



Reference and Administration



Charity Registration No:

1197273

Registered Company No:

CE027753 (England and Wales)

Address:

3 Kingswell Street (off Gold Street),
Northampton, NN1 1PP

Honorary Presidents:

Jan Jourard and Dr John Toby

Current Trustees:

Chair - Stephen Edmonds

Vice Chair - Andrea Martin

Treasurer - Jonathan Smith (left Nov 2025)

- Alisa Moore (joined Nov 2025)

Brendan Dunphy

Georgina Bayliss (left Nov 2025)

Dr Mike Scanlan (left Nov 2025)

Andre Gore

Damon Boughen

Will White (joined Apr 2025)

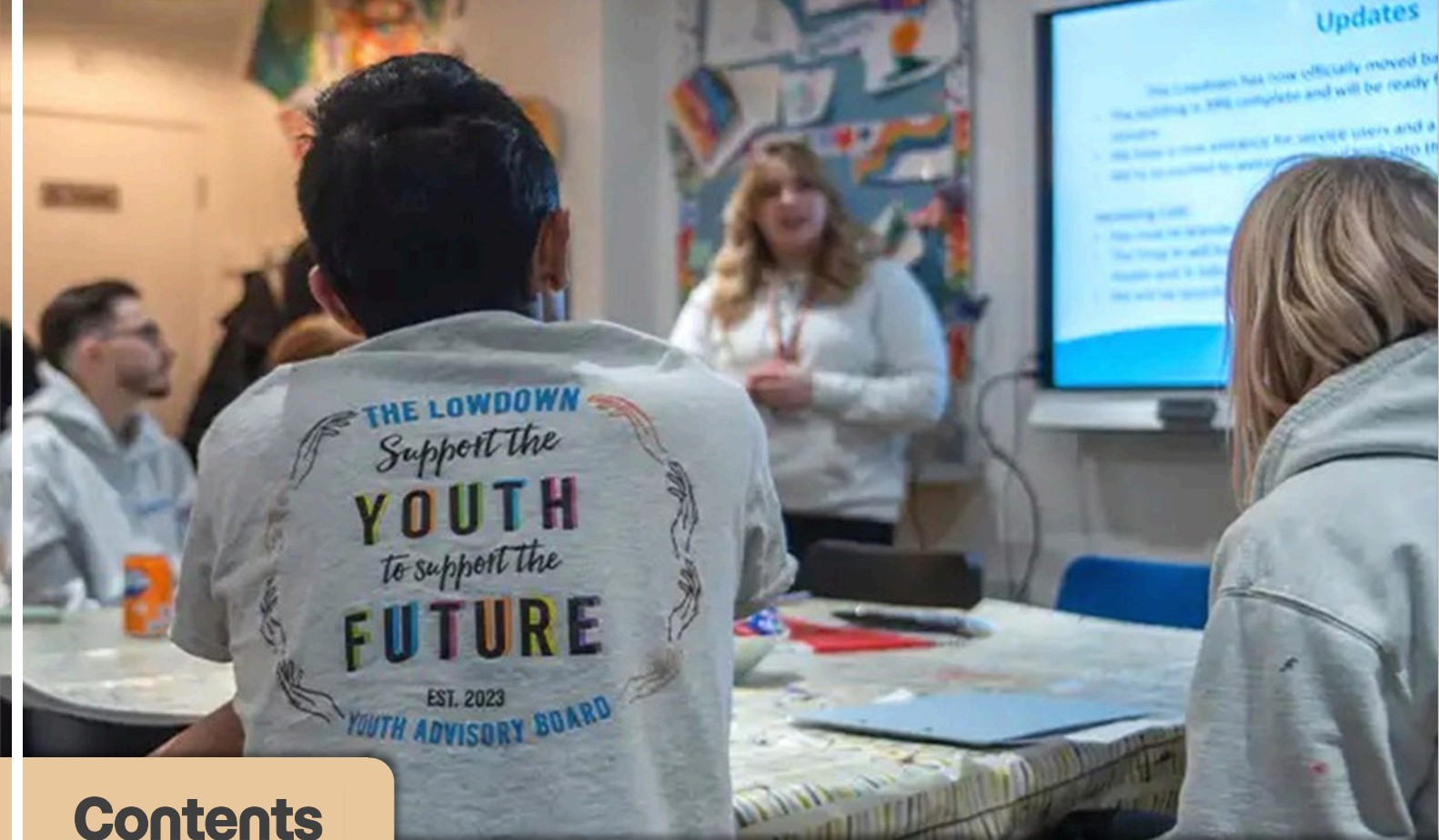
Claire Harrison-Breed (joined May 2026)

Bankers:

Metro Bank Northampton

Auditors:

Shaw Gibbs (Audit Limited)



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Chairs Report

Continuing to respond in an increasingly challenging environment

Welcome to this year's Annual Report, which once again highlights the vital role The Lowdown continues to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of young people across Northamptonshire.

However, as I noted in last year's report, the environment in which we operate remains extremely challenging. Demand for services continues to increase at pace, particularly within counselling, and this inevitably places pressure on waiting times. Alongside this, the funding landscape remains uncertain and continues to present a significant challenge in ensuring the long-term sustainability of services.

Notable achievements

Against this backdrop, the achievements of the organisation are all the more notable. The Lowdown continues to respond effectively to the needs of young people, and it is clear that the organisation plays an increasingly important role within the local community.

The Board has maintained its focus on governance, safeguarding, and risk management, and we are reassured by the steps being taken to strengthen internal systems and support staff wellbeing during a sustained period of demand.

As ever, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the CEO, staff, and volunteers for their continued dedication and professionalism. I would also like to thank my fellow trustees, along with our partners, supporters, and funders, whose ongoing commitment makes this work possible.

Despite the challenges ahead, I remain confident that The Lowdown will continue to develop and adapt, strengthening its services and extending its reach to meet the needs of young people. In an environment that shows no sign of becoming less demanding, the organisation's ability to respond, evolve, and remain focused on those it supports will be more important than ever—and I have no doubt that it will continue to rise to that challenge.



Steve Edmonds
Chair of Trustees



CEO Report

This has been another year of growth, consolidation, and reflection for The Lowdown, as we continue building on strong foundations to respond to the increasing mental health needs of young people across Northamptonshire.

A key highlight has been the strengthening and integration of our services at our Kingswell Street building, including the return of our LGBTQ+ services in October 2025.

Bringing all our teams back together under one roof feels like an important milestone for the organisation, improving collaboration and creating a more cohesive experience for the young people we support.

This has been further strengthened through the introduction of the Information and Guidance element within our drop-in, alongside the expansion of our Happy Heads counselling service for 8 to 10 year olds.

Promotion and engagement

We have continued to develop our presence within the community, promoting our services and actively engaging in education and health networks to ensure young people know how and where to access support when they need it.

Our focus on quality and professional standards has remained central. Achieving Living Wage and Disability Confident status, along with progressing counselling accreditation, reflects both the commitment of our team and our determination to provide safe, high-quality services.

Internally, we have placed strong emphasis on safeguarding, risk management, and workforce wellbeing. Investment in training, support, and organisational systems has been important in ensuring we remain resilient in what continues to be a very demanding environment.

High demand and challenges

Demand for our services remains extremely high, particularly for counselling, and as a result waiting times continue to be a challenge for some groups. Alongside this, financial sustainability remains a key concern as we navigate an increasingly complex funding landscape.

We have also experienced some ongoing challenges with our building and infrastructure. While progress has been made, these issues have required flexibility and patience from both staff and the young people accessing our services.



Despite all of this, I continue to be incredibly proud of our staff, volunteers, and trustees. Their resilience, compassion, and commitment are evident every day, and it is this that ensures we are able to make a real difference to young people's lives.

22,454
support contacts
provided this
financial year



Overall contacts rose by 16% to a record 22,454 - our seventh consecutive year of responding to the growing demand and complexity of young people's mental health needs in our community.

As we look ahead, our focus remains on strengthening what we do well, reducing waiting times where possible, and continuing to provide a safe, inclusive, and trusted space for young people. We will keep listening, learning, and adapting to ensure our services meet the needs of those we support. It is our strategic aim to source both diverse and sustainable funding opportunities to continue to deliver our existing services improving the lives of young people in Northamptonshire.

I would like to sincerely thank our staff, volunteers, trustees, partners, and funders for their continued support - without whom this work simply would not be possible.



Sharon Womersley
CEO





Who we are

A local charity providing free, safe, non-judgemental, and confidential mental health and support services for 8 to 25 year olds in Northamptonshire.

Our Vision

No young person will ever experience challenges alone.

Our Mission

To support every young person with the right help at the right time, empowering them to thrive

Our Values

Nurturing, Inclusive, Collaborative, Empowering, Responsive.

Theory of Change

Young people have free and timely access to evidence-based early intervention and prevention services that improve their mental health, emotional wellbeing and resilience.

The Lowdown changes lives and sometimes saves them.

Our Impact 2025/26



2,547 young people were supported.



Through all The Lowdown services we provided
22,454 support contacts for young people and their families.

An increase of **16%** on the previous year.

Main issues



- anxiety
- low mood
- family/relationship problems
- self harm
- self-esteem
- stress

What do our service users say?

99%

would recommend our service to others.

99%

felt they had a positive outcome using our services.

96%

found the service accessible.

"I found it really good... and has helped transform how I think about things and how I view life." - service user



Case Study: Wraparound Support



When this 24 year old Black British African young person first accessed The Lowdown, they were struggling with significant depression, isolation, exhaustion and uncertainty about their future.

They were living alone with their young son, separated from family support, navigating the asylum process, and recovering from domestic abuse within a previous relationship. They described spending most days indoors, struggling to sleep, crying frequently, overeating, lacking motivation and feeling emotionally overwhelmed.

Their journey began through our mental health and wellbeing drop-in before moving into counselling and wider RE:Start support. This cross-service approach became incredibly important throughout their time with us, allowing emotional support, practical advocacy and wellbeing interventions to work alongside one another during a period of ongoing instability.

They presented to the Lowdown Drop-In seeking support with ongoing housing and income issues. Due to their immigration status they had no recourse to public funds and could not afford necessities such as their medication and groceries. They had disclosed being subjected to domestic abuse which had led to their current living situation. We explored options for support such as counselling and RE:Start, and referred to said services. Additionally, we completed a referral to Lighthouse and their local foodbank.

Opening up and reconnecting in a safe space

In counselling, they gradually began opening up about the abuse they had experienced, the impact of isolation, and the emotional toll of trying to parent a young child while living in survival mode. Sessions gave them a consistent and safe space where they did not feel judged or alone. Much of the work focused on emotional regulation, grounding techniques, rebuilding trust, and helping them reconnect with parts of themselves that had been lost through trauma and uncertainty.

Alongside the emotional work, practical difficulties around housing, finances and immigration status became major stressors impacting their mental health.

During periods where they faced unsuitable temporary accommodation and threats of homelessness, counselling sessions became a vital stabilising factor. Support was closely linked with the RE:Start team, who were able to advocate around housing concerns, PIP applications, food access, furniture support and wider practical needs. This meant the client was not repeatedly retelling their story across services and instead experienced joined-up, trauma-informed support.

Throughout the sessions, they began identifying coping strategies that genuinely helped, including mindfulness, guided imagery, exercise, worship music, colouring, walking, grounding techniques and reconnecting with faith and community.



Over time, they started to speak differently about themselves and their future. The young person who initially described feeling trapped indoors and emotionally numb began speaking about friendships, routines, exercise, going for walks, and creating a stable future for themselves and their son.

Significant challenges

There were still significant challenges throughout the work, particularly around housing uncertainty and the emotional impact of trauma. At points, their mental health deteriorated enough that they attended A&E to keep themselves safe during a crisis linked to accommodation pressures. However, because support was already established across multiple Lowdown services, intervention and advocacy could happen quickly, reducing further escalation and helping them remain engaged.

By the end of support, they had successfully moved into accommodation that felt safer and more suitable for them and their child. They described feeling “much happier”, were accessing local services independently, reconnecting socially, and reported significant improvements in mood, sleep and daily functioning. Their final CORE score reduced to 7, reflecting a substantial improvement in wellbeing from their starting point of severe distress.



Hope for the future

This case highlights the importance counselling and flexible, joined-up support for young adults experiencing trauma, migration-related stress, domestic abuse and isolation. The combination of counselling, wellbeing support and practical RE:Start advocacy helped create stability at a time where they had very little elsewhere, enabling them to move from crisis and survival towards safety, connection and hope for the future.

