

ASPIRE OXFORD

IMPACT REPORT

2025

Welcome to
OBSERVATION WHEEL
Bournemouth



* **NOVEMBER 2025**

* **Charity Number: 111 77 26**

 **aspire**

WORKING TO CHANGE LIVES

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LETTER FROM THE CEO



NICCI MARZEC
CEO of Aspire Oxford

I am proud to introduce Aspire's 2025 Impact Report, a reflection of a year in which determination, partnership, and community spirit made real change possible. Over the past twelve months, we have supported over 2,600 people across Oxfordshire, offering safe housing, personalised guidance, and practical opportunities to rebuild stability and confidence. We've helped people move into employment and to progress in education, and sustained tenancies through our housing projects, each representing an individual story of resilience and renewed hope.

At a time when rising costs, complex needs, and limited resources continue to challenge the people we support, Aspire has remained a steady and trusted presence.

Our teams have worked tirelessly to ensure that every person feels seen, supported, and able to take their next step forward. These achievements are only possible because of the commitment of our staff, volunteers, funders, partners, and communities who believe in our mission.

Thank you for standing with us, and for helping us turn first steps into lasting progress for so many.

* OUR TRUSTEES

Chair: **William Smith**

Trustees:

- **Helen Cannon**
- **Chris Blackburn**
- **Laura Brown**
- **Hugh Richardson**
- **Cath Rowe**
- **Richard Dick**

Thank you for your strategic leadership, scrutiny and unwavering support.

73.6%

Increase in clients supported compared to last year.

£2,761,261

Total Gross Income

1,352

New Referrals



ORGANISATION OVERVIEW

ABOUT ASPIRE

Aspire is a collaborative organisation; we believe we can only help to solve complex social problems through building trusted alliances and partnerships, by being embedded in our communities, and by being person-centred.

VISION

To empower people to rebuild their lives and futures and realise their potential.

MISSION

To empower people to rebuild their lives and futures and realise their potential, by providing:

- Person-centred employment
- Enterprise development
- Housing
- Support opportunities

Over **35%** of Aspire's team have lived experience of challenges that shape the psychological and trauma-informed guidance we provide to the individuals we support.

And that's what makes us different!

ASPIRE IN NUMBERS

*** 2,615**

Support interventions delivered across Aspire services

*** EDUCATION, TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT (ETE)**

Aspire's ETE offer is voluntary, client-centred, holistic, and strengths-based, delivered alongside housing/health/social prescribing to build confidence, skills, and aspirations, particularly for people furthest from the labour market.

New Referrals **1,535**

Supported into employment **155**

Assisted in education **390**

*** 185**

Social Prescribing Clients

*** 792**

Get Oxfordshire Online Clients (GOO)

*** HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS**

Across four housing projects and Housing First, Aspire provides safe, supported accommodation and wrap-around support to help residents sustain tenancies and progress to secure, affordable move-on options.

Supported Clients **276**

Tenancies Sustained **116**

Referrals Received **114**

New Tenancies Accepted **27**

*** 25%**

Of Oxford City accommodation residents supported to secure/sustain employment (reduced-rent model + ETE support).

ASPIRE PROJECTS

What we do & why it matters

Across Oxfordshire, Aspire's projects turn first steps into lasting progress. Each programme is designed to meet people where they are, helping them build confidence, stability, and skills through housing, employment, and wellbeing support.

Together, these projects form a joined-up pathway that supports people through every stage of rebuilding their lives.



* Housing

SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

Enables people who are recovering from **rough sleeping and homelessness**, to develop their personal readiness and confidence to move on to independent living. Residents are encouraged to rebuild stability, confidence & readiness through meaningful daily activity, routines, and opportunities that help them realise their potential.

OUR HOUSE

A supportive home for **young people aged 18–26** who want to gain employment and develop independent living skills. Our House provides practical coaching, stability, and a pathway to securing their own long-term accommodation.

AFO (Accommodation for Ex-Offenders)

Specialist support for people **leaving custody within the last 12 months** who do not have stable housing. The programme works with individuals towards securing private rented accommodation while developing routines, skills, and structured activities that support successful reintegration and independence.

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

Early support for people **at risk of losing their home**. The team provides clear guidance, advocacy, and practical help to navigate housing systems, understand options, and take timely action—empowering individuals to avoid crisis and maintain secure accommodation.

