



# Impact Report 2024/25

Reducing health inequalities and  
enhancing community wellbeing

[compasswellbeing.co.uk](https://compasswellbeing.co.uk)



“ I have seen autistic young people go from not speaking at all in their first session to having so much to say, growing in confidence and happiness and gaining new friendships – the result of a safe, accessible space. ”

JR Josephs, Sirlute

VCSE provider, NCEL CAMHS Inequalities scheme



You Vs You CIC, VCSE provider, NCEL CAMHS



# A word from our CEO

**It's my absolute pleasure to welcome Compass Wellbeing's 2024/25 Impact Report – my first since joining in February. It's been a year of change and achievement, and through it all our focus has remained on working together to reduce inequalities and improve wellbeing in our communities. I also want to recognise Simon Hall, who led Compass Wellbeing as Interim CEO for 11 months of 2024/25: his steady leadership underpins many of the achievements you'll read about.**

**It feels like I joined Compass only yesterday, yet so much has happened in the past eight months.** We have invested £4.4 million, launching 85 projects through our VCSE network, and we continue to manage more than 8,000 medical devices across 110 East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT) sites - spanning 6 boroughs across East London and Bedfordshire & Luton. Through standardised processes and targeted audits, this workstream enhances clinical outcomes and drives savings through trust-wide data reporting.

Over the past few years, we've supported over 420 VCSEs and remain connected with over 3,000, across 16 boroughs in North, Central and East London, as well as Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton. Our steady support of ELFT Charity has amounted to 140 different initiatives to date. We have also honoured our Living Wage Employer pledge for our staff and for those working on community projects delivered by VCSE partners, uplifting pay to the Real Living Wage for over 230 people.

**These results reflect a simple and ambitious vision: fairer, healthier communities** where everyone can thrive. Over the past year, we've grown programmes, strengthened partnerships, and backed projects that tackle the wider determinants of health. None of this would be possible without the hard work of our team, the support of ELFT and our VCSE partners.

From securing vital funding for grassroots organisations to championing creative, community-led initiatives through the NCEL CAMHS Provider Collaborative and ELFT Charity, our work shows what is possible when we work together. This report shines a light on those outcomes and the people behind them. I hope you will be inspired by the stories, numbers and voices shared.

**I remain focused on listening to the experts to learn where we can have the greatest impact.** We are strengthening workplace wellbeing programmes for our staff and VCSE partners, with a focus on employee welfare, mental health and Living Hours implementation. Separately, we are developing our overall strategy, co-produced with stakeholders from VCSEs and the NHS, so we can best support what is needed. This approach focuses on faster access, tackles health inequalities through local care and stronger community support, and makes better use of digital, with VCSE partners playing a critical role.

The climate is challenging and the sector is under pressure, yet important work continues. With the committed team at Compass and our partners, I am confident we can deliver meaningful change this year – and I'm excited to see it.

Thank you for helping shape the next chapter of Compass Wellbeing's story.

With gratitude and optimism,

**Mathew Sheehan**  
Chief Executive Officer, Compass Wellbeing CIC



Mathew Sheehan



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**£4.4m**  
 secured for  
 community-led  
 solutions



**10,000+**  
 people  
 impacted

**16**  
 funding categories from  
 mental health to healthy  
 lifestyles



**307**  
 applications  
 received

**85**  
 new projects launched  
 through our network

**51**  
 contracts for children and  
 young people, totalling  
**£1.5m**



# Who We Are



## So what are we all about?

Empowering smaller grassroots organisations from the bottom up, to support them in accessing the support they need. They are our champions!



# About Us

## Our Vision

We see a future where every individual and community can thrive, supported by local charities who have the resources they need to facilitate health and wellbeing for all.

## Who We Are

A non-profit social enterprise working to reduce health inequality at both the people and structural level, working at the heart of communities. We partner with VCSEs, NHS trusts, and local authorities to make health, wellbeing and opportunity accessible to everyone.

## Our Mission

To reduce health inequalities, improve community wellbeing and promote social justice by empowering people and local charities to work hand in hand with institutions like the NHS, to create fairer and more connected communities for everyone.