Objectives

The Lowdown is a local charity in Northamptonshire that provides free, safe, non-judgemental, and confidential mental health and support services for 8 to 25 year olds.

Our services include Counselling, RE:Start, Drop-ins for Information and Guidance, Mental Health, Sexual Health, and Youth Groups, including Wellbeing and LGBTQ+.

Our services are developed based on the proven YIACS (Youth Information Advice and Counselling) model developed by Youth Access (youthaccess.org.uk) to provide a holistic approach to supporting young people.

Part of this is ensuring that young people's voices are heard, and we are developing our services with young people to meet **their** needs.



Our services are easy to access, as young people can either drop-in, self-refer or be referred by professionals such as CAMHS, schools or their GP.



We actively promote all our services in the local community so that young people and their families are aware of what we have to offer and how to access them.



Robust safeguarding procedures are implemented and regularly reviewed to ensure that any disclosures are dealt with appropriately.



The Lowdown offers unique and rewarding volunteering and personal development opportunities for young people and members of the public.

We also partner with Higher Education providers, including The University of Northampton, Tresham College etc. to offer placements and internships for students.

Further details of our services are shown right, and **continue on the next 2 pages:**



Drop-In Services

Our **Mental Health and Wellbeing Drop-In** is for 8 to 25 year olds who need support, we are here to listen.

Professional mental health workers offer a safe space to talk and be listened to with one-to-one support. Parents and carers of young people are welcome too.

Our **Information and Guidance Drop-In** for 8 to 25 year olds provides in the moment support with practical issues. We offer a listening ear and validation for anything that a young person may be experiencing.

Our **Sexual Health Service** provides information and support on all aspects of sexual health and relationships including free condoms, pregnancy testing and chlamydia & gonorrhoea screening for 14 to 25 year olds.



Down2BeYou Youth Groups

Our 4 weekly youth groups for 11 to 18 year olds are a place for young people to have fun and just be themselves. They are delivered in collaboration with Free2Talk, a local youth work organisation.

It's an inclusive and safe space, a chance to meet new people and participate in fun activities; designed collaboratively with the young people that attend.

The group uses an innovative approach as it is staffed by counsellors and youth workers so can provide in the moment mental health support and onward referrals to either organisation to best meet the young person's needs.





Young Adult Social Group

This free weekly group for 18 to 25 year olds is a space to meet new people and connect with others through fun activities.

Our support workers are on hand if needed.

For RE:Start Clients there are also dedicated Groups across West Northamptonshire.



Counselling

Supporting 8 to 25 year olds to manage and improve their mental health. Counselling can facilitate, support and empower young people to make positive changes in a safe, friendly and non-judgemental environment. Counselling support is person-centred, with aspects of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and solution focused therapy.

We offer on average between six and twelve sessions, either face-to-face or remotely via telephone or videocall, on a wide range of issues that young people present with.



Mindspace

Our weekly Mindspace group for 11 to 18 year olds provides a safe space to explore emotional and personal wellbeing through creative activities.



RE:Start

The RE:Start Service is for 16 to 25 year olds and provides practical and emotional wellbeing support for young people transitioning from CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) to AMS (Adult Mental Health Services).



Out There LGBTQ+ Groups

Our Out There LGBTQ+ groups offer a safe and confidential space for young people to socialise, meet like-minded people, discuss issues and take part in activities.

The **Out There Youth Group** is for school years 7 to 13, and the **Out There Plus Group** is for 18 to 25 year olds.

For parents and carers of young people in the LGBTQ+ community we offer a Facebook group that is accessed by searching for 'Out There Group Parent and Carers Support Network Northamptonshire'.

Our Towcester group is delivered in collaboration with South Northants Youth Engagement (SNYE).



Youth Voice

We have established a **Youth Advisory Board (YAB)** for 11 to 25 year olds to volunteer their time, share views on our services, building, accessibility, website, social media etc.

This helps ensure we are providing what young people need and want while offering those involved the opportunity to learn new skills, meet new people and make a difference in their community.

RE:Start also has a dedicated Youth Involvement Group that informs service developments and activities.





Our Volunteers

Volunteers make an important contribution to The Lowdown by supporting both the delivery of services to young people and the wider governance and development of the charity.

Their involvement helps extend the organisation's reach, strengthens the quality of support available, and ensures that young people's voices are reflected in service planning and decision-making.

2134

hours given by
volunteers this
financial year

- **Volunteer qualified counsellors** - support the counselling service by providing therapeutic sessions to young people. As trained and qualified practitioners, they help The Lowdown increase counselling capacity, reduce waiting pressures, and offer timely emotional wellbeing support to young people who may be experiencing anxiety, low mood, relationship difficulties, trauma, or other challenges.
- **Placement counsellors** - contribute while completing their professional training placements. Under appropriate supervision, they provide counselling sessions unpaid as part of their development towards qualification. Their contribution supports service delivery while also helping to develop the future counselling workforce.
- **Youth Advisory Board volunteers** - give feedback on projects, communications, accessibility, service design, and topics affecting young people. Their involvement helps make services more relevant, inclusive, and youth led.
- **Trustees** - provide voluntary leadership and governance. They are responsible for overseeing the charity's strategic direction, financial sustainability, legal responsibilities, safeguarding, risk management, and overall accountability. Trustees bring professional knowledge, lived experience, and community insight to support strong decision-making.
- **Mental health and wellbeing drop-in volunteers** - support accessible, informal wellbeing provision for young people by helping to create a safe, welcoming and supportive environment. They assist with signposting, listening support, practical activities and the smooth running of drop-in sessions, helping young people access early support and information at a point when they may not yet be ready for, or require, more structured intervention.
- **Volunteer youth group leaders** - support group-based youth engagement work by creating safe, welcoming spaces, encouraging participation, and helping evaluate services by gathering feedback and identifying improvements.

Together, these volunteers have given approx. **2134 hours** which adds significant value by increasing The Lowdown's capacity, bringing specialist knowledge and lived experience, strengthening governance, and helping ensure that services remain responsive to the needs of young people.

Spotlight: Youth Advisory Board



The Youth Advisory Board (YAB) continued to play a vital role throughout the year, ensuring that young people's voices shaped The Lowdown's services, priorities, and strategic direction.

Made up of diverse young people aged 11 to 25, the YAB provides lived-experience insight, champions youth voice, and co-designs projects that reflect the real needs of local young people. Their work strengthens The Lowdown's commitment to youth-led practice and ensures our services remain relevant, accessible, and empowering.

Here are some of the many highlights from the Youth Advisory Board's work:



Performing Room Event

In August 2025, the YAB delivered an ambitious and creative project through a collaboration with Performing Room, a local arts organisation specialising in participatory performance and youth creativity. Together, they designed and hosted a dynamic event that promoted the importance that both services have in supporting youth mental health and wellbeing.

The project gave YAB members the opportunity to explore themes such as creativity, mental health, belonging, and community via helping Performing Room raise £470 towards the extensive renovation of their building.

The event brought together young people from across Northampton to watch and take part in live performances, with members of YAB stepping outside their comfort zones to perform to an audience. They demonstrated confidence and determination whilst showcasing the positive impact that music and self-expression can have on mental health.

YAB members took the lead in planning, hosting, and marketing the event, developing leadership skills and strengthening peer and community connections.



Skydive Challenge

In September 2025, two of our YAB members, Jennah and Sandie, took on an incredible challenge by completing a charity skydive in support of The Lowdown.

Together, they helped raise over £5,000, making a significant contribution to our work with young people.

Their commitment, courage, and willingness to go to such extraordinary lengths to support our cause is truly inspiring.



Spotlight: Out There Exhibition



Our LGBTQ+ service was fortunate to fund a residential trip for our Out There youth groups, giving members the opportunity to spend a few days away from home and enjoy a weekend filled with fun, friendship and new experiences.

The success of our collaboration with Educreate resulted in some truly incredible artwork and a powerful, moving documentary that we simply had to share. This inspired the idea of hosting an exhibition, bringing together friends, family members, local professionals and funders to celebrate the creativity and talent on display.



The exhibition offered guests a glimpse into the experiences of LGBTQ+ young people and highlighted the vital role that Out There plays in helping them feel connected, accepted and able to thrive.

Together, the residential and exhibition represented a powerful celebration of youth voice, growth and belonging. Informed by reflection on our 2024 outcomes and shaped directly by participants, the 2025 residential intentionally returned to the roots of youth work, placing team building, life skills, independence and wellbeing at its heart, whilst maintaining a strong focus on fun, connection and creativity.

Outside of comfort zones

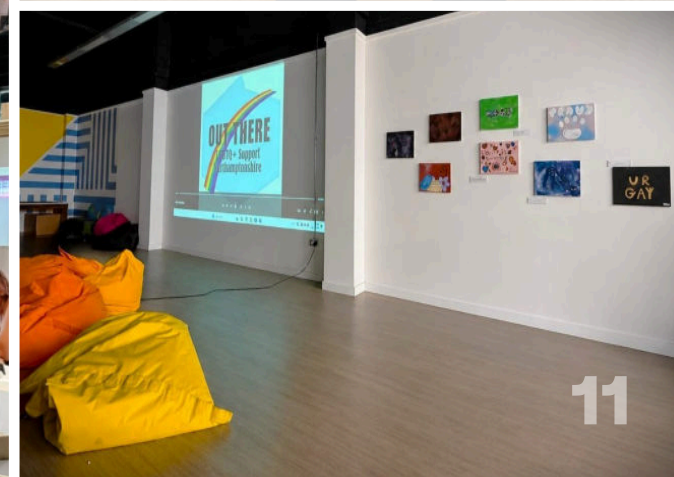
Throughout the weekend, participants were encouraged to step outside their comfort zones within a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment. Many experience social anxiety, neurodiversity, reduced mobility, or were staying away from home for the first time, making their achievements particularly significant. Activities such as budgeting, planning, cooking and shared living encouraged collaboration, resilience and problem-solving, with individuals taking ownership of responsibilities and supporting one another along the way.

