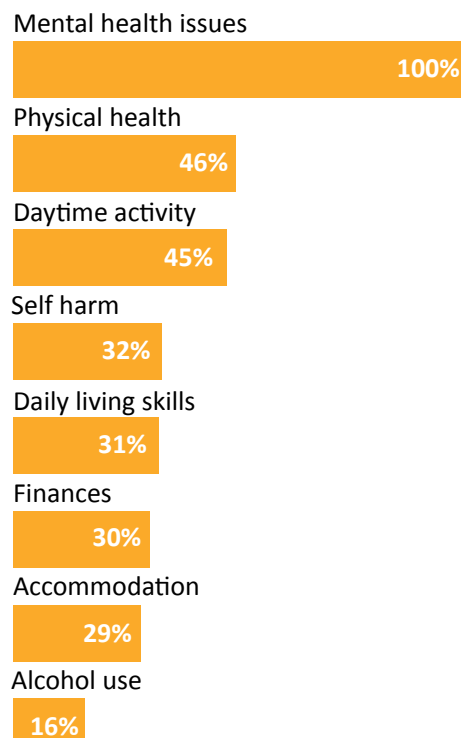
40: Client

28: Advice/information

4: Elmore transfer

2: Outcome pending

Main needs



Russell's story

Russell explains how Elmore helped him to get back on his feet again...

I have suffered from diabetes and depression for many years, and then in early 2016 I had two heart attacks. Following my recovery, I was able to return to work on a gradual basis under the direction of Occupational Health. However, in July 2016 I suffered a seizure and hypo whilst having an angiogram. I couldn't return to work after this, and my mental health deteriorated. After seeing a consultant neurologist, I was diagnosed with non-epileptic attack disorder and also conversion disorder.

The months passed and I heard nothing about treatment, and eventually I approached my GP for more help and I was referred to the Elmore Team in July 2017. My Elmore worker was amazing from the start, and I felt that I was able to address my frustrations, fears and concerns: I had not left Oxford in over two years, I found it difficult to travel anywhere due to my seizures, and I had very low self-esteem.

My Elmore worker started by walking with me around the village then I built up the courage to travel with my wife to Headington on the community bus. This was not without incident, and on one occasion I was convinced that the Headington roundabout was the Falls Road in Belfast and that it was an ideal place for an ambush. In my head I was back in the early '80s on the streets of Belfast. Eventually I gained the confidence to travel further afield and travelled to Germany by Eurostar and Malta by plane. Both of these trips would not have been possible before Elmore intervened.

I continue to meet with my Elmore worker on a fortnightly basis in local cafés, and I travel to the venues on my own. I am working at a mental health charity and I'm also receiving support and mentoring from another charity to develop my own small business, making scented candles and tea lights to sell at local markets and fairs. Elmore have restored my self-worth and I am eternally grateful for all of their efforts. I still have a way to go, but I am in a far better place now than I was eight months ago. Thank you.

Elmore have restored my self-worth, and I am eternally grateful for all of their efforts



Tenancy Sustainment Team

Janine'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

27

Number of referrals

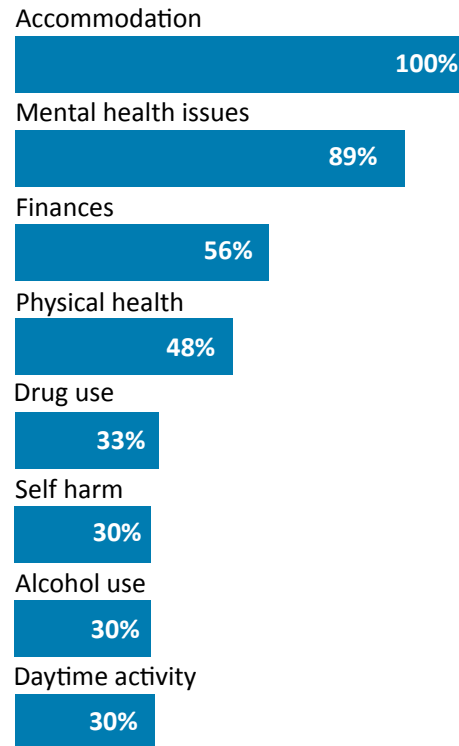
9

Referral outcomes

8: Client

1: Advice/information

Main needs



When Janine was first assessed by Elmore, she was in a dire financial situation...