## Where We Work

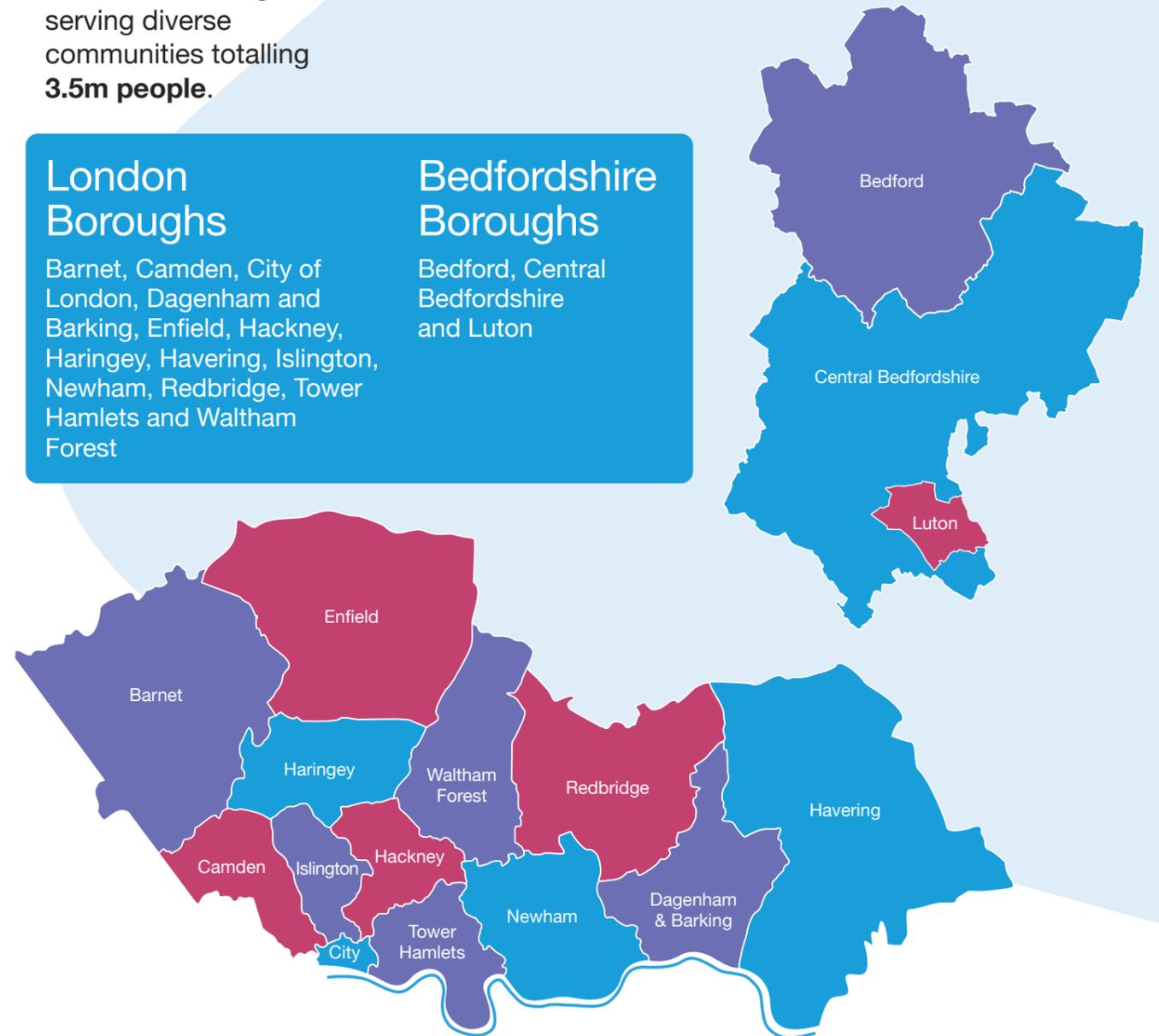
Across **16 boroughs** - serving diverse communities totalling **3.5m people**.