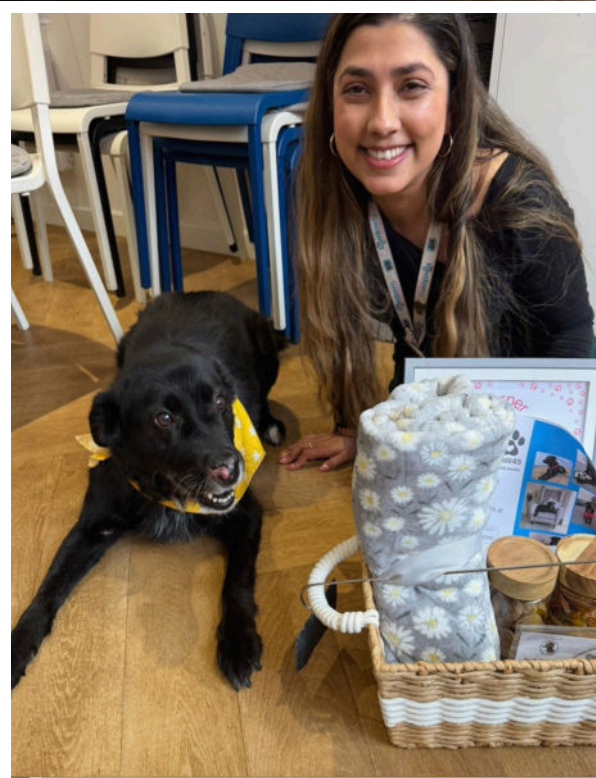
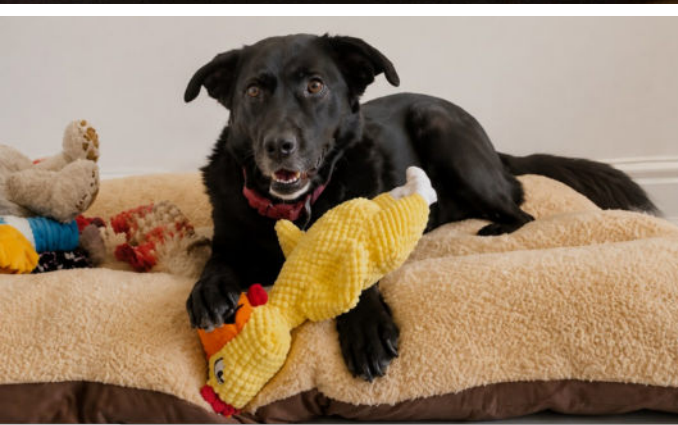
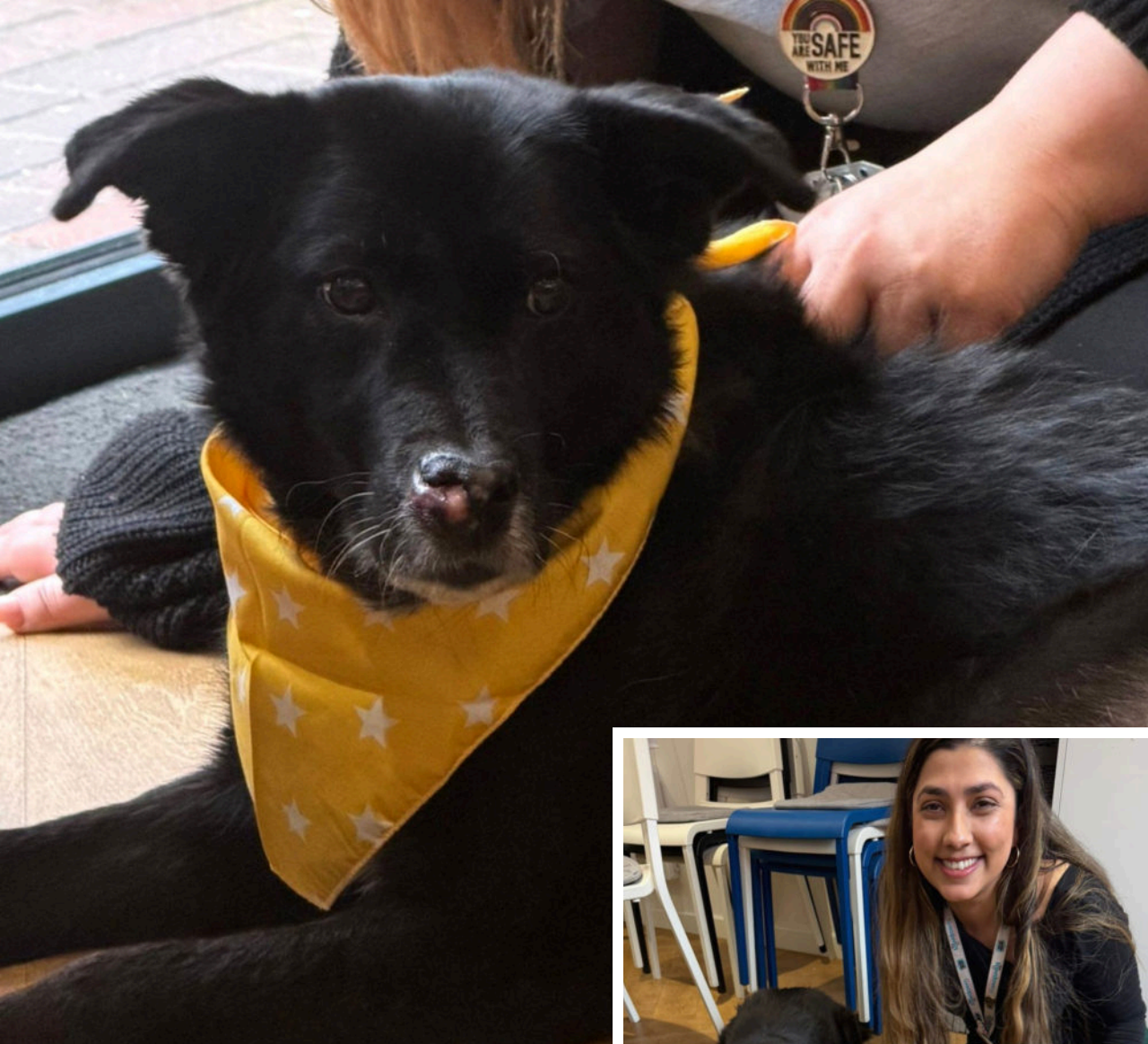
Creative arts workshops were central to the experience, providing opportunities for self-expression through graffiti art, photography and filmmaking. Confidence visibly grew as participants embraced new challenges, with quieter group members stepping into leadership roles and discovering new strengths. The work produced showcased not only exceptional creativity, but also pride, perseverance and teamwork.

Impact and importance

The exhibition brought these outcomes to life, providing a platform to share and celebrate what had been achieved. It stood as a testament to the impact of the residential, highlighting increased confidence, independence, stronger relationships and positive steps towards adulthood. More than anything, it demonstrated the importance of having spaces where LGBTQ+ young people feel valued, empowered and genuinely proud of who they are.

With thanks to our arts partners, staff, management team and funders, this project demonstrates what is possible when young people are trusted, supported and placed at the centre of their own journey.





Spotlight: Thank You Harper



During this year, we said a heartfelt goodbye to Harper, The Lowdown's much-loved therapy dog, as she retired from her role supporting young people within our services.

For five years, Harper worked alongside our team, supporting young people facing severe anxiety, trauma, learning difficulties and selective mutism. She helped break down barriers to engagement and made our services feel more accessible.

Calm, safety and trust

Her presence offered something traditional therapeutic settings cannot always provide. For many young people, Harper created a sense of calm, safety and trust, helping them open up, engage more fully, and regulate their emotions during difficult conversations.



Harper also played an important part in our one-to-one and 'walk and talk' interventions.

These approaches created a less formal, less intimidating environment, especially for young people who found traditional counselling settings overwhelming.

Beyond individual sessions, Harper helped create a warm and welcoming environment across the organisation. She often encouraged young people to attend and supported them in taking important first steps towards improving their mental health and wellbeing.

Contribution and legacy



As Harper retires, we reflect with gratitude on the significant contribution she has made to The Lowdown and the young people we support. Her legacy will continue to shape how we deliver accessible, compassionate and responsive services.

We extend our sincere thanks to Harper, her owner Krissy, and everyone who supported her work. The lasting impact she has had on our community will be felt for years to come.



Northampton Carnival

In June 2025, we proudly took part in the Northampton Carnival, celebrating creativity, collaboration and community while raising awareness of our services.

Young people and staff represented the organisation in the parade, with our vibrant float awarded first place in its section. Inspired by the carnival theme, *Earth, Wind, Fire and Water*, young people from across The Lowdown groups came together ahead of the event to share ideas and create artwork and decorations during a joint creative session.

This was made possible with support from Northampton Carnival, who funded an external carnival arts workshop alongside regular youth groups.

On Carnival Day, young people took part supported by staff and volunteers, culminating in a joyful and inclusive celebration that showcased their creativity, strengthened social & community connections, and increased local awareness of who we are and what we do.

Lowdown Legends Reunion

In April 2025, The Lowdown hosted the 'Lowdown Legends' Reunion, bringing together former and current staff, volunteers, trustees and supporters to celebrate the people who have shaped the organisation over the years.

The event provided a meaningful opportunity to reconnect, share stories, see the newly improved building and reflect on the collective effort that has enabled The Lowdown to continue supporting young people in Northampton.

As shared in the speeches on the evening, while The Lowdown still exists because young people need somewhere safe to access support, the other reason we are still here is because of the time, energy, passion and dedication of our team – our Lowdown Legends.



"The magic of The Lowdown isn't just the work we do; it's the incredible people who have helped create something so special. The Lowdown has always been more than bricks and mortar - its true foundations are the people. You are the magic. Every contribution you have made has mattered, and your legacy continues to shape The Lowdown and the lives of young people in Northampton, now and for generations to come."

The reunion honoured this legacy, celebrating the lasting impact of their contributions and the role they continue to play in shaping the organisation's future.



This building is dedicated to the amazing young people of Northamptonshire.

May this space continue to be a welcoming, inclusive and safe space for all.

Thank you to the brilliant Lowdown Teams over the years, whose vision, dedication and patience have made this extension and major refurbishment possible.

You are all True Lowdown Stars.

The Lowdown – 23rd January 2025.

Spotlight: A Fundraiser's Story

- by Joleen Dotan

Sometimes the most life-changing moments come from the most unexpected places. For one supporter, what began as a daunting skydive to raise funds became a turning point.

One year on, inspired by her own personal journey, she chose to take the leap again, not just for the thrill, but to give back to The Lowdown, a charity that has transformed so many young lives... including her own - she is not in our age group. This shows the wider impact The Lowdown has in the community.

"When the opportunity came for her to do something for charity and change the lives of young people, there wasn't anything that was going to change her mind, even the dread of the penny dropping of what she had actually signed up to, a SKYDIVE.

Preparing for the jump

The day came and she was prepared with snacks, a bottle of water and even a picture of her Dad tucked away safely in her sock. Her name was called and off she went to go and jump out of a plane to raise money for the charity who work with young people and changing their lives for the better.



After she landed with both feet back on earth telling herself 'If I can do this, I CAN do anything' she burst out crying as all her demons, dark moments and even the horrible black cloud that had been covering her for months just disappeared, she had become STRONGER!!

Life-changing experience

Fast forward 1 year and she is a different person. She searched for help, made the changes, blew away the black cloud and fought the demons that haunted her for years with the help of her friends and family. Now she wanted to do it all again as the 1st skydive changed her life (yes she is THAT crazy!!). But for other reasons. She wanted to do this for HER!!! And if she could help the charity again then why not, if it changed her life then it will change the lives of others too.

The funny thing about this story is that a skydive was not on her bucket list, but it was something she needed to do without actually knowing it. After falling through the sky and (you could say) blowing away the darkness she has become the person that she used to be before the world got too much.

The Lowdown helps so many young people and do amazing things, little did they know they also changed my life too."

£5,000

**collectively raised
(with 6 other
participants)**



A counsellor is someone who listens, doesn't judge and someone you can tell your worries to.



My name is Georgina and I am a Children and Young Person's Counsellor working for The Lowdown Northampton.



- My favourite animal is a hedgehog
- My favourite food is pasta bake and cheese
- My favourite sport is running / walking
- My favourite colour is peach / sunset colour
- I love drawing and colouring and helping others
- I look forward to meeting you soon! 😊



A counsellor is someone who listens, doesn't judge and someone you can tell your worries to.



My name is Andrew and I am a Children and Young Person's Counsellor working for The Lowdown Northampton.



- My favourite animal is a dog (cockapoo)
- My favourite food is chicken and rice
- My favourite sport is cycling
- My favourite colour is blue
- I love arts and crafts and helping others
- I look forward to meeting you soon! 😊



Our Happy Heads one page counsellor profiles - help to support young people in knowing who will be working with them.

Happy Heads



During 2025/26, The Lowdown's Happy Heads service supported 192 children aged 8 to 10, delivering 1,531 counselling sessions.

The service provided early emotional wellbeing support for children experiencing anxiety, low mood, emotional regulation difficulties, trauma responses, friendship issues, school worries, bereavement and family stress.

Support was delivered face-to-face mainly in schools, helping children feel safe, understood and able to express feelings in age-appropriate ways through talking, creative and play-based approaches.

The work helped children build confidence, manage big feelings, reduce worry and return to everyday activities with more resilience.



Happy Heads 2025/26 Wellbeing Outcomes



Percentage of Service Users who showed a maintained or improved Wellbeing score on completion of treatment



84%

Average across 12 months



192

unique children supported
(Children aged 8-10 across West Northamptonshire)



Strong outcomes. Brighter futures.

Happy Heads continues to make a positive difference to children and young people's emotional wellbeing.



Demand, capacity and access

Due to continued high demand across West Northamptonshire, Happy Heads has experienced extended referral to treatment waiting times during 2025/26.

Moving into 2026/27, The Lowdown is working in partnership with Time2Talk to increase capacity and improve access, helping reduce waiting times and respond more effectively to rising levels of need across the county for this age group.

Counsellors Perspectives

Our counselling service for young people aged 19 to 25 provides a vital lifeline at a time when many are facing the pressures of adulthood without the support they need.

Despite the very real challenges this age group experiences, there is no statutory provision available to them, making access to free counselling more important than ever.

To ensure we continue to offer this service, we work hard every year to apply to foundations, grants and trusts with the aim to secure year on year sustainable funding.

On this page, our counsellors share their reflections on the profound difference these sessions make, and why it is so important that young adults have somewhere safe, compassionate and free to turn.



Colette R

“I feel it’s incredibly important for us to provide support to this age group as they are thrust into adulthood, a lot of the time with huge expectations on them.