Her out-of-work benefits had been stopped for 18 months due to unintentional benefit fraud (failing to declare changes in her circumstances). Her only income was her disability and housing benefit, and she was in arrears with her utilities and rent. Her mental health was very negatively affected by her financial situation, and she also had chronic physical health needs, waiting for surgery. There was an on-going criminal case against Janine for the benefit fraud, which was also a source of distress for her.

During this time, Janine was transferred from Disability Living Allowance to Personal Independent Payments, and when re-assessed, she lost the mobility component of her disability award. This exacerbated her financial worries, and had a negative impact on both her physical and mental health. She resorted to using food banks and begging to afford to eat.

Janine was also receiving regular payment demands for utilities and rent, so her Elmore worker intervened to prevent further action being taken. Payment plans were set up for her to pay the minimum to keep from being cut off or evicted. Elmore supported Janine to challenge the decision to cut her disability benefit, and after a year-long appeal her mobility component was successfully reinstated. Janine got a large back-payment which allowed her to pay off a lot of her arrears.

Elmore worked closely with Janine to understand her benefit problems. She was supported to attend court, where it was accepted that the benefit fraud had been unintentional: on these grounds she avoided a custodial sentence. Following the court case, further calls were made to try and get Janine's out-of-work benefits reinstated. This took a lot of persistence, and additional support from a specialist benefit agency, but this was also eventually successful.

Janine's mental health improved noticeably once her financial worries were dealt with, and it also meant she could eat more healthily due to being able to afford fresh food. She was able to keep on top of her bills, and felt more able to cope with everything going forward.

Janine's mental health improved noticeably once her financial worries were dealt with

1.2963734/istockphoto.com

New Beginnings

Kate's story



The New Beginnings Team has continued to build on our work with adult survivors of childhood sexual exploitation (CSE).

The effects of CSE are long-lasting, and can have a huge impact on peoples' adult lives. Survivors often experience difficulties with their mental health, problems with relationships, an increased chance of substance misuse, and poorer physical health. New Beginnings works alongside people to offer support in making positive changes to their lives.

This year the team has worked in partnership with Thames Valley Police to support several women through a court case brought as a result of Operation Silk, a police investigation into historical CSE in Oxford. The work done by this partnership was instrumental in empowering these women to manage the process, and the positive learning from this is being used to develop national police guidance for supporting victims of CSE.

Number of clients

27

Number of referrals

32

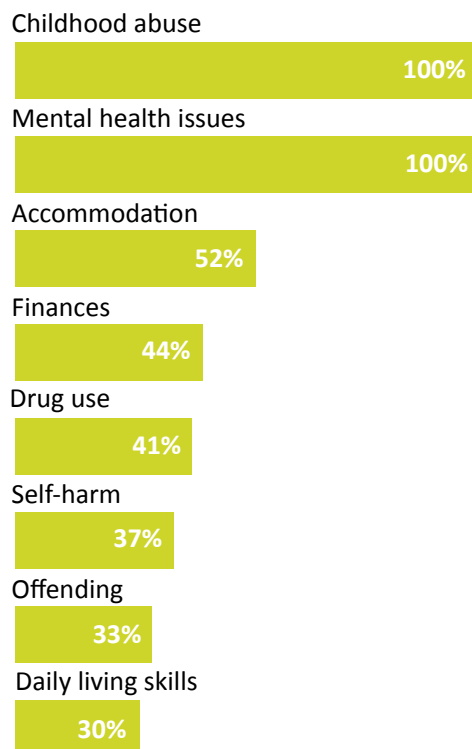
Referral outcomes

17: Client

3: Advice/information

1: Outcome pending

Main needs



Kate was referred to us while going through a challenging time with an on-going police investigation and approaching court case (related to sexual abuse she experienced as a child).

