



**The Violence Intervention Project**

**2024  
Impact Report**



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# Introduction

## "Short-term work, long-term relationships"

Since 2017 The Violence Intervention Project has been delivering 1-2-1 support to young people involved in **Serious Youth Violence**.

So far, we've worked with over 200 high risk young people in **West London**. From our beginnings in Hammersmith & Fulham we've expanded into neighbouring boroughs over the past 2 years and intend to continue our expansion.

Over time, we've developed our own intervention model, '**Urban Therapy**' which puts a trusting and equitable relationship at the heart of our work. Through these relationships, built over months and years, we deliver practical and therapeutic support to help young people transform their lives.

### Vision

A society free from youth violence

### Mission

To create relationships built on trust and respect, provide support and opportunities to empower young people, transforming their lives.

### Values

**Support:** We believe that people already have the capacity to change, we help them realise their potential

**Commitment:** We're dedicated to empowering young people, and we never give up

**Collaboration:** We work together, with young people, families/carers and professionals, to create a positive network of support

**Communication:** We create containing relationships to talk openly, without fear of judgement. This is fundamental to positive change, focussing on a future free from violence.

**Creativity:** Serious Youth Violence is a complex issue with few known solutions, we bring a fresh approach

## **Legal and Administrative**

### **Trustees**

Christopher Leslie  
Desiree Blamey  
Charmaine Goddard  
Alessandro Ferrari  
Osric Richards

### **Registered Charity Number**

1175817

### **Registered Address**

The VIP, Violence Intervention Project  
4 Hammersmith Broadway  
LONDON  
W6 7AL

### **Independent Examiner**

Howard Lane FFA/FIPA  
ProFiling Ltd  
Co. Number 01716179

# Activities

## Shame Informed Practice

### Shame and its effects

We follow the theory that all violence is triggered by a feeling of shame. For many of our beneficiaries, childhood trauma or neglect has caused them to develop low self esteem and become “shame dominated”.

Shame can also be developed and compounded through experiences related to poverty, inequality, racism and discrimination.

All this leaves them desperate to gain the respect of others, which sadly becomes one of the primary driving forces behind engagement with gangs, crime and violence. Additionally, this shame dominated psyche will massively overreact to perceived disrespect, resulting in violent acts.

### Shame and Relationships

As a social species humans are hard-wired for connection. If we feel ourselves being rejected by ‘the group’, this can trigger a primal, visceral response, as shown in the Compass of Shame.

Our work focusses on rebuilding the positive relationships that help most of us function in society. This begins with the 1:1 relationship between worker and young person, and then broadens out to include family, friends, other professionals and new social groups.



Adapted from D.L. Nathanson, Shame and Pride, 1992

# Activities

## Urban Therapy

'Urban Therapy' is the VIP's therapeutic model developed from, and built on Adolescent Mentalisation Based Integrative Treatment (AMBIT) from the Anna Freud Centre.

A medium to long-term aim is to see Urban Therapy recognised as an **evidence based therapeutic model**. This will enable our work to be **replicated more widely**, across London and further afield.

Urban Therapy includes 4 phases, laid out below.

### Phase 1: Assess - 2 to 4 months

- Referral received
- Team discussion and matching a Therapeutic Outreach Worker (TOW) to the young person
- Professional consultation with the referrer
- Meeting families and carers
- Initial contact and engagement with the young person
- Building relationships, identifying challenges, strengths, and needs

### Phase 2: Plan - 2 months

- Develop a multi-domain intervention plan based on the assessment
- Domains: Biological, Psychological, Professional Network, Family, Cultural, Pro-social, Employment, Training, and Education
- Construct the plan with TOW and Head of Therapeutic Operations
- Quarterly review and adaptation of young person's 'Violence Intervention Plan'

### Phase 3: Engage - 1 to 3 years

- Implement the intervention plan in the community
- Flexible, dynamic engagement with young people
- Proactive engagement: community outreach, family engagement, and professional network collaboration

### Phase 4: Ending - 6 to 12 months

- Assess readiness for ending based on progress and positive outcomes
- Evaluate reduction in violence, engagement in pro-social activities, improved relationships, and self-sufficiency

## Our Impact

Our therapeutic work recognises **shame** and **trauma** as major **causes of violence**. They negatively effect the development of behaviour and emotions in children. Through 1:1 talking therapy we address these issues so that young people are equipped to regulate their emotions and behaviour.