I particularly enjoy working with them as they are actively seeking the support and willing to do the work.

Certainly, within this community, many young people are struggling with the demands of adulthood, and adolescence may look like ending around 25 years rather than 18 as expected by society.

The clients I have worked with have finished counselling feeling seen and heard and have learned a lot about themselves, which has allowed them to have some confidence moving forward in their lives.

Therefore, being able to offer both mental health support and practical support within The Lowdown for this age group is a very special thing.”



Becky H

“Working with counselling clients aged 19 to 25 years is incredibly meaningful for me.

This stage of life can bring significant change, uncertainty, and pressure, and I have witnessed how powerful it can be when young people are given the space to be truly heard.

Seeing clients grow in confidence, develop self-understanding, and make positive changes in their lives makes me feel deeply proud of the work we do together.

These experiences continually reinforce for me how vital it is that young adults can access supportive, safe counselling services like The Lowdown.”



Andy A

“What has come to my attention is sometimes we are the only people they can talk to.

Occasionally they do not have their own family support network who they can go to.

The sessions are a safe space where they feel empowered to express their own thoughts and feelings without judgement.

It’s so, so important to have this safe space to be able to reflect on their life.”



Kirsty B

“Young people’s lives are being changed for the better. We simply need to exist to try and support young people who sometimes have nobody and nothing.

We make the biggest difference, and this work couldn’t be more important. How can I as a counsellor, not feel a sense of gratitude for being the person who offers support, who is part of an outstanding charity, who gets to create positive change?

Their friends and circle witness the changes in them, and they then want to come and try counselling for themselves, which in turn creates an even better change in this part of the world.”

Counselling

Supporting 8 to 25 year olds to manage and improve their mental health. Counselling can facilitate, support and empower young people to make positive changes in a safe, friendly and non-judgemental environment.

Counselling support is person-centred, with aspects of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and solution focused therapy.

A record 13,464 counselling sessions were provided during this financial year with an average of 91% of young people stating a maintained or improved Core Score the measure of the improvement in their emotional wellbeing.



Case Study:

A 13 year old young person was referred into The Lowdown's counselling service following significant safeguarding concerns linked to suicidal thoughts and plans to overdose using medication collected from home.

At the point of referral, they were feeling overwhelmed, emotionally withdrawn, and unable to openly share the extent of their distress with family or peers. Experiences of bullying, family stress, and emotional isolation had left them struggling to cope safely.

Personalised safety plan

Immediate intervention focused on stabilisation and reducing risk. A personalised safety plan was developed from the outset, alongside practical coping strategies including grounding techniques, journalling, emotional regulation tools, and identifying trusted adults for support. Sessions provided a safe and consistent space where the young person was able to begin expressing emotions, they had previously internalised.

Over 12 face-to-face sessions, the young person gradually moved from crisis towards stability. They developed a stronger understanding of their emotional triggers and became more confident in recognising early warning signs before reaching crisis point. Creative therapeutic tools and reflective activities supported them to process difficult experiences, improve communication with family, and build healthier coping strategies.

Significant impact

The impact of the intervention was significant. By the end of support, there had been no further disclosures of intent to act on suicidal thoughts, relationships at home had improved, and the young person reported feeling more able to talk openly about their emotions. Their wellbeing score reduced dramatically from 28 to 2, reflecting a move from severe emotional distress to healthy wellbeing.

This case highlights the importance of rapid, early intervention for young people at high risk. Through timely therapeutic support, safety planning, and consistent relational work, the service helped prevent escalation and supported a young person to regain stability, hope, and emotional confidence.

13,464

**counselling sessions
provided this
financial year**



Client testimonials:



"I found it really good... and has helped transform how I think about things and how I view life."

"It was a great experience and a great way to talk about personal stuff in a safe environment."

"I found counselling very helpful for my mind. Ever since I've started, I have been in a better mental state."



1,790
support contacts
provided this
financial year

Service User Testimonial:

"I wholeheartedly recommend Restart and their mental health team. They've walked with me through some of the hardest chapters of my life, including surviving attempted murder and navigating the homeless system.

They've offered me acceptance, safety, and genuine care. More than I sometimes found elsewhere. They know my story without judgment. They've encouraged me to keep believing in my dreams, even when they felt impossible. And because of them, I've been able to make a life I never imagined possible. More than anything, Restart gave me something I had struggled to find, a place where I felt safe, accepted, understood, and able to be completely myself.

I honestly don't know where I'd be without them. They have changed my life with their kindness, compassion, and unwavering belief in me. I will always be grateful."

RE:Start

The RE:Start Service is for 16 to 25 year olds and provides practical and emotional wellbeing support for young people transitioning from CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) to AMS (Adult Mental Health Services).



Case Study:

The young person, a 19 year old, referred to RE:Start by CAMHS in August 2025, had been engaging well in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and exposure therapy for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Emetophobia (fear of vomiting).

She had shown resilience and increasing motivation to think about her future, while continuing to manage anxiety with medication.

At assessment, she identified several goals, including finding suitable employment, improving her mental health to enable future study, developing budgeting skills, understanding financial support, exploring realistic options for moving out, improving communication with family, finding an accessible psychology course, and obtaining photo ID.

Practical and emotional support

Across 22 face-to-face sessions, RE:Start provided practical and emotional support tailored to these goals. This included helping her research higher education options, complete her UCAS personal statement, and identify the most suitable pathway into further study.

She accepted an offer from the University of Northampton to begin training as a Counsellor in September.

Support was also given with applying for Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment, understanding benefits, attending Jobcentre appointments with advocacy where needed, developing her CV, preparing for interviews, and improving her understanding of payslips and HMRC terminology.

Confidence building experiences

Key outcomes included greater confidence in planning for her future, improved financial awareness, successful benefit awards, and valuable work experience through a temporary role at Tesco.



Areas for continued development include securing further employment, maintaining access to mental health support as she transitions to university, and continuing exposure-based work to build confidence and independence.

RE:Start Youth Involvement and Young Adult Social Groups

Recognising the positive impact of our Northampton Young Adult Social Group in reducing social isolation, we identified a wider county-wide need for accessible spaces where young people could connect and feel supported.

In response, we expanded our young adult provision throughout 2025, strengthening opportunities for young people to build friendships, improve wellbeing and feel part of their local community. A key milestone was the launch of our Youth Involvement Group in early 2025. Made up of RE:Start service users, from the outset the group played a central role in shaping and developing activities for other young people accessing the service.

Welcoming and inclusive

Within just a few months, they organised a wellbeing event for all RE:Start service users in May 2025. The event brought young people together for an afternoon of crafts, games, animal encounters and a silent disco, creating a welcoming and inclusive environment where attendees could relax, connect and have fun.

The Youth Involvement Group has continued to be at the heart of service development. In their own words: "We created the Tea & Talk group so us young adults can have a place that can be both sociable and yet more peaceful at the same time. It gets people out and is a quieter group to chill/feel safe".

They also shared: "Young Adult Social has different activities on each week including a few of our favourites: Journal making, painting, and games nights. It's more social and a great place to make friends and participate in different interests and creative experiences".

Launching new groups

Over the past year, we have expanded our Young Adult Social Groups beyond Northampton, launching new groups in Moulton and Towcester to reach young people across the county, who otherwise wouldn't be able to access the groups.



How our young people feel:

"At Young Adult Social we get the chance to broaden our outlook on new people and environments - for example, we have done a variety of activities like Clay making, Kahoot Quiz, Bingo and Candle making."

"Gain the opportunity to reconnect with people like us."

FREE - FOR 18-25'S



551

support contacts
provided this
financial year

Mon

Tea & Talk 1pm-3pm

@ The Lowdown Lounge at The Lowdown, Kingswell Street, Northampton NN1 1PP.

Tue

Towcester Young Adult Social 6:30pm-8pm

@ The Barn, Bransons Lane, Towcester, NN12 6AX

Wed

Moulton Young Adult Social 1pm-3pm

@ Moulton Community Centre, Sandy Hill Reedings, Northampton, NN3 7AX

Thu

Northampton Young Adult Social 7pm-8:30pm

@ The Lowdown Lounge at The Lowdown, Kingswell Street, Northampton NN1 1PP

"Having YIG we're able to input into things we want - It gave us a voice we didn't know we had." "We enjoy the inclusivity of the group."

"It's made me more confident in talking to people & trying new things."

"We get to know a wide range of like-minded people and that has made all the difference for me."

"I feel like I've a new family." "We like the positive environment."

Drop-Ins

During 2025/26, The Lowdown's Mental Health & Wellbeing (MHWB) and Information & Guidance (I&G) Drop-Ins continued to provide immediate, confidential 1:1 support to young people across Northamptonshire.

The MHWB service recorded **604 contacts with 276 unique users**, offering emotional support, risk management and safety planning, a space to build coping strategies, and access onward support where needed. The I&G service delivered **433 contacts to 165 unique users**, supporting young people with practical advice around housing, education, benefits, SEND, employment and navigating local and national services.

Increased accessibility

In November 2025, both services merged operationally, opening Monday to Friday, 1–6pm, to increase accessibility and flexibility for young people. Two workers are now available daily to support service users. This integrated model has improved continuity of care, reduced barriers to access, and ensured young people can receive timely support that responds to both their emotional wellbeing and practical needs.



Case Study:

A 23 year old service user accessed the Information & Guidance Drop-In seeking support with education-related issues that were impacting their wellbeing.

Difficulties with student finance, university demands, and existing mental health conditions contributed to increased anxiety, low mood, and disengagement from studies.

Through ongoing I&G support, the service provided advocacy with university support services, resulting in appropriate adjustments and equipment being put in place. The service also supported the individual to navigate the NHS Right to Choose pathway, leading to an ADHD diagnosis and access to further treatment.

The service user continues to access the Drop-In for ongoing emotional support and stability when needed.



1,037

support contacts
provided this
financial year

Quote from a Service User:

"Information and Guidance were able to support me by going above and beyond their services... I've been helped with my immigration status, university application, student finance and citizenship advice."

I would recommend this service to anyone no matter what their issue is because the Information and Guidance service is so catered to everyone's individual needs, and even if they may not be experts they will get down to the bottom of it and make sure research is done."



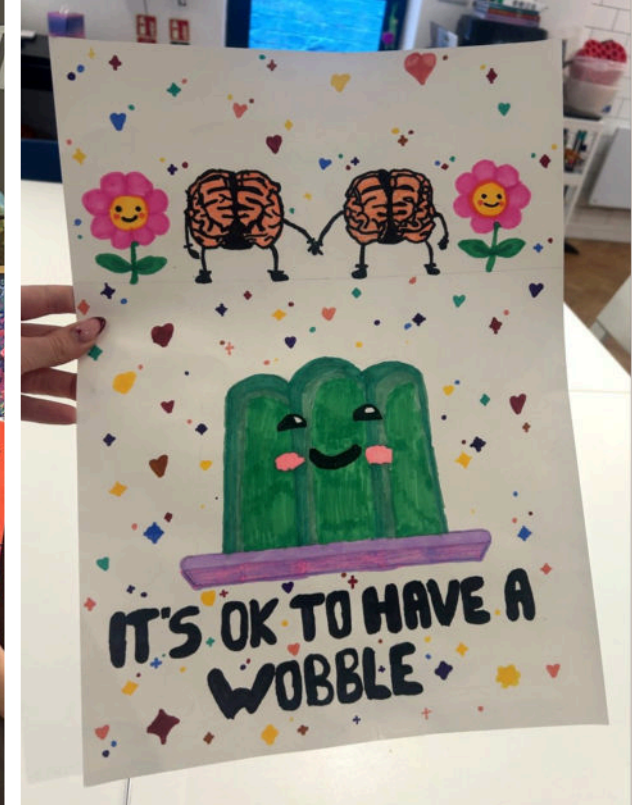
Youth Groups





Out There Youth Groups





Mindspace





Accessibility

Level 1 & 2

Disability
Confidence status
achieved

Our presence at diverse community events, universities, inclusion fairs, faith networks, Pride, and within mental health campaigns ensured we were able to reach young people who may not otherwise access support.

Social media engagement, particularly “behind the scenes” video content, further reduced anxiety by highlighting our inclusive building and services. Network involvement strengthened referral pathways and widened access across education, health, and voluntary sectors.

Removing common barriers

This year we introduced Lowdown Information Packs and Sensory Needs Checklists, which will have a lasting accessibility impact by removing common barriers such as uncertainty, sensory overwhelm, and fear of the unknown.

