



Impact Report

2024 / 2025



Guideposts
Trust

Guideposts service Locations



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Welcome to Guidepost Trust

We reflect on another successful year for Guideposts, providing vital support to 1077 disadvantaged people in local communities who would otherwise be left behind. By securing new grants and contracts, renewing key agreements, and reinforcing our foundations, we have strengthened our ability to create lasting impact and ensure the continuity of our work for years to come.

This year, we continued to develop our support services for people with mental health, learning disabilities, dementia and their carers.

In Hertfordshire, our **Community Mental Health Service** launched a new platform to support smooth transition for new referrals and facilitate engagement with available services. It also provides a temporary holding space for individuals awaiting access, reducing the risk of disengagement and isolation. Service users, along with carers, support staff, and referring organisations, have praised this initiative as essential for sustaining service users' recovery and reablement, benefitting everyone involved.

With sustained NHS funding, our **Complex Emotional Needs Coaching Service** in Gloucestershire has expanded, offering group support alongside 1:1 coaching. Positive feedback remains strong, with 96% of participants feeling supported, listened to, safe, and respected, and equally engaged in the process.

The year also marked the development of our learning disabilities support with the rollout of **Guideposts Academy** in Gloucestershire. This innovative modular training programme offers adults with learning disabilities and mental health challenges access to skills development, culminating in ASDAN GCSE-equivalent certificates—a significant step beyond traditional day services.



Our **Forest School Service** piloted a new CBT-informed initiative in North Oxfordshire, focusing on building children's social and emotional resilience. The programme has shown excellent early results; enhancing children's emotional well-being and equipping them with life skills to thrive.

Our **dementia-friendly support groups** continued to expand, with a 30% increase in attendance at our Connect groups across Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire. Since July 24, a new outreach strategy has strengthened collaboration with health, social care and community partners including churches. This work directly supported the relocation of one of our clubs in Gloucestershire, resulting in increased attendance and a greater outreach impact.

The **renewal of key contracts last year was essential in sustaining our vital work for people** with learning disabilities in Oxfordshire and Hertfordshire. Additionally, securing a place on the Hertfordshire Talking Therapies Framework was a pivotal achievement, enabling the charity to expand its mental health support for people living in Hertfordshire.

The year 2024/25 also marked an exciting milestone for us - our rebrand. It was time for our brand to better reflect the energy, passion, and innovative spirit of the organisation we are today. **More modern and aligned with our mission, the new brand strengthens our charity's role as navigators in people's lives**, bringing us back to the name 'Guideposts Trust' and the optimism our support inspires.

This renewed identity has not only strengthened our mission but has also been reflected in the incredible support we've received. **2024/25 was another successful year for fundraising**, with £1.16M raised through legacies, donations, and both new and continuation grants. Funding was secured from the NHS grants, Oxon Well Together Fund, Glos Thriving Communities Fund, Barnwood Trust, and many others, while supporters across the regions contributed generously through fundraising events.

We are incredibly grateful for the unwavering support of our donors, grant funders, corporate partners, and community and voluntary partners whose generosity make our work possible.



Diana Billingham
Chair



Kathryn Courtenay-Evans
Chief Executive Officer



Who we are

Our Purpose:

To ensure that no-one is left behind. We support people who are isolated, excluded, and invisible to society, particularly those with mental health conditions, learning disabilities, dementia, and their carers, to live fulfilling, connected lives.

Our Vision:

A society where no-one is overlooked – where everyone is empowered to thrive, and every life is valued.

Our Mission:

We empower people to recover, connect, and grow by providing personalised, community-based support, that enables them to navigate challenges, away from crisis and towards an included and purposeful life.

Our Promise:

To guide people on the margins of society and help them find their way to a connected and fulfilling life.

Our year in numbers



Our services

1,077

people supported by

105

Staff

92

volunteers

97.6%

User satisfaction

11,402

sessions in

20+

community locations across

3

Counties working closely with

152

Statutory, community & voluntary partners

131,200

hours of support





Engagement & fundraising

14,444

visitor sessions
on our website

5.8M

post views on TikTok
with 35k profile views.

216

service users' original
artworks showcased in
community exhibitions, on
social media & websites

18

trips enabled by our
Never Seen, Never Been Campaign,
championing our service users right
to be seen, valued, & connected

£5,451

raised through promoting
our Arts initiatives

£12,573

raised through our
Never Seen, Never Been Campaign

£1,164,457

secured in donations, grants, sponsorship,
community events & gifts in wills





Empowering Journeys:

from personalised support to more connected and fulfilling lives

The year 2024–2025 has been both busy and productive for Guideposts' Services teams as we continue delivering our mission to empower people to recover, connect, and grow through personalised, community-based support.

Our work has continued to help individuals navigate challenges, move away from crisis, and build inclusive, purposeful lives.

Throughout the year, we have witnessed incredible stories from service users from those just beginning their journey and accessing specialist support, to others who are recovering and progressing toward greater independence.



How our work transformed people's lives by delivering on our mission.