**641** 1:1 sessions delivered, over 1500 hours

**111** Family sessions delivered

**95** Professional network sessions working alongside the professional network, such as social and youth justice workers

### Key outcomes

We worked with 62 young people in total and carried out baseline and 12 month assessments with 34, of these;

**40%** saw a reduction in violence

**43%** had improved mental health

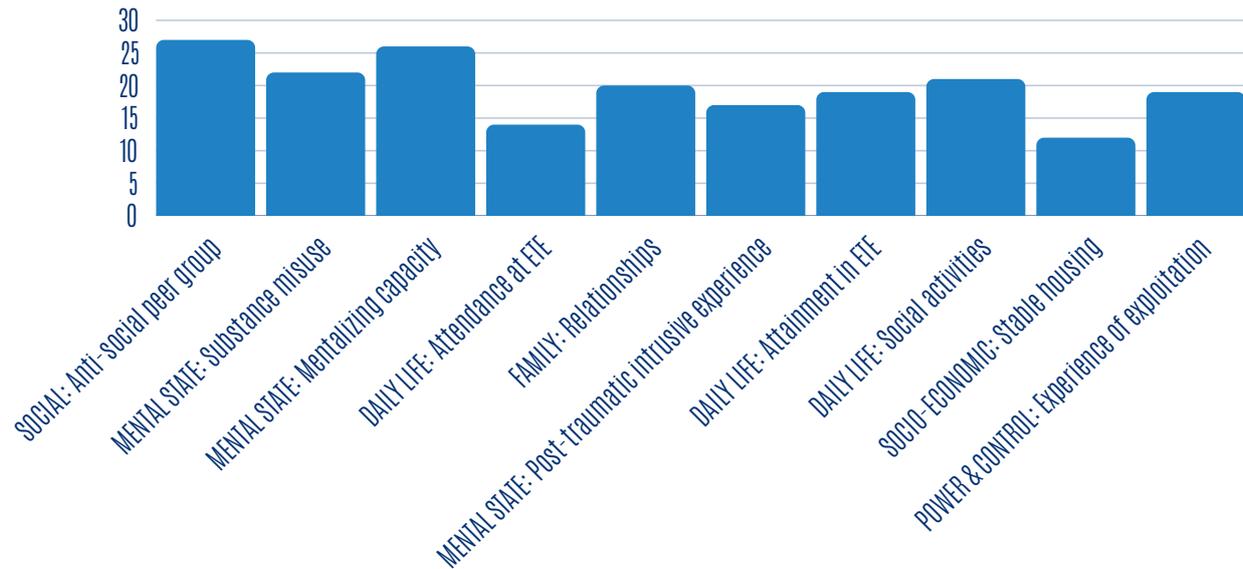
**35%** were more Engaged in Education, Training or Employment

**NOTE:** This data is limited to approximately 1 year, whereas **Urban Therapy** continues for several years. As such we see a higher percentage of improvements, up to 80% over the full multi-year intervention.

We use a **43-point assessment (AIM)** which covers several aspects of a young person's life, including **mental states, daily life, socio-economic, family and response to situations**. The worker rates the 43 items on a scale of 0-4 and can choose up to six key problems (items that the worker identifies as particularly challenging area for the client). We take a **baseline assessment within 2 months** of starting the work, and a **second assessment after 12-18 months**.