These resources:

- Help young people understand what to expect before attending;
- Reduce anxiety and increase confidence, particularly for neurodivergent young people;
- Enable ongoing improvements to the physical environment and service delivery;

This work all ensures services are easier to access and more inclusive, the environment is welcoming, and we continue to take positive action on young people’s feedback.

Continued commitment

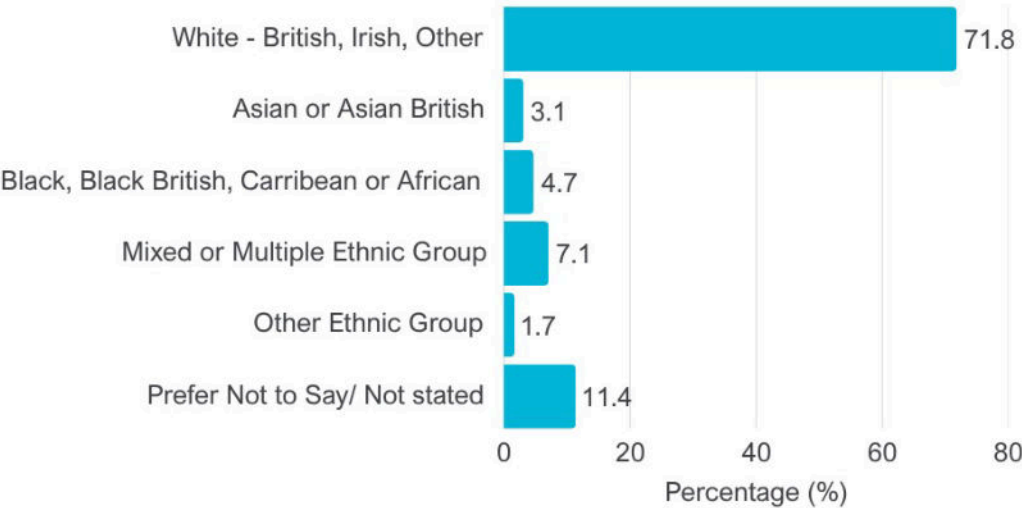
We successfully applied for Disability Confidence Level 1 and Level 2 status, part of this work showed our continued commitment to recruitment, training and improved accessible environments for all staff and visitors to the building.

A new Equality Diversity and Inclusion policy was created for the organisation, which again highlighted and strengthened the value of Inclusion for all.

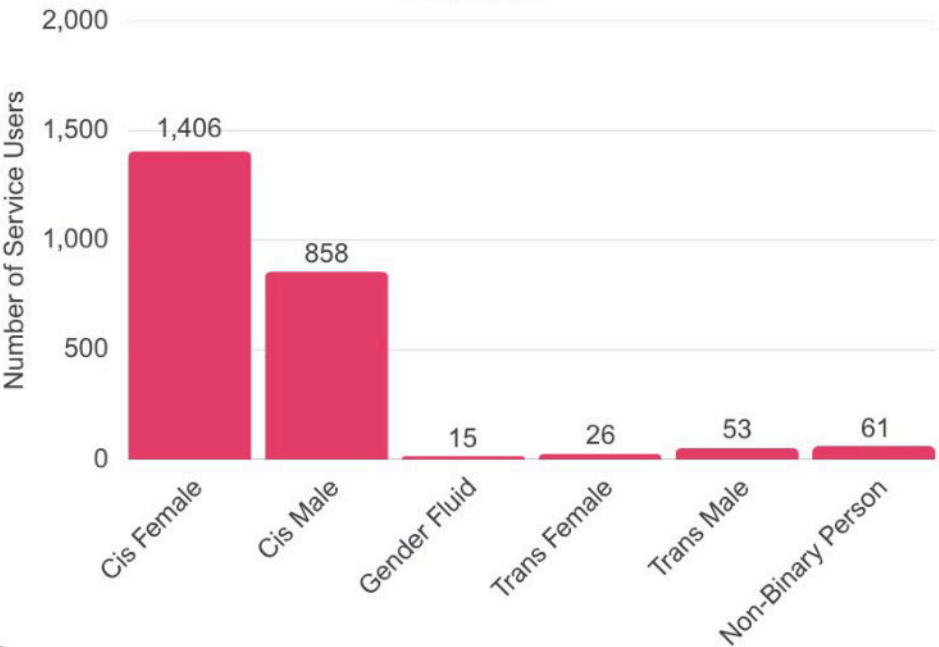
Work within EDI was key to the development of further EDI training to be delivered to staff in the new year. Ensuring that this is an ongoing process, to maintain the safe space and inclusive environment for all regardless of any uniqueness or support needed.

Accessibility Statistics (2025 / 26)

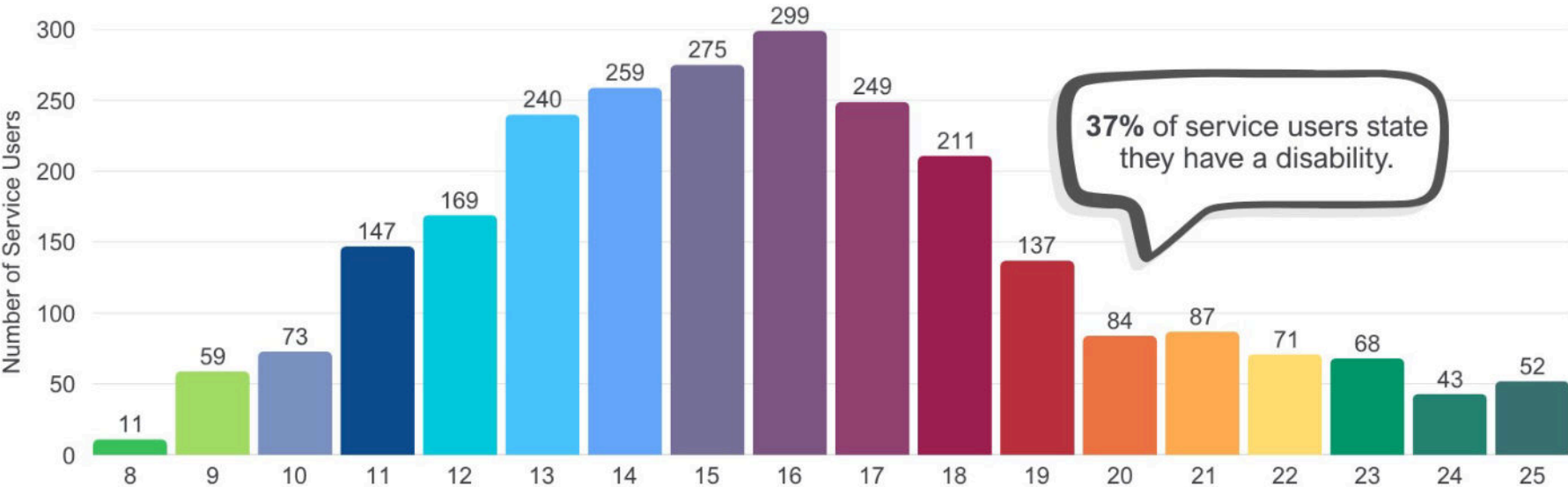
Ethnicity

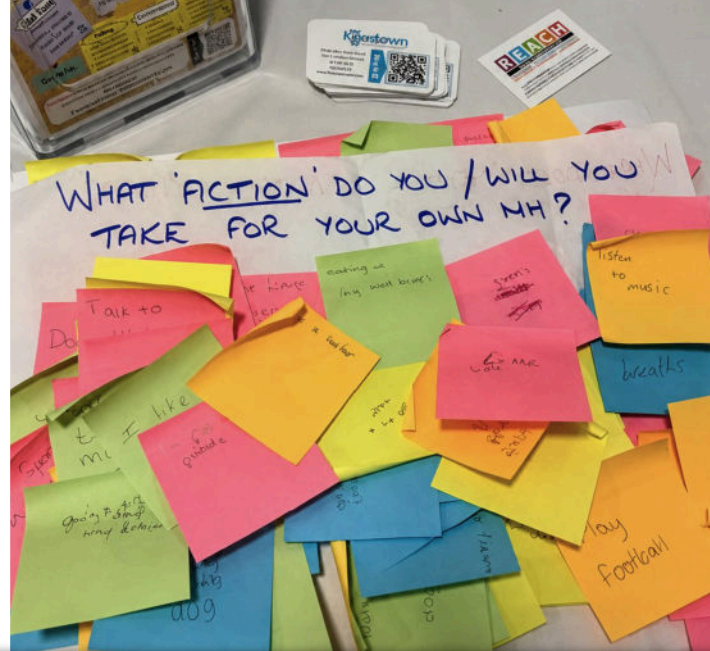


Gender



Age Range





Engagement Events



Fundraising Report

Each year we are supported by both new and returning donors, fundraisers and partners, and this year has been no exception. Despite an increasingly challenging funding climate, we have been incredibly grateful for the continued generosity and dedication shown by our community. Their commitment plays a vital role in supporting young people's mental health in Northamptonshire.

We were delighted to be selected as Charity of the Year by a local solicitor (who wish to remain anonymous), they helped to raise both funds and awareness of The Lowdown's services and supported our Christmas Party attended by young people who use our services. Their support, alongside other local businesses such as Michael Jones Jewellers, Hays Travel, Meadows & Co Accountants and Barclaycard demonstrate the strength of partnerships within our community and their commitment to supporting young people's futures.

We have also continued to benefit from the generosity of individual supporters and community-led fundraisers. Events included Northampton Carnival, The Solstice Festival and These Guys Theatre Company. We also received donations in memory of loved ones which remain particularly meaningful, and we are honoured to be chosen by families and friends to provide ongoing legacy in their memory.

Throughout the year, individuals and groups took on fundraising challenges and events to support The Lowdown. In September 2025 we had 7 people including 3 young people take part in the 'Leap for The Lowdown' Skydive fundraiser which raised £5,000 for our services. People also took part in the Amazing Northampton Run and a father and son, Nathan and Reece took on The Santa Run 5K. Our very own staff took part in a 50's themed Murder Mystery evening with attendees paying 'what they feel' for the evening of entertainment and home cooked food. We also had a previous service user take part in an Ultra MMA Fight raising over £2,000. Joseph wanted to give back after using The Lowdown to support his mental health and says he couldn't have got to where he is now without our help.

We are grateful to schools who fundraise and donate, this year we had support from Northampton School for Boys, Champion School and Moulton School. We also continue to be supported by local Rotary Clubs, Church Groups, Women's Institute and Northampton Quakers. Their enthusiasm and commitment not only raised valuable income but also helped increase awareness of mental health support for young people.

 We also continue to receive support through online platforms, regular giving, and small but meaningful contributions such as the Northampton Lottery participation, easyfundraising purchases, and events and donations via JustGiving.

In addition to community fundraising, we have secured support from trusts, foundations, and grant funders to contribute towards our services and projects. This funding enables us to continue delivering vital support including 19-25's counselling, youth groups, and youth-led initiatives such as our Youth Advisory Board.

These consistent income streams are essential and we remain proactive in seeking new opportunities and strengthening existing relationships.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to every individual, organisation, funder and supporter who has contributed to The Lowdown this year. Your generosity ensures that young people across Northamptonshire can access the support they need, when they need it most.



Support Us

Your support and donations are vital so we can continue to provide free services for young people. Our work helps us to increase young people's resilience and empower them to thrive and cope with challenges in their life.

There are lots of ways you can support us:

- Set up a monthly donation
- Make a one off donation
- Organise a fundraising event or activity
- Donate via JustGiving, easyfundraising or play the Northampton Lottery



Or scan this QR
code to instantly
donate



Who's Who

Everyone who has worked or volunteered for The Lowdown between 1st April 2025 and 31st March 2026.

The Lowdown would not be what it is without our amazing team who are very flexible and constantly help us to adapt to fulfil every opportunity we get to support young people.



CEO:

Sharon Womersley

Deputy CEO:

Laura Simms

Office Manager:

Lisa Braithwaite

Fundraising and Marketing Manager:

Ellie White

Clinical Manager:

Rachel Welsh

Support Services Manager:

Helen Heng (left Aug 2025)

RE:Start Team Leader:

Aisling Kelly-Gee (joined Sept 2025)

Drop-In and Participation Manager:

Rebecca Kings

Youth Services Coordinator:

Kelly Emmanuel

Trustees:

Stephen Edmonds (Chair), Alisa Moore (Treasurer), Brendan Dunphy, Andre Gore, Damen Boughen, Will White, Alice Smyth.