### London Boroughs

Barnet, Camden, City of London, Dagenham and Barking, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Havering, Islington, Newham, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest

### Bedfordshire Boroughs

Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton



# Our Journey

More than a **decade of learning** how to **make systems work** for people

## 2013 Community Roots

Compass Wellbeing spun out from the NHS as a CIC, starting small with talking therapies in Tower Hamlets



2013

## 2018 Learning to Bridge Worlds

ELFT brought us back into the family. Our training of 124 Newham GP surgeries won us a 'Leading Healthcare' award



2018

## 2021 VCSE Support

Support of voluntary sector began; launch of SU Training and Employment (SUTE) programme offered paid placements for mental health service users. Community interpreter training turned lived experience into job prospects



2021

## 2024 Reducing Social Inequalities

£5.4m of funding delivered to VCSEs, £43,837 managed on behalf of ELFT Charity, 3k VCSEs within our network, 8k medical devices serviced, 9 people completed SUTE and 94 projects commissioned

2024

2025

## 2015 Innovation in Action

Expanded into community nursing and developed specialised counselling services for marginalised groups – showing how the best health solutions happen outside of traditional clinical settings



## 2020/2021 Crisis Response

When COVID hit, we pivoted fast - running testing for key workers across Luton and Bedfordshire and creating new jobs for people hit by the pandemic



## 2022/2023 Scaling Up & Marmot

£12m secured for VCSE partners, 900 staff trained and 31 service users supported into employment. The ELFT Winter Pressures Fund backed 36 projects that delivered 20,115 sessions and reached 17,078 people, by simplifying applications and community-led solutions

## 2025 Your Change Partner

Today, we manage £22.6m in VCSE funding across 16 boroughs. We've supported 448 contracts and work with 300+ organisations. But the numbers tell only part of the story...



Our VCSE alliance building conference

# What We Do



# What We Do *in a nutshell*

Our mission is simple – to reduce inequalities and strengthen communities by helping systems work better for people – but how we do that isn't always easy to sum up! We can group our work into three rough areas...



## 1 Empowering VSCEs

**Funding:** Unlocking £22.6m to-date, by supporting projects like the NCEL CAMHS Grant that reached 10,000+ children and young people.

**Capacity-building:** Going beyond just awarding funds by equipping organisations with the tools to grow stronger independently, via free training, resources and mentoring.

**Facilitating partnerships:** As a trusted bridge, we open doors for community groups with NHS partners and decision-makers, so their voices shape services across 16 areas, from mental health to domestic abuse support.

## 2 Supporting Service Users

We handle bureaucracy and translate jargon to make services and opportunities easier to access.

### Service User Training & Employment

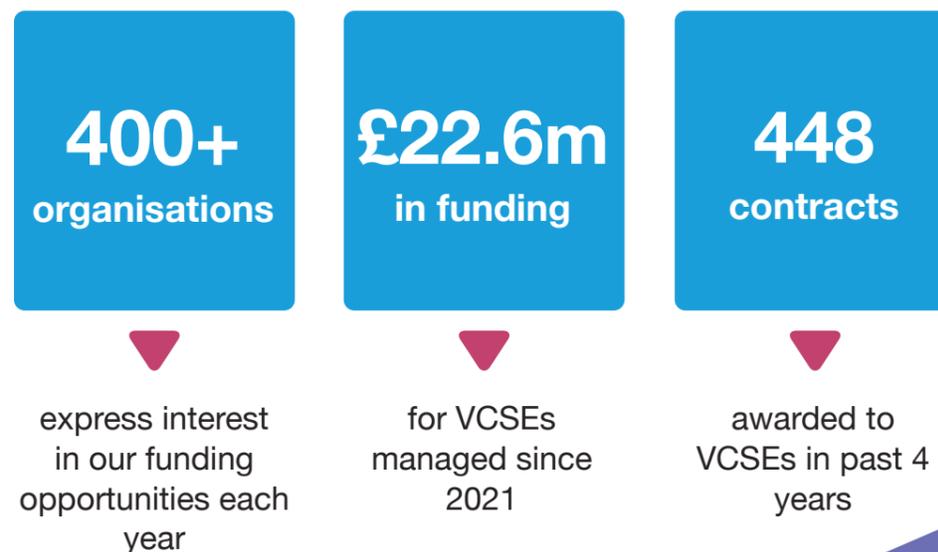
programme helps people get career experience on their CV to support them back into the working world.