Key problems are shown in the next graph

## AIM - Key problems



## Earning & Learning

We recognise that engagement in Education, Training or Employment (ETE) is one of the single biggest factors in improving the life chances of the vulnerable and socially excluded young people we work with. Money and career prospects are the obvious benefits, but the extended social networks and structured lifestyle are also huge factors in maintaining the positive changes these young people are making.

Following on from a successful pilot project, we secured funding from The National Lottery to fund an ETE Specialist. This was highlighted as a key development in a previous client survey.

Since starting in early 2024, they have provided an excellent service, achieving positive outcomes for 12 of our young people, with notable successes highlighted below;

**21, Female - Criminal conviction for grave offences**

Signed up to hair and beauty course in January, once the course begins, she'll visit a film studio to see hair make up done within the industry

**18, Male - History of violence & crime, expelled from school**

Volunteered at a climbing centre whilst on a climbing wall instructor course

**18, Male - GBH conviction, charges including assault & robbery**

Sponsored to go on IT course and once completed, will start a traineeship at "This is Timeless" (social media company)

19, Male - Conviction for assault, possession with intent to supply

Studying plumbing and electric level 1. Inspirational visit to Coca-Cola arranged next year with a plan to start a traineeship there.

17, Male - Multiple arrests for possession with intent to supply

Completing First Start college course. Once complete will start construction course with Team Green.

18, Male - Multiple arrests for robbery and assault. Friend was murdered in 2024

Inspirational visit to Coca-Cola and will start traineeship there once Level 2 college course is completed

Given the difficulties and challenges faced by our client group, these outcomes are excellent. Education, Training and Employment don't just help our clients improve their socio-economic prospects, but provide positive social connections, increased self-worth and motivation.

## Our cohort

We work with the highest risk young people, where statutory services are unable to effectively engage with them and meet their complex needs. It's no surprise that many of our clients suffer from multiple disadvantages. From an early age, these factors combine, to create circumstances that increase their likelihood of involvement in gangs and crime.

## Adverse childhood experiences

A key measure of the difficulties faced by our clients are Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). ACE's include physical/sexual/emotional abuse, neglect, parent/carer drug or alcohol abuse, exposure to domestic violence or losing a parent through separation, death or abandonment.

We collect ACE data from our clients to generate Composite ACE Scores which demonstrate very traumatic upbringings.

An ACE study of England (Bellis et al, 2014) found that:

**Nationally** (Bellis et al, 2014)

**46%** of adults in England had at least 1 ACE.

**8%** have experienced 4 or more ACEs.

**Our cohort**

**90%** have experienced at least 1 ACE.

**38%** have experienced 4 or more ACEs.

The study also found:

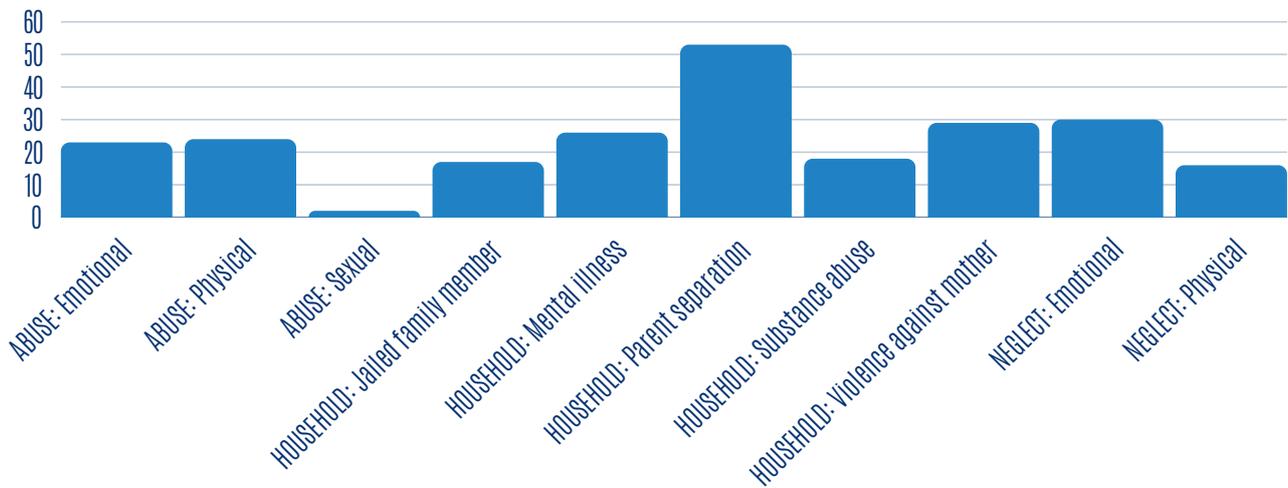
### Individuals with 4+ ACEs were:

**7x** more likely to have been involved in violence

**11x** more likely to have ever been in prison

It's bad enough that these children go through these experiences in the first place, but the subsequent effects on their lives are truly tragic. ACE's affect their mental development, resulting in complex emotional and behavioural issues.

A significant part of our work focusses on developing a safe and trusting space where these young people can talk about, and confront, these past experiences. The below graph shows the ACEs experienced by our cohort.

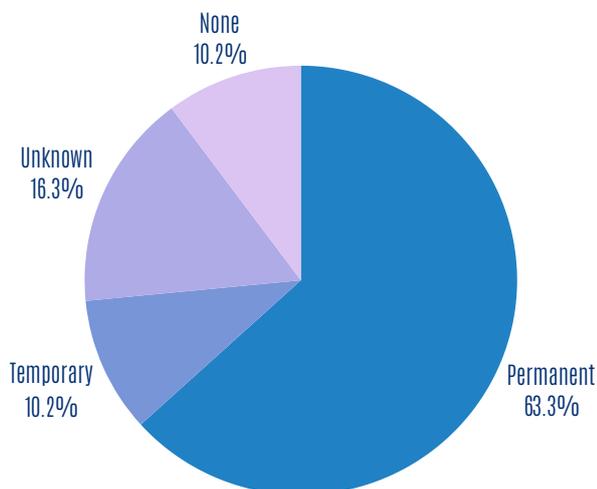


### Key demographics

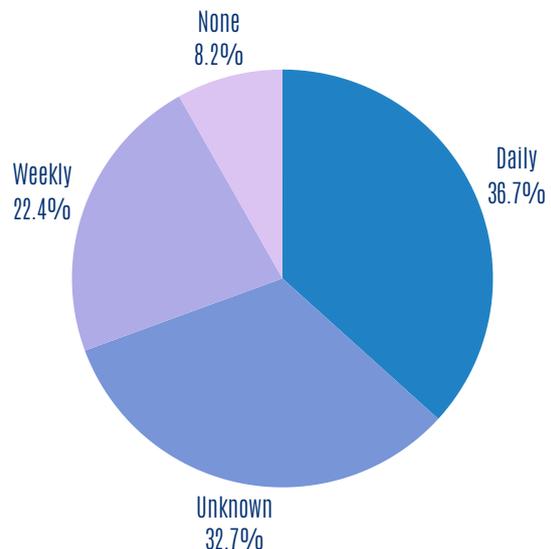