Jonathan Smith (left Nov 2025), Dr Mike Scanlan (left Nov 2025), Georgina Bayliss (left Nov 2025), Andrea Martin (left Feb 2026).

Honorary Presidents:

Jan Jourard, Dr John Toby

Administrator Team Lead:

Maxine Eborall

Administrators:

Alison Inglese, Victoria O'Shea

Access and Engagement Lead:

Charlene Ward-Greef

Information and Guidance Drop-In Workers:

Cami Martin, Eden Davies

Mental Health and Wellbeing Drop-In Workers:

Colette Rose, Kelly Lane, Niamh Roe, Kirsty Roberts, Krissy Jimdar, Meghan Wright, Peggy Brayfield-Jones, Emma Rose

Mental Health and Wellbeing Drop-In Volunteers:

Demi Turland, Lisa Greenough, Niamh Roe, Richard Wootton

Clinical Support:

Becky Hyland, Ryan Parkinson, Meghan Wright, Georgina Bridgewater

Paid Counsellors:

Adrian Shaw, Anna Tutt, Rebecca Ibbs, Becky Hyland, Daniel Kwakye, Emma Rose, Hitomi Palmer, James Young, Jennifer Gee, Laura Kaye, Leanna Allsop, Matthew Price, Meghan Wright, Natalie Morrison, Niamh Row, Rebecca Wheeler, Ryan Parkinson, Kirsty Bees, Kirsty Roberts, Toniiie Smith, Kelly Lane, Kanan Robinson, Krissy Jimdar, Katie Redding, Helen Shouler, Colette Rose, Nyasha Nyamariwata, Toni Allard, Julie Elliott, Camilla Cobb, Andrew Alexander, Georgina Bridgewater, Peggy Brayfield-Jones, Vicky O'Shea

Placement Counsellors:

Lisa Greenough, Dawn Willis-Lovelock, Lucy Ananda, Julie Elliot, Camilla Cobb, Niamh Row, Peggy Brayfield-Jones, Sheelagh Chetwode, Charlotte Ward, Louise Merritt, Vicky O'Shea

Volunteer Counsellors:

Geraldine Ward, Hitomi Palmer, Laura Kaye, Steph Clayton, Toni Allard, Charlotte Ward, Sheelagh Chetwode, Julie Elliott, Vicky O'Shea, Niamh Roe

School Outreach Counsellors and Workers:

Emma Rose, Katie Redding, Vicky O'Shea, Andrew Alexander, Peggy Brayfield-Jones, Georgina Bridgewater, Krissy Jimdar

Clinical Supervisors:

Daniel Kwakye, Matthew Price, Kelly Lane, Alison Souster, Clare Marshall, Rebecca Vivash, Chelsea Buswell, Charlotte Tomaselli-Halford, Catherine Bruce, Kate Williams, Robina Zafar

RE:Start Support Workers:

Carol Jeyes, Julie Holt, Lauryn Agyeman-Kyeremeh, Stephanie Gardner

RE:Start Youth Engagement Worker:

Rebekah Troop

Out There Youth Leaders:

Julie Holt, Cami Martin, Sophie Turner, William Beckett, Rebekah Troop, Ashe Harrison, Maxine Eborall, Harry Hiskins

Out There Volunteers:

Tyler Bury, Sally Nickols, Talia Sear

Wellbeing Youth Worker:

Maxine Eborall

Volunteer Wellbeing Youth Worker:

Taylor Gardiner

Down 2Be You Youth Group Workers:

Kirsty Roberts, Georgina Bridgewater, Peggy Brayfield-Jones, Cami Martin, Nyasha Nyamariwata

Down 2Be You Youth Group Volunteers:

Eden Davies, Sally Nickols, Gregg Brown, Jessica Saunders, Harry Hiskins

Young Adult Social Workers:

Carol Jeyes, Stephanie Gardner

Youth Advisory Board Leaders:

Rebecca Kings, Maxine Eborall

Youth Advisory Board Members:

Abigail Davie, Alice Durbala, Bekebi Mezeh, Bushra Ahmed, Ebony-Mae Palliser, Erin Caspall, Otto Morrison, Grace Pontin, Ibtisam Mussa, Jagraj Shah, Jennah Rylander, Jezz Cheng Chung Ming, Klea Tzatzos, Lily Morris, Lorraine Nkomo, Nathan Boak, Nicole Ashcroft-Connolly, Olivia Makobu, Oskar White, Ruby Cook, Sahil Sahak, Sarah Fetuga, Shafee Jolil, Shane Gillett, Tanika Patel, William Dunne, Amy Ebanks

Other Volunteers:

Jan Jourard

Acknowledgements and Thanks

Each year we are supported by both new and returning donors, fundraisers and partners, and this year has been no exception.

Despite an increasingly challenging funding climate, we have been incredibly grateful for the continued generosity and dedication shown by our community. Their commitment plays a vital role in supporting young people's mental health in Northamptonshire.

- **Ashby Computers**
- B&Q Fund
- **BBC Radio Northampton**
- Beckett's and Sergeant's Educational Foundation
- **Breathe HR**
- Campion School
- **Crick Software**
- Department for Culture Media and Sport
- **EasyFundraising**
- Faraway Children's Trust
- **Free2Talk**
- Gateway HR
- **GiveStar**
- GXO Logistics Wellingborough
- **Hays Travel - Weston Favell**
- Jane Dollar
- **JD Foundation**
- Lowdown Supper Club
- **MatchBox Cafe**
- Meadows and Co Accountants
- **Mental Health Collaborative Northamptonshire**
- Michael Jones Jewellers
- **Mother's Union St Benedicts Church Hunsbury**
- Moulton School
- **Much Loved Donations**
- National Lottery
- **National Youth Agency**
- Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- **Nlive Radio**
- Northampton Chronicle and Echo
- **Northampton Lottery**
- Northampton Quakers
- **Northampton School for Boys**
- **Northampton School for Girls**
- Northampton Town Council
- **Northamptonshire Community Foundation**
- Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board
- **PayPal**
- Public Health Northamptonshire
- **Reach Collaborative Partners - Youth Works, Service Six, Time2Talk and CHAT**
- Roade Youth Club
- **Rotary Club of Northampton Becket**
- Rotary Club of Northampton West
- **Rotary Clubs of Northamptonshire**
- Royal and Derngate
- **Scott Bader Charity Fund**
- Simon Rivett-Carnac Trust
- **Social Investment Business**
- Solicitor's in Northampton (Anonymous)
- **Solstice Festival**
- South Northants Youth Engagement
- **St Faiths Church**
- St James's Place Foundation
- **Surefire Creative**
- The Bridge
- **The Charities Trust**
- The Talent Fund
- **The University of Northampton**
- Theze Guys Theatre Company
- **TKMaxx**
- Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire
- **West Northants Council**
- Young Northants
- **Youth Investment Fund**





Report of the Trustees

Public Benefit

The Trustees have taken due regard of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

The Lowdown is a Mental Health charity, providing free and confidential support services for 8 to 25 year olds and their families in Northamptonshire. We provide a caring environment where young people are always supported in their journey towards positive emotional health and wellbeing regardless of their socio-economic circumstances, ethnicity, gender, religion, ability, sexuality, or perceived disadvantage.

We aim to help children and young people feel valued and supported so that they can live safe, happy, and healthy lives, be part of and enjoy family and community life, and achieve their full potential. The services we provide, along with our varied outreach services, not only benefit young people directly but also the wider community.

The Lowdown provides student placements for counselling and other trainees in order to develop the workforce of the future to support the escalation in demand for mental health services for children and young people.

Our anonymous service user questionnaires, regular internal reviews, and feedback from the organisations that use The Lowdown enable us to keep abreast of any gaps in youth service provision, and we continually develop our services to fill them. Young people are involved when introducing new services to ensure that they meet their needs.

Structure, Governance, and Management

The Lowdown is a charity governed by its constitution. The trustees are responsible for the strategic direction of The Lowdown, meeting quarterly or more frequently to review the performance of the organisation. Trustees regularly do service visits and conduct safeguarding deep dives and a Finance and Operations Committee, chaired by our Treasurer, review our financial and operational performance. These Trustees then independently feed back to the Board of Trustees if there are any concerns.

The CEO is responsible for the day-to-day management of the organisation and is in regular contact with the Chair of Trustees/Trustees to report progress. The Lowdown became a CIO on 1st April 2022 due to the growth of the organisation.

Setting Pay and Remuneration of Key Management Personnel

The Board of Trustees is responsible for determining the remuneration of the charity's key management personnel. In setting pay, the trustees seek to ensure that remuneration is fair, proportionate and sufficient to attract, retain and motivate individuals with the skills and experience required to lead the charity effectively, while reflecting the charity's values and stewardship of charitable funds.

Remuneration is reviewed periodically and is informed by a range of relevant factors, including the responsibilities and scope of each role, individual performance, organisational performance, affordability, and prevailing economic conditions. The trustees also consider external benchmark data where appropriate, including salary information from comparable charities of a similar size and complexity, as well as relevant sector salary surveys and publicly available remuneration data.

When determining remuneration, the trustees take account of the charity's financial position and ensure that any pay decisions are consistent with the charity's objectives, resources and public benefit responsibilities.

The charity aims to maintain a remunerative framework that is transparent, evidence-based and aligned with good governance principles, ensuring that pay decisions represent an appropriate balance between market competitiveness and responsible use of charitable resources.

Relationships with Related Parties and Other Organisations

The charity works collaboratively with a range of organisations in furtherance of its charitable purposes. These include statutory bodies, voluntary and community organisations, funding partners, professional advisers and other charities where partnership working enhances the delivery of services and maximises benefit for beneficiaries.

The trustees recognise the importance of maintaining effective and transparent relationships with related parties. Any related party transactions are conducted in accordance with the charity's governing document, the requirements of charity law and accounting regulations, and are undertaken on terms that are in the best interests of the charity. Trustees are required to declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest, and appropriate procedures are followed to ensure that such conflicts are appropriately managed.

The charity values the contribution of its partner organisations and seeks to develop collaborative relationships that improve outcomes for beneficiaries, make effective use of resources and promote the achievement of its charitable objectives.

Risk Management

The trustees are responsible for identifying, reviewing and managing the principal risks facing the charity. They have undertaken a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed and are satisfied that appropriate systems and procedures have been established to identify, assess, monitor and manage those risks.

The trustees maintain a risk management framework to identify the key strategic, operational, financial, governance and compliance risks facing the charity. Each significant risk is assessed according to its potential impact and likelihood, with appropriate mitigating actions identified and monitored. Internal controls, financial procedures, delegated authorities and governance arrangements are designed to minimise exposure to risk while enabling the charity to pursue its charitable objectives effectively.

The trustees are satisfied that the systems of internal control and risk management are appropriate to the size and nature of the charity and provide reasonable, although not absolute, assurance against material loss or failure.

Appointment of Trustees

New trustees are recruited for their expertise and knowledge. The Lowdown adheres to a policy of equal opportunities in the advertisement, selection, recruitment, and training of its trustees, and within all aspects of its service delivery.

Applicants are interviewed by the trustees and CEO, who then reach a decision as to the suitability of the candidate.

Successful candidates are inducted and appointed subject to a satisfactory DBS check and fulfilment of a 3 month probationary period. At the next annual general meeting, they are officially elected, and trustees are subject to re-election at our AGM as per our constitution. In accordance with good practice, governance is regularly reviewed.





Treasurer's Report and Financial Review (31st March 2026)

This has been another busy year for the fantastic and dedicated team at The Lowdown. It has been great for the teams to be able to work together in one building at Kingswell Street following the completion of the two-story extension.

The financial statements reflect a net deficit for the year of £112k. This was expected and budgeted given the challenging funding environment and growing demands for our services.

Consequently, the general reserve has decreased by £63k to £558k compared to £621k last year. As a Board of Trustees, we are comfortable with this reduction and have sufficient reserves to be in line with the policy.

The reserve policy, approved by the Trustees, is to protect the charity's core activities, ensure financial sustainability, and provide a buffer for unexpected events. The policy ensures the charity can continue to meet its obligations even if faced with adverse financial conditions.

The reserves policy is reviewed on a quarterly basis and are currently based on six months operating costs, three months direct costs and allows for any funding gaps as grants are received at various times during the year.