98%

experienced improved health and wellbeing

82%

accessed meaningful activities and developed valuable skills with our support

86%

felt more connected and less isolated



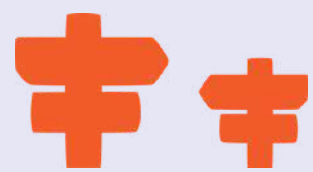
Recover
Mental health & Wellbeing



Grow
Inclusive activities, skills & independence



Connect
Community connections & Friendship



Recover

Mental Health & Wellbeing Programmes

4678

1:1 sessions, welfare & crisis interventions

376

People supported

1646

Group support sessions

96%

User satisfaction

This year's highlights

- **Community Mental Health Service** launched a **new platform** to ease transitions for new referrals, reducing disengagement and isolation, a key step in recovery and reablement and intervention celebrated by all stakeholders for its positive impact. Additionally, the service **strengthened community inclusion through Arts and Football**, offering service users opportunities to showcase their talents and re-gain a sense of pride and purpose.
- **CEN Coaching service** successfully introduced and implemented group coaching alongside 1:1 support.
- **Emotional Wellbeing Coaching initiatives** made a clear, positive difference to carers managing their responsibilities, helping them reduce stress levels and combat feelings of isolation. Feedback showed many would have struggled without this support.

"Without Guideposts my mental health would be in a completely worse state. I believe Guideposts has kept me alive when my times were at their darkest."

Service users, CMHS - 2024

"Guideposts CEN Service have CHANGED my life for the better for the first time in my life. I feel like i have a purpose to my life and and goals i can aim at and focus on."

Client, CEN coaching - 2024

"I could not cope without Guideposts' help, I and my brother get."

Carer - 2024



Guideposts CEN Coaching:

Lisa's Story



My name is Lisa and I have complex emotional needs (CEN). At the age of 61, I was diagnosed with Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder (EUPD), a condition that affects 1 in 20 people in the UK. I struggle with severe anxiety. I feel scared all the time, and I fear being abandoned. My moods and emotions can change dramatically in a short space of time. Sometimes I experience dissociation when I am upset, and I'll end up somewhere with no clue how I got there.

"I am a product of my upbringing."

As a child, I was mistreated by my parents. When I suffered a head injury at age 9, they didn't take me to hospital for a long time. I was having seizures, and they still didn't take me. Eventually, a scan revealed I had suffered brain damage, which had caused epilepsy. It was all too much for me to take in. I suffered a mental breakdown soon after and was referred to a psychiatrist. Scared I would tell someone what had been happening to me, My dad moved us to an extremely isolated area. We lived in a cottage, and my dad built a shed a short distance away. I had to live in it, alone. I was nine years old.

Sometimes I would have pets, but my dad would always take them away. He would gloat that he'd had them killed. He would take away anything that brought me happiness. I did try to tell my teacher what was happening to me. He said I was making it up. It was absolutely heart breaking. I didn't speak out for another 50 years, when I told my GP about my childhood, at the age of 61.

"I have bounced from service to service all my life, never finding one that helped me."

Many people with CEN struggle to find the right support, and diagnosis can take decades. Often, they are simply seen as having anxiety or depression, when the reality is far more complex. I'd bounced from service to service all my life, never finding one that helped me. I was diagnosed with depression, agoraphobia, anorexia... I was put in a 'box' each time I sought help, but I knew it wasn't right. When I finally opened up to my GP about my life experiences, it was like all the pieces came together. He could see I was dealing with something beyond anxiety or depression. I was referred to the CEN Coaching Service at Guideposts. It was the first time I'd accessed a specialist service. I finally had hope that there was something that could help me.

"Guideposts CEN Coaching is my lifeline. For the first time, someone understands me. I finally have hope that things will get better."

This Service is the best thing that has ever happened to me. I haven't been impressed with any other service. This is what I have needed all my life. For the first time, I have someone who understands what it's like to have EUPD. I've learnt a lot at Guideposts, like how to be kind to myself. My past is always going to be there, but now I understand I'm not worthless, I do deserve a happy life, and I can see a way forward.



Grow

Inclusive activities, skills & independence programmes

2960

Group activity
sessions

351

People and families supported

18

Skills training
sessions

98%

User satisfaction

This year's highlights

- **Our Activity Hubs**, including the Outdoor Wellbeing Hub, continued to enable adults with learning disabilities to engage in varied activities and experiences, develop skills, and enjoy fulfilling weekdays. Activities included inspirational outings and trips, including a visit to Weston-super-Mare, giving some their first-ever opportunity to see the sea and creating unforgettable memories.
- **Guideposts Academy** launched successfully in Gloucestershire this year, paving the way for expansion into other regions. This innovative modular training programme aims to give adults with learning disabilities and mental health conditions the chance to develop skills, leading to GCSE equivalent certification - advancing beyond traditional day services.
- **Forest School and Bushcraft Project** took part in a 30 weeks pilot delivering CBT informed sessions for children with mild anxieties in school

"I've been coming to the Hub for about a year and a half now. It has saved my life, actually. I was in an awful state, a really bad place. I was going through so many support work companies. Because I don't seem disabled, they didn't really understand. After I started coming here, I came out of the dark place. I love it. I come here every day I can."