**80%** of our clients are BAME

**79%** aged between 16 and 22

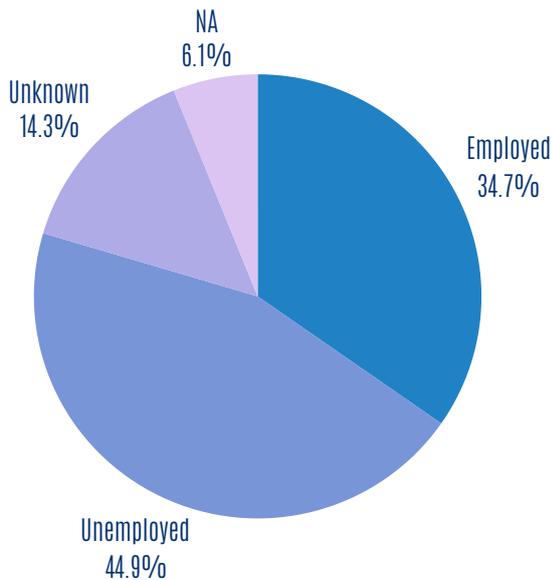
### School exclusion



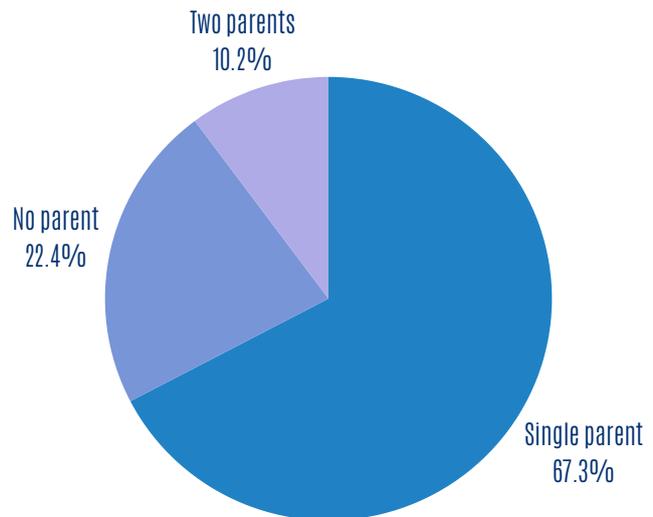
### Substance misuse



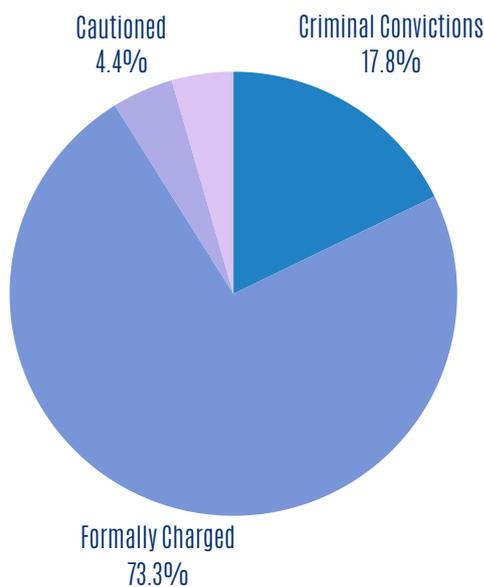
## Socioeconomic status



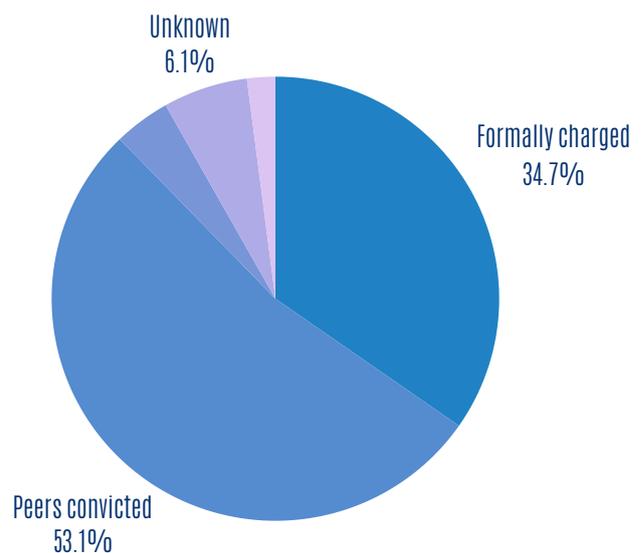
## Family structure



## Police contact



## Peer police contact



West London sees extreme affluence and poverty located side by side. Many of our clients live in postcodes at the bottom of the Index of Multiple Deprivation, and the emotional impact of their situation is made worse by their close proximity to great wealth.