This period was emotionally very difficult for Kate, especially going through the many investigation procedures – which included identifying suspects via video line-ups, and giving statements. As a result she was very stressed, struggled to eat regularly, and often felt depressed. She also felt anxious about the whole process, fearing possible repercussions from her abusers. As a result of her previous experiences, Kate found it very difficult to trust anyone.

Elmore supported Kate during this time by focusing on providing emotional support through the criminal proceedings (this included accompanying her to the police station and court), and in time we built up a positive therapeutic relationship with her. We also offered practical support around day-to-day issues, such as benefits advice. We encouraged and helped Kate to complete a self-referral to another service, which could help her address planning and implementing positive changes for her future.

Following the resolution of the court matters (and her abusers being jailed), Kate is now working part-time and is happy with her role. She is managing to have at least one proper meal every day and accepts regular support from her GP. She still has chronic sleep problems, but is feeling more able to address these now, and generally now feels much more positive about her life.

Elmore supported Kate by focusing on providing emotional support... and in time we built up a positive therapeutic relationship with her.

Michat Chodyra/istockphoto.com

Modern day slavery

Our Independent Trauma Advisor (ITA) service wound up in 2017 when funding from the Police Innovation Fund came to an end. Drawing on the learning, and the very positive independent evaluation, a similar service was later recommissioned from an organisation that could provide support across the whole of Thames Valley (from September 2018). We continued to use our skills and experience to benefit Elmore clients who appeared vulnerable or fell victim to exploitation. We also shared this expertise through the Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Network which Elmore helped to found, and co-chaired alongside a local authority designated officer for safeguarding children.

Over the course of the ITA project, our team encountered over 50 victims or suspected victims of slavery, of whom 31 accepted intensive support to escape their exploitative situation. For some, this involved going into a safe-house in another part of the country, under the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). But many victims did not want to enter the NRM – they wanted support to stay in their own community with protection from their abusers. Whether or not a victim goes into a safe-house, escaping exploitation is just the start of a long journey to a safer, happier life. Our support ranged from a few days to over a year, with most receiving support for about nine months.

It's a common misunderstanding that modern day slaves are trafficked; amongst our clients, less than half had experienced any form of trafficking. Most victims experienced more than one form of exploitation and this did not include other crimes that were committed against them while enslaved, including crimes of violence, theft, threats to their families, coercion to create drug dependence.

Most of the victims we worked with were women (70%), most were UK citizens (90%) and over half were parents. As the project progressed, we encountered more men and more cases of forced labour. Anti-slavery projects across the country are finding that the more you look, the more you find...

Ongoing research

Elmore is currently carrying out a research project to investigate the nature and extent of Modern Slavery and Trafficking in the city of Oxford.

Modern-day slavery encompasses sexual exploitation, forced labour, forced criminality and domestic servitude. In 2016, research on the extent of modern slavery in the Thames Valley came up with a wide range for the number of victims, from 533 to 2,462 – reflecting how little is actually known.

Our research aims to obtain better data and information in order to improve the understanding of levels and types of exploitation and trafficking of adults and children in Oxford. The findings will be used by city and county-wide bodies responsible for community safety to:

- Identify where exploitation is happening and who is vulnerable
- Understand how to protect and support victims better
- Make it harder for exploiters and traffickers to operate in our area

The project will involve talking to a wide range of statutory and voluntary services which may come into contact with victims of exploitation.

The project started in December 2017 and is due to run to the summer of 2019; it is funded by Oxford City Council.

Our research aims to obtain better data and information in order to improve the understanding of levels and types of exploitation and trafficking of adults and children in Oxford

At Elmore, we believe that meaningful and genuine service user involvement is essential. The Elmore Members' Association was formed in 2014 by staff and past/present Elmore service users to support this goal. The aims of the group are to increase the members' control over their own care and to produce positive change. We have found that the group has also enhanced the skills and increased the confidence of participants – it is now chaired by members, and has been identified as a consistent and welcoming space.

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 beneficial conversations about the support they receive, and have usefully discussed their thoughts on the out-of-hours service Oxford Safe Haven.

The second hour of the meeting is used for education, training and information sharing. In 2018, this has included sessions on Physical Health (involving guests from Active Body, Healthy Mind and the Active Communities Team), Education, Employment and Training (with the Job Centre's Disability Employment Adviser) and Money.