HOME (HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES MADE EASY)

HOME provides **safe housing and personalised coaching** to help residents work toward independent, stable living, with a focus on meaningful use of time, skills-building, and long-term goals.

HOUSING FIRST

For individuals with a **long history of rough sleeping** who have struggled to sustain other types of accommodation. Housing First offers a permanent, stable tenancy from the outset, paired with intensive wrap-around support to help people rebuild security, wellbeing, and independence at their own pace.

* Key Highlights of Housing Over the Past Year

- **25%** of Oxford City accommodation residents were in employment, some gaining employment through our ETE offer, others able to secure employment independently, in both instances our reduced rent model allows employment to be sustained – set at **90%** of the LHA rate for a room in a shared house.
- **Housing First** has launched **phase 3** with South & Vale DC and SOHA (responsive placements for entrenched rough sleeping).
- **Homelessness Prevention** streamlined referrals; defined service levels to enable quicker, needs-appropriate support.
- **HOME** consolidated team of 3.
- Co-designed **Warnings & Evictions Policy** to ensure clarity and opportunity for resolution, for all residents whose tenancies are at risk.
- **New sign-up agreements** help set expectations around meaningful activity, engagement with support and move on, for the duration of residence with us.



160

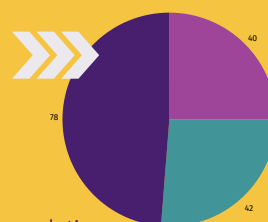
People actively supported

* HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

Aspire's Homelessness Prevention service provide practical guidance, advocacy, and one-to-one support to stabilise people's housing situations **before** crisis hits. From negotiating with landlords to securing emergency payments, benefits adjustments, or safer accommodation routes, our team works alongside each person to prevent homelessness wherever possible and ensure they have the clarity, confidence, and tools to move forward.

82

Homelessness cases resolved, including:



- * **40** people supported into new accommodation
- * **42** people supported to sustain current accommodation
- * **78** people sought our support before their risk of homelessness became urgent. Timely advice and guidance were enough to resolve the issues and prevent them from escalating into a crisis.



* Education, Training & Employment

INCLUSIVE
RECRUITMENT & EDP

RECONNECT & PEER
SUPPORT WORKERS

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

PRISON LEAVERS
PROJECT

GET CONNECTED

YOUTH HUB

Aspire's ETE programmes help people gain the skills, confidence, and opportunities they need to move into work, training, or education. Our approach is client-centred, flexible, and strengths-based, delivered in collaboration with housing, health, and social prescribing teams. By addressing barriers such as low confidence, skills gaps, and long-term unemployment, Aspire enables people to progress toward sustainable livelihoods.

* THIS YEAR'S HIGHLIGHTS

- Developed **new referral pathways** and employer partnerships to improve inclusive recruitment practices.
- Expanded Youth Hub activities, **providing dedicated coaching** for young people seeking work or training.
- Embedded Social Prescribing into **core service delivery**, supporting wellbeing alongside employability.

155

Individuals were assisted in
securing employment

390

Individuals were supported
in their education

* Social Prescribing



* Aspire's Social Prescribing offer provides supportive wellbeing activities that help people build the foundations needed to progress into education, training, and employment.

For many individuals, improving physical health, confidence, and social connection is the essential first step toward long-term stability.

* Through group activities and tailored support, the programme helps participants build vital soft skills:

- Social Connections
- Positive Routines
- Re-engagement with ETE pathways
- Time management
- Communication
- Confidence

* Social Prescribing activities include:



Blenheim Palace wellbeing walks



Monthly Art Club



Box Fit sessions



Gym Club access

* Getting Oxfordshire Online (GOO)

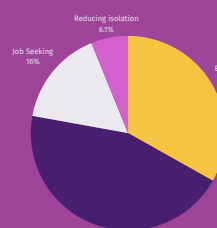
* Getting Oxfordshire Online is a countywide partnership led by **Aspire** and **SOFEA** to tackle digital exclusion by providing refurbished devices, free data and personalised digital support to people who would otherwise be offline.

Since its launch in 2021, the project has delivered refurbished laptops, tablets and phones and distributed free data SIMs, supporting **adults, young people, families** and **older residents** to stay connected, access essential services, study, apply for work and manage their wellbeing.