A [report](#) commissioned by the Mayor of London’s Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) found that many forms of violence are tightly clustered into small, usually deprived, communities of less than 3,000 residents.

While this somewhat insulates the majority of London’s population from the threat of violence, those unlucky enough to live in these areas are subjected to a life of fear and danger. This creates a self-perpetuating ecosystem where generations of young people grow up surrounded by deprivation, violence, fear. Their original motivation for carrying a weapon is often self-defence, rather than the intention to attack someone.

## Client Survey

It's important to capture our community's voice, so in early 2025 we carried out a survey amongst our clients. In many areas this confirmed that our approach is working, and also identified how we can improve our service.

### Overall, how would you rate the VIP and our service?

**84%** said '5/5 - Very good' or '4/5'

### Since working with the VIP;

**68%** said they feel they make better choices

**73%** said their goals and aspirations have changed

**37%** have new hobbies or interests

**89%** said their VIP worker has helped them feel safer in their community

This is particularly significant as fear is usually a motivating factor in the decision to carry a knife or other weapon.

**47%** said their relationships with parents/carers/relatives had improved

### How much do you trust your VIP worker, from '1 - not at all' to '5 - completely'

**47%** said '5'

**32%** said '4'

**16%** said '3'

There was clear correlation between trust and the length of time they had been seeing their worker. None of the clients we've been seeing for 2+ years scored lower than a 4.

## Key Areas

**The survey highlighted 3 key areas where we can improve our service and provide more benefits to our community**

### **1. 63% want more specialist support around ETE.**

For the 2nd time running this was the most popular area for additional support, and highlights the desire amongst our cohort to change their lives for the better. It also highlights the difficulty young people face if they have been expelled from the education system.

Seeing the need for this service we would like to increase the hours of our ETE Specialist from part-time to full-time and will be applying for funding to achieve this. We'd also like to have a ring-fenced funding pot to help pay for ETE related costs like training courses, transport, workwear and equipment.

### **2. 47% would like Housing Support, 37% would like Mental Health support, 37% would like to do Sports/Training/Fitness**

These are all provided, where possible, as part of Urban Therapy, but we can definitely improve the quantity and quality of support available. Initial ideas are for us to have a part-time Housing Support worker who can help families navigate the housing system and advocate on their behalf.

We already encourage certain clients to engage with statutory mental health services, but many are hesitant to do this so we will explore options for a 3rd sector partner who may be more suitable for them.

Finally, we'll seek to develop local partnerships with sports clubs and gyms to widen our options for sport and activities. Several clients suggested we could pay for gym memberships so we will apply for a small grant to allow us to do this.

### **3. 42% would be interested in working/volunteering for the VIP**

Our beneficiaries have a wealth of knowledge and experience that can help the VIP offer a better service so we'd love for them to contribute to our mission. We'd also hope this would provide them with valuable work experience, career guidance and increased self-worth. We proposed a number of potential positions including joining a Youth Committee, taking part in Workshops, Social Media/Content Creation, Fundraising, Mentoring and Therapeutic Outreach.

Our first step towards achieving this will be to establish a Youth Committee, meeting twice a year. The first meeting will include a discussion around how we could proceed with some work experience, followed by a paid internship.

# DRIFT Project

## Year 3

We're now in the 3rd year of a 3-year project in a local school, providing early intervention with year 7/8 pupils who are at risk of disengaging with education. This pilot project, funded by John Lyon's Charity, is a partnership with another charity, Family Friends, and West London Free school. V.I.P. workers meet with students in the school twice a week during the day, and we also lead positive activity programmes during the school holidays.

The key objective of this project is to understand how schools and charities can work together, with a view to creating systemic change. Since our project began a further 8-12 projects have been funded and our pilot has helped develop a range of outcome measures based on effective partnership engagement, development of trust, resilience, collaboration/communication.