Service user - 2024

"I am so proud of my certificate. All my friends want me to cook for them now."

Service user - 2024

"Bea has really grown in confidence since [taking part in forest school], they even want to stand up and talk in assembly."

Teacher - 2024

Guideposts Academy:

The first graduations from our accredited courses



Guideposts introduced a major new initiative this year: **Guideposts Academy**. It provides nationally approved courses to help people to gain essential life skills, while enhancing their confidence and independence. **The first cookery course launched at Guideposts Community Hub in Stroud, with more courses being developed.**

From the outset, Guideposts has recognised how much people's lives are improved by learning skills for independent living and the confidence that these skills bring. Our day service provision has always included opportunities for skills development, but we decided to bring in courses to formalise the work, and to ensure that people get the due recognition for what they have learned.

Taking a course for certification has enormously added to the pride and confidence in the students, much more than we had expected. The Life Skills courses are to GCSE-level, and accredited by ASDAN, an education charity that promotes personal, social, and employability skills among learners of all ages, empowering them to lead more independent and fulfilling lives.

The first students graduating from the cookery course in July 2024 hailed it a great success. The subjects include meal preparation, budgeting, shopping, and healthy eating. **Many of the participants started struggling to cook a jacket potato and graduated being able to cook a healthy vegetable Rogan Josh curry made from scratch, with not a cook-in sauce in sight.** The course broke down the complex tasks into manageable steps, incorporating strategies to work with each individual's learning styles. The participants range of motor skills, spatial awareness and sensory processing, which make a seemingly simple task much more complex, all had to be taken into account.

The first participants graduated and received their well-earned certificates at a ceremony, with **big smiles of pride on their faces**. All of them had grown in confidence, knowledge and picked up many life skills along the way. "We believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to learn and grow, and we are dedicated to providing an inclusive environment where adults with learning disabilities can thrive." said Sharon Baker the Support Worker leading the course. We are hoping to gain funding to expand across Gloucestershire later this year, with plans to roll out the scheme in Oxfordshire and Hertfordshire too.



Connect

Community Connections & Friendship Programmes

180

group sessions

350

People supported

1,920

1:1 sessions

99%

Service user satisfaction

This year highlights

- **Connect** dementia friendly community groups have continued to expand in Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire with a **30% increase in attendance**.
- **Our Friendship 4 All Service** in Hertfordshire has **launched** a very popular **brunch club**, bringing people together and strengthening connections. Area teams have united, expanding friendship opportunities and enriching user experiences across the region. The service has also seen a significant **increase in referrals from people with complex needs**, who have been able to access friendships and community opportunities that no other service could provide.
- A new **Friendship 4 All Service in Oxfordshire** was formed early 2025 with already 35 service users signing up to planned events throughout 2025/26.

"Thank you. I really enjoy coming out with the group. Before I had no friends and now I can call the other members of the group my friends. I look forward to my next outing!"

Service user, Friendship 4 All - 2024

The friendship group has enriched his life, he was very isolated apart from his coffee morning once a week. "

Family - 2024

"It has made my life better."

Service user - 2024



Friendship For All:

Helping people with learning disabilities find friendship



Friendships profoundly impact wellbeing, yet for those who are isolated or find communication difficult, making and keeping friends can be particularly hard. Guideposts strives to create supportive spaces across all services where meaningful relationships and friendships can grow and continue for the long-term, including through dedicated services such as Friendship For All.

Guideposts has been providing **friendship support for over 50 years**, and Friendship For All continues 30 years of dedicated friendship provision for adults with Learning Disabilities living in Hertfordshire and in other counties. **The Service has witnessed some wonderful connections develop.**

"Our groups have some wonderful personalities, and it's lovely to see the dynamics of the group evolve."

One group meets every Thursday evening, engaging in community activities that helps build confidence in social interactions as they practise simple tasks like ordering food, paying for tickets, or striking up a conversation. Among the members, two autistic individuals, who initially only connected with support staff have since blossomed into active participants in group conversations.

"We've watched friendships blossom as our members have started asking each other questions, sharing stories, and really listening to one another."

For some, joining has been a lifeline in overcoming isolation. Peter, who lives alone in a flat with some assistance from his sister has struggled to form supportive connections in his area. Since joining the group, he has made friends, join in conversations, re-engaged activities he had been unable to participate in for years and discovered a talent for golf, boosting his self-esteem immensely.

"Making friendships is so important for everyone's mental and emotional well-being, and the bonds formed in our groups not only lift individuals but also lift a burden from their families."

Another young man, Paul, recently joined our group. After leaving college, he was feeling very isolated and searching for a way to connect. Though naturally quiet, he has embraced activities like golf and pool, and his parents are delighted to see him enjoy his outings and gradually come out of his shell.

Every connection we make brings us one step closer to a more inclusive and supportive community for everyone, which is why we have decided to expand the service into Oxfordshire in 2025/26.





Get in touch

If you'd like to learn more about the impact we make, or to support our work. Join us in ensuring no one is left behind.



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Charity number: 272619

Company number: 1282361

Support
your way
**Guideposts
Trust**