792

Digital devices distributed across Oxfordshire



* Education
* General
* Job Seeking
* Reducing isolation

How Recipients Used Their Devices

* Witney Youth Hub

The Witney Hub supports **young people aged 16–24** facing multiple barriers — including homelessness, drug and alcohol challenges, NEET status, refugee backgrounds, long-term unemployment, or struggles within education.

The Hub provides a wide range of personalised support:

- Careers guidance
- Work experience
- 1-1 English and Maths tuition
- Mental health and counselling support,
- Wellbeing activities
- Training courses
- Peer support
- Help navigating statutory services.

Demand has grown significantly, especially for English and Maths tuition and counselling.



60%+ 

Increase in young people accessing English & Maths tuition

5-WEEK

Young Leaders programme delivered with classroom learning and work experience



REAL LIVES, REAL CHANGE



* A DOOR THAT LOCKS AND A LIFE THAT OPENS

When **A** first moved into one of Aspire's HOME properties, she barely spoke. Shoulders hunched, eyes lowered, she carried years of exhaustion and fear.

The moment she turned the key and closed the door behind her — a door that locked from the inside — she cried. It wasn't just a room. It was safety.

Aspire's support team helped her reconnect with her rights as a worker and as a person. She learned about employment contracts, fair pay, and her entitlement to breaks; knowledge that had once been withheld from her.

That learning changed everything. She challenged her former employer, secured a fair wage, and began to see herself not as a victim of circumstance, but as a person with power.

With guidance, she completed her Food Safety Level 2 qualification and began exploring part-time work that suits her mental health needs.

For the first time in years, she's thinking about what she wants, not just what she must do to survive.

STORIES FROM THE HEART OF ASPIRE

Behind every number in this report is a person; someone who found the strength to rebuild, the courage to start again, and the support to make it possible.

These stories remind us why **Aspire** exists: to offer people not just a place to stay or a job to do, but a chance to rediscover purpose, safety, and self-belief.

* STAYING, NOT BREAKING

B had been given a Section 8 and a Section 21 notice, facing eviction due to rent arrears.

Recently unemployed, newly divorced, and struggling with his mental health, he feared losing his home and custody of his two children.

Aspire supported him to apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) — initially declined — and then successfully for a Homeless Assistance Payment (HAP). They worked alongside his letting agent, advised on budgeting, and linked him to NHS mental health services.

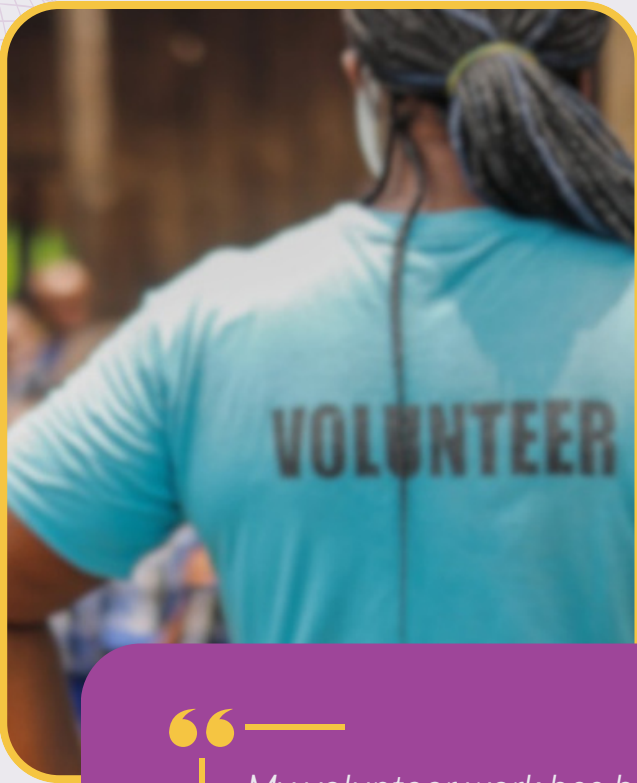
The outcome: the landlord withdrew the eviction. **B** kept his home.



“

*I didn't know I had the right to say no, or the right to be safe. **Aspire** helped me see that I do.*

* VOLUNTEERING WITH PURPOSE



C connected with the No Limits programme after arriving in the UK and wanting to stay active while not yet eligible for employment. With guidance from the team, C began volunteering with local cultural and community organisations, gaining routine, confidence and a sense of belonging. These opportunities helped C build new skills and remain connected during a challenging transition into life in the UK.