A 4th Year has been agreed to continue the project and further develop the intervention model and prove the benefits of collaboration between organisations.

## Year 2 Highlights

- The project engaged 18 pupils last year, with many accessing multiple services such as psychotherapy, mentoring, group activities, and holiday programs.
- Psychotherapy Delivery: The VIP psychotherapist provided 120 hours of psychotherapy to 8 individual pupils, addressing their mental health needs.
- Parent Support: The VIP delivered 40 hours of support to parents, helping families with complex issues.
- Multi-Agency Networks: VIP embedded its team in 3 multi-agency networks, contributing to case reviews and enhancing collaborative efforts.
- Mentoring: 8 clients received 75 hours of one-on-one mentoring support.
- Group Support: 14 clients participated in weekly group support sessions, totalling 30 hours.
- Holiday Activities: VIP organized 12 holiday activity programs, engaging 18 young people.
- School staff consultations: The VIP therapist has delivered 14 staff consultations.

# Board of Trustees

## New Appointments

The Violence Intervention Project (VIP) is excited to announce the appointment of five new trustees joining its board as the charity continues to expand its services. These appointments will strengthen the VIP's leadership in supporting at-risk youth and breaking the cycle of serious violence. The new trustees bring diverse expertise reinforcing the VIP's mission to foster long-term positive outcomes for vulnerable young people.

Christopher Leslie, Acting Chair of Trustees, expressed his enthusiasm:

**"I'm thrilled to welcome such an accomplished group to the VIP board. Their backgrounds and shared passion for our mission will guide the organisation as we continue to impact vulnerable youth."**

Charlie Rigby, Founder and CEO, added:

**"These trustees will help shape the VIP's strategic direction. Their dedication aligns with our vision to provide life-changing support to those who need it most."**

These new members will help the VIP expand services, secure funding, and engage communities to enhance its evidence-based programs. With their guidance, the VIP is well-positioned to continue delivering critical support to at-risk youth.

## The VIP Board of Trustees

- **Christopher Leslie (Acting Chair of Trustees)** - Chief Executive Officer at Inside Out Support Wales, Christopher is an experienced director and consultant with expertise in criminal justice reform and rehabilitation.
- **Desiree Blamey** - Director of Finance at CIBSE, Desiree offers strong financial leadership with qualifications from CPA Australia.
- **Charmaine Goddard** - Head of People and Culture at Mind, bringing extensive HR and workplace culture expertise.
- **Alessandro Ferrari** - With over 30 years of experience in marketing, Alessandro Ferrari is a passionate advocate for diversity and inclusion.
- **Osric Richards** - Portfolio Implementations Associate at BlackRock, Osric brings a wealth of experience in project management and client relations.

## 2025 Plans

### Service Developments

1. Increase the specialist support available to our clients. Following the success of our ETE provision, we want to add additional support around housing, drug use and psychotherapy.

2. Begin project for older clients - over 25. While our focus will remain on young people under the age of 25, there is also a clear need for our intervention beyond 25. We plan to assess the demand for this across our boroughs and apply for funding accordingly.

3. Following conclusion of DRIFT school project (Summer 2026) we will assess the case for continuing/expanding our early intervention work.

### Fundraising

We've already secured over 75% of our funding for next year, so we want to direct some resources towards more diversified and long-term funding sources.

This will include public donations and corporate funders. We've secured funding for a Comms & PR Officer who will contribute towards this objective.

Building reserves is also a high priority as our continued growth over the past few years has made this difficult. We expect to finish this financial year (2024/5) with close to 3 months reserves, as per our reserve policy.

# Funders

Thanks to all the wonderful funders who supported us this year.



JOHN LYON'S CHARITY



Garfield Weston  
FOUNDATION



London Borough  
of Hounslow



COMMUNITY  
FUND



CITY BRIDGE  
FOUNDATION



West London  
NHS Trust



QUINTESSENTIALLY  
FOUNDATION

MRS SMITH & MOUNT TRUST