- 
- *Physical health*
 - *Education, employment and training*
 - *Money*



Steve is a member of the Elmore Members' Association, and explains here how much it means to him...

"I have always found the meetings useful and productive. The general atmosphere of inclusiveness and the ethos of democracy makes them a place all members can feel free to discuss anything – from criticisms to praise – and to suggest new ideas.

I have often been moved and touched by suggestions from other Elmore team members – and the willingness to listen and support each other. The fact that everyone from such diverse backgrounds and sometimes people with problems (I include myself in this) can express ideas and give input is again quite remarkable.

I put this down to great management and something within the overall structure. What could have been a challenging environment, in my experience, has never been one. Perhaps this is down to group dynamics – a kind of shared wisdom of the afflicted, and maybe some luck to boot.

The position many people find themselves in after periods of mental illness combined with severe social problems often leaves them stigmatised, talked down to, and directed rather than encouraged. With my experience of other services (not all bad by the way), there can sometimes be a lack of awareness, empathy or an adoption of a one-size-fits-all model. It is of immense credit to the Elmore Team that the groups are handled with astute awareness and an encouragement that leaves group members with a sense of empowerment (a bit of an over-used word, but kind of apt).

Anyway, I have heard some fantastic contributions from other service users and this is a credit to the skills and ability of the staff enabling this environment.

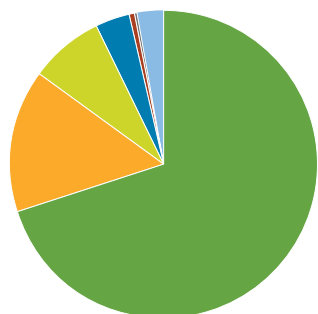
So I'd like to say thanks to all the members and staff who have made these meetings worthwhile. Hope springs eternal."

"What could have been a challenging environment, in my experience, has never been one"

Finances

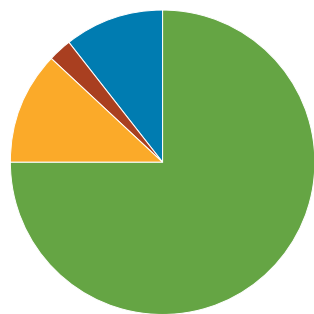
Elmore had a deficit year in 2018, it's first since 2012. Income reduced significantly following the closure of some services over the past two years while new projects were smaller scale and did not make up the shortfall. However, while efficiency savings continued to be sought, Trustees considered that Elmore's management capacity was insufficient and decided to introduce a new role of Services Manager, partly in order to increase capacity to seek new income and projects while maintaining quality of service delivery to existing clients.

Income in 2017-18: £666,655



- Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership: **£468,026**
- Oxfordshire County Council: **£100,000**
- Oxford City Council: **£50,630**
- Thames Valley Police and Crime Commission: **£24,000**
- Student Placement Fees: **£4,360**
- Skills for Care: **£2,150**
- Other: **£17,490**

Expenditure in 2017-18: £686,297



- Staff costs: **75%**
- Office costs: **12%**
- Governance: **2.6%**
- Other service delivery costs: **10.4%**

Our detailed accounts are publically available on the Charity Commission website, or 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 provided support and/or funded our clients' essential items and much needed welfare in crisis situations:

- Andrew Leadbitter, Blake Morgan LLP
- Banbury Charities
- City of Oxford Charities
- Katharine Moss Consulting
- OxFAP – Oxford Friends Action on Poverty
- OxPAT – Oxford Poverty Action Trust
- Response Giving
- St Michael's and All Saints' Charities
- Stanton Ballard
- Tessa Hennessy, Solicitor
- The Besom in Witney
- The Salvation Army
- The Witney Town Charity
- Think Family Fund
- Vicar's Relief Fund
- Abingdon Emergency Foodbank
- Banbury Foodbank
- Bicester Foodbank
- Community Emergency Foodbank
- Didcot Emergency Foodbank
- North Oxfordshire Community Foodbank
- Oxford West Foodbank
- Wantage & Grove Foodbank
- Witney and West Oxfordshire Foodbank

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 2017/18.



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



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