Total funds held as at 31 March 2026 was £1.7m, of which £1.1m was restricted funds, therefore the unrestricted reserves at year end were £0.6m.

Tangible fixed assets represent £1.2m of total funds, and £0.5m represents free reserves at year end and this is sufficient to cover operating costs, direct costs and the funding gap at year end.

Excluding the capital monies received in 2025, total income is 4% lower this year at £1.26m compared to £1.31m like for like income.

Investment in salaries has continued again this year, enabling us to deliver the services needed. Salaries represent 76% of the total costs. Overheads are strictly managed and robustly reviewed. Depreciation has increased by £38k to £54k this year due to the building work completion and starting to depreciate the works.

The cash balance at the year-end totalled £664k, down £213k on prior year. This is due to several factors, including the release of deferred income as performance related services were delivered, a return to normal levels of capital expenditure, the ongoing delivery of youth services funded from general reserves while new funding sources are identified and investment in training of our team following receipt of a training donation in the prior year. The Lowdown continues to maximise its interest return using the Flagstone Cash Deposit account generating £23k of interest.

The team have also invested time during this year strengthening and updating internal policies that are fit for the size of the organisation and compliant with legislation.

The Trustees at The Lowdown would like to say a big thank you to the organisations and individuals who generously made donations and gave their time, all of which allows The Lowdown to continually evolve and expand its service offerings.



Alisa Moore
Treasurer

How to get in touch with us:



Call us: 01604 634385

Monday to Friday: 9am - 5pm

Saturday: 9am-4pm



Email us:

General Enquiries:

info@thelowdownnorthampton.co.uk

Fundraising, Events and Business Partnership:

fundraisingandmarketing@thelowdownnorthampton.co.uk

Drop-Ins:

dropin@thelowdownnorthampton.co.uk

LGBTQ+ Support Enquiries:

lgbtqsupport@thelowdownnorthampton.co.uk

RE:Start Enquiries:

aislingkellygee@thelowdownnorthampton.co.uk

Youth Groups Enquiries:

youthgroups@thelowdownnorthampton.co.uk



How to find us:

The Lowdown, 3 Kingswell Street (off Gold Street),
Northampton NN1 1PP



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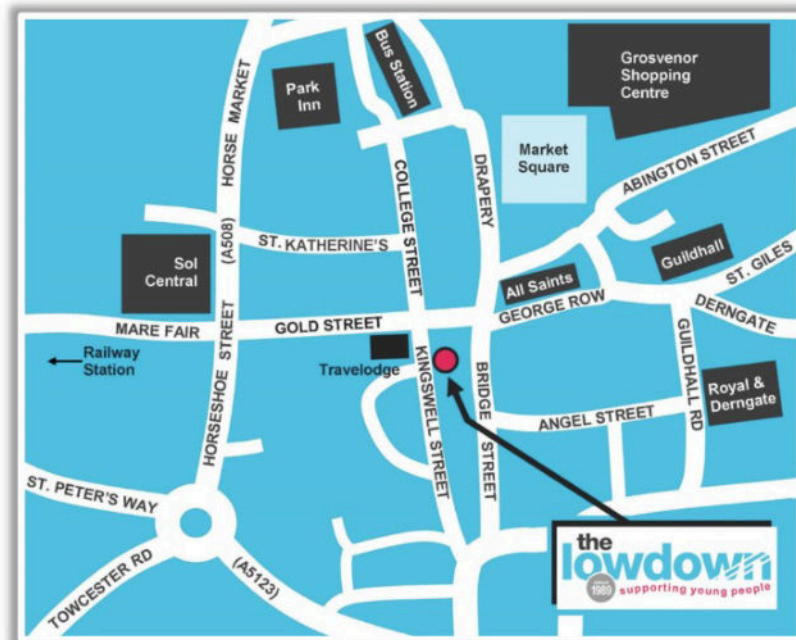
[thelowdown1989](https://www.facebook.com/thelowdown1989)



[thelowdownnn1](https://www.instagram.com/thelowdownnn1)



The Lowdown



- We are 2 mins from the North Gate Bus Station.
- If coming from Gold Street, turn at the Travelodge.
- **For our Drop-In Services:** Go to the red door and ring the buzzer.
- **For our Counselling Service:** Come through the blue door, up the steps to the glass door.
- **For our RE:Start, Youth Groups, MindSpace, YAB & Young Adult Social:** Come through the accessible side entrance to the right of the building in the Car Park.

**For information on all our services or to
make a referral, visit our website...**

www.thelowdown.info



REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: CE027753 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1197273

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026
FOR
THE LOWDOWN**

THE LOWDOWN

CONTENTS OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

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THE LOWDOWN

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2026. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

STRATEGIC REPORT

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (the CIO) governed according to the new and more flexible Constitution dated 22 December 2021. It was established to take forward the work of the unincorporated charity with registered charity number 801886.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Company number

CE027753 (England and Wales)

Registered Charity number

1197273

Registered office

3 Kingswell Street
Northampton
Northamptonshire
NN1 1PP

Trustees

S Edmonds
G Bayliss (resigned 10/11/25)
J Smith (resigned 10/11/25)
A Martin (resigned 23/2/26)
M Scanlan (resigned 10/11/25)
B Dunphy
A Gore
D Boughen
W White (appointed 28/4/25)
A Smyth (appointed 23/2/26)
A Moore (appointed 10/11/25)
C Harrison-Breed (appointed 18/5/26)

Auditors

Shaw Gibbs (Audit) Limited, Statutory Auditor
Eagle House
28 Billing Road
Northampton
Northamptonshire
NN1 5AJ

THE LOWDOWN

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales, the Charities Act 2011, Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

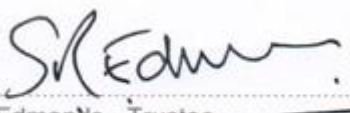
- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

AUDITORS

The auditors, Shaw Gibbs (Audit) Limited, Statutory Auditor, will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

Report of the trustees, incorporating a strategic report, approved by order of the board of trustees, as the charity trustees, on 18 September 2026 and signed on the board's behalf by:


S Edmonds - Trustee

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE LOWDOWN

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Lowdown (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 March 2026 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Statement of Financial Position and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2026 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Report of the Independent Auditors thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the Report of the Trustees is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE LOWDOWN

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements which give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditors under Section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a Report of the Independent Auditors that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

We identified the greatest risk of material impact on the financial statements from irregularities, including fraud, to be the override of controls by management and the understatement of revenue. Our audit procedures to respond to these risks included enquiries of management about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities, sample testing on the posting of journals, reviewing meeting minutes, regulatory correspondence and professional fees, detailed substantive testing on the completeness of income, and reviewing accounting estimates for biases. We will also review the regulatory correspondence with the Charity Commission.

Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial statements, even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards. We are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

These inherent limitations are particularly significant in the case of misstatement resulting from fraud as this may involve sophisticated schemes designed to avoid detection, including deliberate failure to record transactions, collusion or the provision of intentional misrepresentations.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE LOWDOWN

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shaw Gibbs (Audit) Limited". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Shaw Gibbs (Audit) Limited, Statutory Auditor
Chartered Certified Accountants
Eagle House
28 Billing Road
Northampton
Northamptonshire
NN1 5AJ

Date: 21st September 2026

THE LOWDOWN

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2026 Total funds £	2025 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies	2	48,097	24,999	73,096	740,373
Charitable activities	4				
Charitable Activities		1,118,955	49,106	1,168,061	1,171,990
Investment income	3	<u>23,457</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>23,457</u>	<u>24,543</u>
Total		<u>1,190,509</u>	<u>74,105</u>	<u>1,264,614</u>	<u>1,936,906</u>
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable activities	5				
Charitable Activities		<u>1,246,026</u>	<u>130,302</u>	<u>1,376,328</u>	<u>1,186,681</u>
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)					
Transfers between funds	15	(55,517) <u>(745)</u>	(56,197) <u>745</u>	(111,714) <u>-</u>	750,225 <u>-</u>
Net movement in funds		(56,262)	(55,452)	(111,714)	750,225
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		<u>621,387</u>	<u>1,170,412</u>	<u>1,791,799</u>	<u>1,041,574</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u><u>565,125</u></u>	<u><u>1,114,960</u></u>	<u><u>1,680,085</u></u>	<u><u>1,791,799</u></u>

CONTINUING OPERATIONS

All income and expenditure has arisen from continuing activities.

THE LOWDOWN

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION 31 MARCH 2026

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2026 Total funds £	2025 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	11	64,299	1,114,960	1,179,259	1,206,256
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	12	43,977	-	43,977	127,361
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>663,648</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>663,648</u>	<u>876,335</u>
		707,625	-	707,625	1,003,696
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	13	(206,799)	-	(206,799)	(418,153)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>500,826</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>500,826</u>	<u>585,543</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>565,125</u>	<u>1,114,960</u>	<u>1,680,085</u>	<u>1,791,799</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>565,125</u>	<u>1,114,960</u>	<u>1,680,085</u>	<u>1,791,799</u>
FUNDS	15				
Unrestricted funds				565,125	621,387
Restricted funds				<u>1,114,960</u>	<u>1,170,412</u>
TOTAL FUNDS				<u>1,680,085</u>	<u>1,791,799</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 18th September 2026 and were signed on its behalf by:


A Moore - Trustee


S Edmonds - Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

THE LOWDOWN

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

	Notes	2026 £	2025 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	<u>(209,123)</u>	<u>834,532</u>
Net cash (used in)/provided by operating activities		<u>(209,123)</u>	<u>834,532</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(27,021)	(763,681)
Interest received		<u>23,457</u>	<u>24,543</u>
Net cash used in investing activities		<u>(3,564)</u>	<u>(739,138)</u>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		(212,687)	95,394
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		<u>876,335</u>	<u>780,941</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		<u><u>663,648</u></u>	<u><u>876,335</u></u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

THE LOWDOWN

NOTES TO THE STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

1. RECONCILIATION OF NET (EXPENDITURE)/INCOME TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2026 £	2025 £
Net (expenditure)/income for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	(111,714)	750,225
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	54,018	15,627
Interest received	(23,457)	(24,543)
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	83,384	(67,077)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	<u>(211,354)</u>	<u>160,300</u>
Net cash (used in)/provided by operations	<u><u>(209,123)</u></u>	<u><u>834,532</u></u>

2. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

	At 1/4/25 £	Cash flow £	At 31/3/26 £
Net cash			
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>876,335</u>	<u>(212,687)</u>	<u>663,648</u>
	<u>876,335</u>	<u>(212,687)</u>	<u>663,648</u>
Total	<u><u>876,335</u></u>	<u><u>(212,687)</u></u>	<u><u>663,648</u></u>

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Charities Act 2011. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

No material uncertainties exist in relation to going concern.

The presentation currency of the financial statements is the Pound Sterling (£).

Charity Status

The Lowdown is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. The Charity became a CIO on 1 April 2022.

Registered address listed in the annual report, managed and controlled by the Management Committee/Trustees named in the annual report.

Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The preparation of financial statements requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise its judgement in the process of applying the charity accounting policies. The areas involving a higher degree of judgement or complexity, or areas where assumptions and estimates are significant to the financial statements are disclosed within the individual accounting policies below

Income

Voluntary income, including donations, legacies and grants that provide core funding or are of a general nature are recognised where there is entitlement, certainty of receipt and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability. Investment income is brought into account on a receivable basis and dividend income on a received basis. Income from charitable activities includes income received under contract or where entitlement to grant funding is subject to specific performance conditions is recognised as earned. Grant income in this category provides funding to support performance activities and is recognised where there is entitlement, certainty of receipt and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Intangible income

Intangible income, in the form of donated facilities and voluntary help etc., is not included in the financial statements since it is not considered practicable to quantify such income.

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised when a liability is incurred.

Cost of generating funds are those costs incurred in attracting voluntary income.

Charitable activities include expenditure associated with direct services and membership support.

Governance costs include those incurred in the governance of the charity and its assets and are primarily associated with constitutional and statutory requirements.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Improvements to leased property	- 10% on cost and over the remaining term of the lease
---------------------------------	--

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Tangible fixed assets

Fixtures and fittings	- 33% on cost
Computer and Office Equipment	- 50% on cost and 33% on cost

Fixed assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Where parts of an item of property, plant and equipment have different useful lives, they are accounted for as separate items of property, plant and equipment.