## 3 Collaborating With Partners

**Medical Device Management:** Overseeing over 8,000+ medical devices across 110 sites, ensuring safe, sustainable and high-quality care, shaped by the Marmot principles of independence and dignity.

**Strengthening ELFT Charity:** From improving fundraising systems to supporting arts, wellbeing, and employability projects, we're helping the charity grow into a unifying force across the Trust, tackling problems in creative ways.

### Our growing impact





# 1. Empowering VCSEs

Across our 16 boroughs

In 2024/25, we ran the North Central East London (NCEL) CAMHS Grant Scheme - supporting better mental health outcomes for children and young people.

The scheme included two funds:

**CYPMH Inequalities:** Tackled inequalities in access, experience & outcomes.

**CYPMH Early Intervention & Community Support:** Helped VCSEs provide early, community-based help to reduce hospital admissions.

Grants of **£5,000-£50,000** helped local groups deliver targeted, meaningful projects across the region.

£5,000-£50,000 granted

51 Projects

10,000 people reached

North Central East London



## Ekota Academy



**Mission:** For every child and young person - especially those facing socio-economic or cultural barriers - to have access to mental health support.

**NCEL CAMHS Lot 1 grant in March 24-25**

**Project:**

Funding allowed them to reach **81 aged 6-25yrs**, through a programme focused on tackling low confidence, social isolation & access barriers. Youth-led, inclusive & culturally aware space.

**Impact:**

Funding from Compass Wellbeing allowed them to exceed their target by over **35%**.

Young people grew in confidence, built resilience & formed stronger social connections.

**“We’ve seen real transformation in these young people – all it can take is someone to listen.”** - Programme Lead

Peer-led impact - some young people have become mentors, now co-designing sessions.

**“Before joining, I used to keep everything inside. Now I know it’s okay to ask for help.”** - Participant, age 13

They’ve since received interest from beyond their targeted regions which testifies to the vast demand.



**200hrs x Group Activities** on sports, arts, wellbeing & social development.



**1,260hrs x 121 Mentoring** in schools, homes & community spaces.



**Expert Guidance** from lived experience staff trained in Mental Health First Aid.

£49,950 granted

81 people reached

Redbridge, Barking and Dagenham





## You and Me Counselling

**Mission:** For every young person to have a safe space to be heard and supported.

**NCEL CAMHS Lot 1 grant in April 24- 25**

**Project:**

Allowed them to reach children and young people with mild to severe mental health needs - as well as their families and carers.

Supported **52 people**, most receiving **9 weekly sessions of 121 or family therapy** in school or at our offices. Combined structured therapeutic tools with creative techniques like mood cards, metaphors and games to help young people express emotions and build resilience.

**Impact:**

Many began anxious or withdrawn but developed self-awareness and confidence, learning to prioritise their wellbeing.

Families reported that communication improved and relationships grew stronger – boosting family and community resilience (as well as individual wellbeing).



**Case Study: AC's Journey**

When AC first joined, he was quiet and anxious, often avoiding eye contact. Using mood cards gave him a non-verbal way to express feelings, such as the “poison parrot” metaphor which helped challenge negative self-talk. This was a turning point and helped AC notice his strengths, manage triggers and build confidence.

**“My son speaks to us freely at home now; he has taken control of whatever stopped him from engaging before – he’s like a new person!” – Parent**

- £49,641** granted
- 52** people reached
- Waltham Forest, Havering, Barking & Dagenham**

## Ambitious about Autism

**Mission:** Standing with autistic children and young people to champion their rights and create opportunities.

**NCEL CAMHS Lot 2 grant in April 24- 25**

**Project:**

Ambitious Hubs set out to help autistic kids find school less isolating through community, friendship and pride in who they are. Reached **379 people across 10 schools** through training, tailored onboarding and safeguarding support.

Delivered co-produced webinars on topics such as Autistic Burnout and Transitioning into Adulthood, with subtitles and BSL for accessibility.

Schools hosted bi-weekly peer sessions – from quizzes and crafts to DJ workshops – giving students fun, creative ways to connect and build confidence.

**“I’ve made some best friends who understand me, talking about autism stuff, which I’ve never had before, so is incredibly valuable to me.”**  
– Participant

- £16,516** granted
- 379** people reached
- Barking & Dagenham**



**Impact:**

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive – Goresbrook School **rated the training 5/5**.