C's journey is a powerful example of how personalised support can help someone stay motivated, develop strengths, and contribute to their community—even when employment isn't immediately possible.

“

My volunteer work has been both engaging and enriching, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to contribute.



* REBUILDING CONFIDENCE AFTER REDUNDANCY

D joined the No Limits programme following redundancy from a long-term role and was looking to regain stability. Through one-to-one coaching, CV support and encouragement, D explored new opportunities and rebuilt confidence step by step. With consistent guidance and mentoring, D successfully secured a new part-time role, marking an important step towards renewed financial and emotional stability.

D's experience reflects what No Limits stands for: person-centred support that helps people regain momentum, rediscover their strengths and move forward with confidence.



“

*Much relief to have finally succeeded. Thank you for your support. The mentoring **Aspire** arranged was invaluable.*

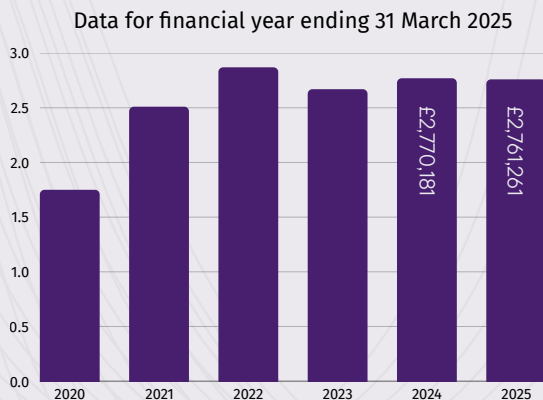


OUR GROWTH STORY

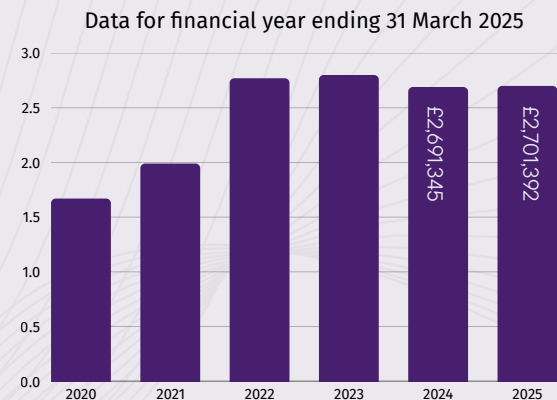
5-year financial data overview to March 2025

Numbers In Million Pounds

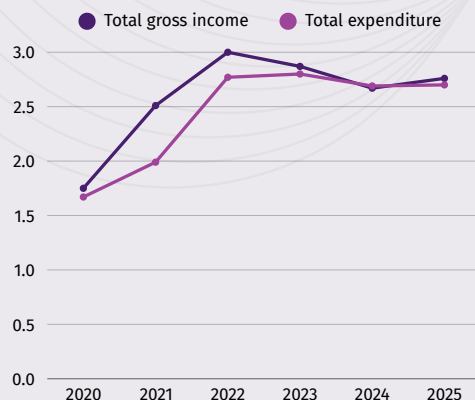
TOTAL GROSS INCOME



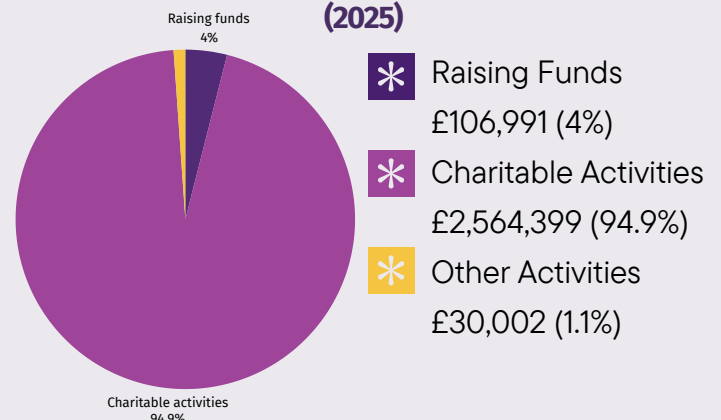
TOTAL EXPENDITURE



INCOME AND EXPENDITURE



EXPENDITURE BREAKDOWN (2025)