Depreciation methods, useful lives and residual values are reviewed at each balance sheet date. The selection of these residual values and estimated lives requires the exercise of judgement. The trustees are required to assess whether there is an indication of impairment to the carrying value of assets. In making that assessment, judgements are made in estimating value in use. The trustees consider that the individual carrying values of assets are supportable by their value in use.

Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charity's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

Reserves

The current reserve policy is to maintain sufficient cash flow for known commitments, and the replacement of certain assets. The required reserves are calculated based on six months operating costs, three months direct costs and allows for any funding gaps as grants are received at various times during the year.

Risk

The trustees do not believe it is subject to any substantial risk beyond the liabilities disclosed in its Annual Report and Accounts.

The organisation has public, employer insurance to protect the Charity in the case of a claim.

Financial Instruments Policy

Cash and cash equivalents in the balance sheet comprise cash at banks and in hand and short term deposits with an original maturity date of three months or less.

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in the statement of comprehensive income under administrative expenses.

THE LOWDOWN

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Financial liabilities and equity instruments are classified according to the substance of the contractual arrangements entered into. An equity instrument is any contract that evidences a residual interest in the assets of the entity after deducting all of its financial liabilities.

Where the contractual obligations of financial instruments (including share capital) are equivalent to a similar debt instrument, those financial instruments are classed as financial liabilities. Financial liabilities are presented as such in the balance sheet. Finance costs and gains or losses relating to financial liabilities are included in the profit and loss account. Finance costs are calculated so as to produce a constant rate of return on the outstanding liability.

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	2026	2025
	£	£
Donations	45,596	121,695
Grants	<u>27,500</u>	<u>618,678</u>
	<u>73,096</u>	<u>740,373</u>

Grants received, included in the above, are as follows:

	2026	2025
	£	£
Youth Investment Fund	-	618,238
NCF	2,500	440
Beckett's & Sargeant's	<u>25,000</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>27,500</u>	<u>618,678</u>

3. INVESTMENT INCOME

	2026	2025
	£	£
Deposit account interest	<u>23,457</u>	<u>24,543</u>

4. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2026 Charitable Activities £	2025 Total activities £
Grants & Contract Services	1,157,415	1,150,056
Outreach Services	6,244	21,686
Other income	<u>4,402</u>	<u>248</u>
	<u>1,168,061</u>	<u>1,171,990</u>

THE LOWDOWN

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

4. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES - continued

Grants received, included in the above, are as follows:

	2026	2025
	£	£
LGBTQ	26,999	29,643
VCSE - Happier Families	-	1,900
NHFT - Espresso Yourself Cafe	-	58,065
NHS Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board	985,345	752,521
Constance Travis	12,050	7,500
National Lottery	66,782	29,750
Queen's Institute	-	5,000
Youth Investment Fund	-	212,028
Northampton Town Council	10,000	10,000
St James's Place Foundation	-	5,000
Faraway Children's Charity	1,050	-
West Northamptonshire Council	7,828	10,500
Michael Jones Jewellers	9,351	8,149
Scott Bader	5,000	-
DWP - Access to Work	510	-
The Talent Fund	20,000	20,000
Simon Rivett-Carnac Trust	5,000	-
B&Q Neighbourly Fund	7,500	-
	<u>1,157,415</u>	<u>1,150,056</u>

5. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct Costs £	Support costs (see note 6) £	Totals £
Charitable Activities	<u>1,330,727</u>	<u>45,601</u>	<u>1,376,328</u>

6. SUPPORT COSTS

	Finance £	Governance costs £	Totals £
Charitable Activities	<u>1,141</u>	<u>44,460</u>	<u>45,601</u>

7. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

Net income/(expenditure) is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2026	2025
	£	£
Auditors' remuneration	6,550	6,240
Auditors' remuneration for non audit work	2,450	1,560
Depreciation - owned assets	<u>54,018</u>	<u>15,627</u>

THE LOWDOWN

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

8. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2026 nor for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2026 nor for the year ended 31 March 2025.

9. STAFF COSTS

	2026	2025
	£	£
Wages and salaries	927,981	805,905
Social security costs	96,079	61,256
Other pension costs	<u>19,443</u>	<u>16,078</u>
	<u>1,043,503</u>	<u>883,239</u>

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2026	2025
	<u>49</u>	<u>47</u>
Staff		

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

Key Management Remuneration in the year was £116,630 (2025: £64,560), this increase is due to the expansion of key management roles.

10. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	67,045	673,328	740,373
Charitable activities			
Charitable Activities	922,170	249,820	1,171,990
Investment income	<u>24,543</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>24,543</u>
Total	<u>1,013,758</u>	<u>923,148</u>	<u>1,936,906</u>
EXPENDITURE ON			
Charitable activities			
Charitable Activities	<u>909,302</u>	<u>277,379</u>	<u>1,186,681</u>
NET INCOME	104,456	645,769	750,225
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	516,931	524,643	1,041,574

THE LOWDOWN

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

10. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES - continued

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	<u>621,387</u>	<u>1,170,412</u>	<u>1,791,799</u>

11. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Assets under construction £	Extension to leased property £	Improvements to leased property £
COST			
At 1 April 2025	961,241	-	285,759
Additions	12,511	-	14,510
Reclassification	<u>(973,752)</u>	<u>973,752</u>	<u>-</u>
At 31 March 2026	<u>-</u>	<u>973,752</u>	<u>300,269</u>
DEPRECIATION			
At 1 April 2025	-	-	40,744
Charge for year	<u>-</u>	<u>38,950</u>	<u>15,068</u>
At 31 March 2026	<u>-</u>	<u>38,950</u>	<u>55,812</u>
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31 March 2026	<u>-</u>	<u>934,802</u>	<u>244,457</u>
At 31 March 2025	<u>961,241</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>245,015</u>

	Fixtures and fittings £	Computer and Office Equipment £	Totals £
COST			
At 1 April 2025	4,296	13,311	1,264,607
Additions	-	-	27,021
Reclassification	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
At 31 March 2026	<u>4,296</u>	<u>13,311</u>	<u>1,291,628</u>
DEPRECIATION			
At 1 April 2025	4,296	13,311	58,351
Charge for year	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>54,018</u>
At 31 March 2026	<u>4,296</u>	<u>13,311</u>	<u>112,369</u>
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31 March 2026	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,179,259</u>
At 31 March 2025	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,206,256</u>

THE LOWDOWN

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

12. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2026	2025
	£	£
Trade debtors	17,718	107,535
Prepayments and accrued income	<u>26,259</u>	<u>19,826</u>
	<u>43,977</u>	<u>127,361</u>

13. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2026	2025
	£	£
Trade creditors	36,688	42,457
Other creditors	54,693	87,869
Deferred Income	97,738	268,552
Accrued expenses	<u>17,680</u>	<u>19,275</u>
	<u>206,799</u>	<u>418,153</u>

Deferred Income Reconciliation:

	2026	2025
	£	£
Balance brought forward	(268,552)	(93,839)
Amount released to the Statement of Financial Activities	268,552	93,839
Amount Deferred in the year	<u>(97,738)</u>	<u>(268,552)</u>
Balance carried forward	<u>(97,738)</u>	<u>(268,552)</u>

Deferred income relates to amounts receivable for the provision of services that have been invoiced in financial year ending 31 March 2026, where performance conditions will not be met until future accounting periods.

14. LEASING AGREEMENTS

Minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases fall due as follows:

	2026	2025
	£	£
Within one year	<u>-</u>	<u>10,304</u>

THE LOWDOWN

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

15. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1/4/25 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31/3/26 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	621,387	(61,517)	(1,391)	558,479
Ruscoe Legacy	-	6,000	646	6,646
	621,387	(55,517)	(745)	565,125
Restricted funds				
LGBTQ	54	(435)	381	-
Children in Need Youth Investment Fund Grant	5,607	(1,025)	-	4,582
Outbuilding	198,647	(7,946)	-	190,701
Leasehold Improvements - Kitchen	6,000	(1,000)	-	5,000
Leasehold improvements - 2 Storey Extension	919,784	(36,971)	-	882,813
Staff Development Training Fund	40,320	(40,320)	-	-
B&Q Neighbourly Fund	-	7,500	364	7,864
Beckett's & Sargeant's	-	24,000	-	24,000
	1,170,412	(56,197)	745	1,114,960
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>1,791,799</u>	<u>(111,714)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,680,085</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	1,184,509	(1,246,026)	(61,517)
Ruscoe Legacy	6,000	-	6,000
	1,190,509	(1,246,026)	(55,517)
Restricted funds			
LGBTQ	41,605	(42,040)	(435)
Children in Need Youth Investment Fund Grant	-	(1,025)	(1,025)
Outbuilding	-	(7,946)	(7,946)
Leasehold Improvements - Kitchen	-	(1,000)	(1,000)
Leasehold improvements - 2 Storey Extension	-	(36,971)	(36,971)
Staff Development Training Fund	-	(40,320)	(40,320)
B&Q Neighbourly Fund	7,500	-	7,500
Beckett's & Sargeant's	25,000	(1,000)	24,000
	74,105	(130,302)	(56,197)
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>1,264,614</u>	<u>(1,376,328)</u>	<u>(111,714)</u>

THE LOWDOWN

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

15. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1/4/24 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31/3/25 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	516,931	104,456	621,387
Restricted funds			
LGBTQ	2,872	(2,818)	54
Children in Need Youth Investment Fund Grant	6,632	(1,025)	5,607
Outbuilding	206,593	(7,946)	198,647
Leasehold Improvements - Kitchen	7,000	(1,000)	6,000
Leasehold improvements - 2 Storey Extension	301,546	618,238	919,784
Staff Development Training Fund	-	40,320	40,320
	<u>524,643</u>	<u>645,769</u>	<u>1,170,412</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>1,041,574</u>	<u>750,225</u>	<u>1,791,799</u>

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	1,013,758	(909,302)	104,456
Restricted funds			
LGBTQ	42,882	(45,700)	(2,818)
Children in Need Youth Investment Fund Grant	-	(1,025)	(1,025)
Outbuilding	-	(7,946)	(7,946)
Leasehold Improvements - Kitchen	-	(1,000)	(1,000)
Leasehold improvements - 2 Storey Extension	618,238	-	618,238
Youth Investment Fund - Revenue Funding	212,028	(212,028)	-
Staff Development Training Fund	50,000	(9,680)	40,320
	<u>923,148</u>	<u>(277,379)</u>	<u>645,769</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>1,936,906</u>	<u>(1,186,681)</u>	<u>750,225</u>

General reserve - to maintain sufficient cash flow due to time differences of grants received and expenditure paid

Leasehold Improvements - Funding to renovate and improve the kitchen facilities and create a staff area within the property, in which the charity operates. The balance on this fund represents the Net Book Value of the assets, are being depreciated over 10 years.

15. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

LGBTQ+ Support Service – Funding for youth groups and events supporting the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning community for young people up to the age of 25.

Children In Need Youth Futures Funding - Building, IT and Service improvements. The balance on this fund represents the Net Book Value of the assets being depreciated over 10 years.

Outbuilding - Funding for the building of the Outbuilding at the Kingswell Street Property.

Leasehold Improvements - 2 Storey Extension - The building of the 2 storey extension to the Kingswell Street leased property. The balance on this fund represents the Net Book Value of the assets, are being depreciated over the life of the lease.

Youth Investment Fund - Revenue Fund - Funding for Wellbeing and Youth Services to support young people.

Training Fund - Restricted funding to be used to for the training of Lowdown employees.

B&Q Neighbourly Fund- Restricted funding to be used to complete the Pergola structure extending the Lounge.

Beckett's and Sargeant's - Restricted funding to cover overspend on property renovations.

Ruscoe Legacy - Designated funding to continue property renovations.

Transfers between funds

Transfer between the General fund and the LGBTQ fund, represents a small overspend of £381 (2025: £281).

Transfer between the General fund and the B&Q Neighbourly fund, represents a small overspend of £364 (2025: £nil).

Transfer between the General fund and the Ruscoe Legacy fund, represents a small overspend of £646 (2025: £nil).

16. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

Donations received from trustees in the year totalled £360 (2025: £360).

During the year a donation of £nil (2025: £10,000) was received from the wife of the Chair of Trustees.

During the year a donation of £nil (2025: £1,200) was received from the CEO of the charity.

During the year, Auction Marketer Limited, a company at which a member of the Trustees is a director, donated £nil (2025: £2,500) towards new furniture.