TOTAL EMPLOYEES: 55

CONTRACTORS: 6

VOLUNTEERS: 19



1 SUPPORT WORKER CAN SUPPORT UP TO 90 CLIENTS

THE ROAD AHEAD



* CHALLENGES

Aspire continues to operate in a complex environment marked by growing demand and constrained resources. Across our services, we see recurring challenges:

- **Rising housing costs** make it increasingly difficult for clients to secure affordable, safe accommodation. Single-room rents in Oxfordshire often exceed the Universal Credit housing allowance, leaving many without viable private rented options.
- **Funding limitations** restrict our ability to scale our Education, Training & Employment (ETE) programmes and maintain staff capacity at levels needed to meet local demand.
- **Access barriers to accredited training** — particularly ESOL, Functional Skills, and CSCS qualifications — slow clients' progression into stable employment.
- **Digital exclusion and low literacy levels** make engagement and long-term progression harder for many participants.
- **Complex needs**, including poor mental health, trauma, and unstable housing, require sustained, multi-agency support, often beyond the scope of short-term funding cycles.

* OPPORTUNITIES

Despite these challenges, Aspire's experience and partnerships create significant opportunities for growth and innovation:

- **Expanding the Witney Youth Hub model** to new areas, bringing tailored education and employment support to young people across Oxfordshire.
- **Becoming an accredited training and exam centre**, allowing Aspire to deliver and assess nationally recognised qualifications in-house.
- **Preferred provider status** with Oxfordshire County Council to deliver English and Maths tutoring for 16 to 25-year-olds.
- **New partnerships** in the pipeline with the Ministry of Justice and local employers to strengthen ex-offender rehabilitation pathways.
- **Social Prescribing expansion** into creative arts and music-based wellbeing activities, ensuring more inclusive, accessible support options for people with physical or mental health barriers.
- **Community Larder launch** and creating affordable food access, community engagement, and in-house work experience opportunities.

TOGETHER, WE MAKE IT POSSIBLE

This year's achievements were made possible thanks to the generosity, collaboration, and belief of so many people and partners.

To our funders, corporate supporters, community groups, volunteers, and individual donors, thank you for standing with us.

Your continued trust enables us to provide housing, employment, and wellbeing opportunities for people across Oxfordshire, helping them move from crisis toward independence.

* OUR SUPPORTERS INCLUDE:

Active Oxfordshire

AKO Foundation

Allen Associates

Awards for All

Bartlett Taylor Charitable Trust

BDO LLP

Belpech Trust

CAE Foundation

Chipping Norton School

Christ Church

Cooper Trust

Dagleish Trust

Dehns

DLM Charitable Trust

Doris Field Charitable Trust

Drees & Somer

Garfield Weston Foundation

Grace Trust

Grant Thornton

Helen Hamlyn Trust

Helen Hunter

Helen Roll Charity

Hodge Foundation

Jim Cousins Trust

Kier Construction

Landsec

Lewis Silkin

Lord Faringdon Charitable Trust

Lucy Group

Mactaggart Third Fund

Mahoro Trust

Mark Benevolent Fund

Midcounties Co Operative

Mike and Helen Brown

Millward Charitable Trust

Morgan Sindall Infrastructure

Northwick Trust

Orano Ltd

Overbury

OxFAP

Oxford University

Oxfordshire Freemasons

OxPat

Paul Flather

Pelican Fund

Pharsalia Charitable Trust

Pye Charitable Settlement

Rectory Foundation

Ridge

Robert & Margaret Moss CT

Savills

Screwfix Foundation

Sir Halley Stewart

Sobell Trust

Souldern Trust

St Mary's Church, Wheatley

Stantec

Steventon Parish Council

Stockwell Charitable Trust

The Charles Hayward Trust

Tesco



GET IN TOUCH WITH US

A photograph of two men standing in front of a purple banner for Aspire Oxfordshire. The man on the left is bald with a beard and glasses, wearing a black suit and a lanyard with a badge. The man on the right has dark hair and is wearing a grey patterned sweater over a dark shirt, also with a lanyard and badge. The banner behind them features the Aspire logo, the text 'Aspire Oxfordshire', and the website 'www.aspireoxfordshire.org'. To the left of the men is a blue and white sign with the word 'Aspire' partially visible. The background shows an indoor event space with orange and white striped walls.

Aspire
Working to Change Lives

**Aspire
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