Teachers praised the flexible, practical format that helped embed changes into daily life.

Students reported stronger friendships and a greater sense of belonging.

Many have since joined the Ambitious Youth Network – where **80% say they enjoy being part of the community**.



### VCSE Training

Our iLearn platform continues to offer flexible online learning, with **159 active users - 110 from 60 VCSE organisations** and other service users from our employability programme - supporting both organisational and individual growth.

Between April 2024 and January 2025, we delivered **12 free training sessions** for VCSE organisations across the ELFT area, attended by **339 people**. Topics such as Bid Writing, Video Marketing, and Managing Burnout were especially popular.

Through these initiatives, Compass Wellbeing strengthened skills, confidence, and capacity across the community with strong results.

-  Sessions rated 4.5/5 overall
-  Presenters rated 4.8/5
-  90% found content relevant
-  92% said objectives were clear
-  90% want more training

## 2. Supporting Service Users

### Service User Training

The Service User Training and Employment (SUTE) programme concluded in April 2025, with **five graduates completing six-month paid Business Administrator placements** to support their transition out of inpatient care.

Participants reported significant personal and professional growth, with an **average increase of 52% in confidence** across all areas during the programme.

Candidates developed **pre programme** and **post programme** in the following areas...

#### Coping with changes and stress management



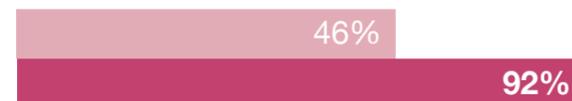
#### Communication skills



#### Preparation for new role



#### Technical skills



These gains reflect stronger self-belief, resilience and readiness for long-term employment.

“Coming from construction into an office was a big shift, but I’ve already learned so much - not just about the work, but about myself. Compass Wellbeing is inspiring; I feel like I’m growing every day.”  
- Craig, graduate

“The kind and flexible team meant I never felt pressured. That support helped me succeed and complete my contract.”  
- Nishaan, graduate





# From Service User to Support Worker

My Journey at Compass Wellbeing



Roxanne

1

## Finding Hope

After four years in an inpatient unit, Roxanne was ready for change.

“At the time, I thought it was the end for me - but it became a silver lining. I gained skills and opportunities that helped me take leadership of my life.”

2

## Joining Compass Wellbeing

Roxanne was introduced to Compass Wellbeing CIC, where she started her six-month Business Administrator placement to build up her experience and confidence.

“The whole team wanted me to succeed and encouraged me to think about my future.”

3

## Building Skills & Confidence

Roxanne completed statutory and professional training, gained certificates, and strengthened her CV, interview and communication skills.

“The training gave my CV a real boost and the courage to pursue my dream of becoming a support worker.”

4

## Achieving her Goal

Her hard work on placement paid off and she managed to secure a role as a full-time Healthcare Support Worker in the NHS - her dream job!

5

## Reflecting on the Experience

“I had the time of my life – it was life-changing. I’ve gained confidence, skills and values that made me a better person. I’m a success story, and you can be too if you give it your all – have faith, be passionate and believe in yourself”

“The NHS values align with mine - I want to make a positive difference to people’s lives and support service users in their recovery. I was a service user myself, so I have a deep understanding of the people I now support.”



# 3. Collaborating With Partners



Molly McCabe

Community Research Initiative Manager, Students' Union UCL



We partnered with Students' Union UCL to collaborate on the **Community Network Innovation Grant**, linking postgraduate students with grassroots VCSEs. Small organisations were grateful for additional resource and fresh thinking, while students gained hands-on experience in real world problems.

**“Compass connected us with key community partners and gave vital support and context that helped us work holistically with local groups.”- Molly McCabe**

**“Working with Compass partners gives our students more autonomy, influence, and direct contact with purpose-driven work.”**  
- Molly McCabe



## What We Did

### Social Hackathon Day:

5 VCSEs collaborated with groups of **10–15 UCL students** each to discuss problems and ideate solutions to organisational challenges from refining messaging to better resonate with stakeholders to expanding community reach.

### Volunteering & Research Placements:

Pro-bono support on anything from research to hands-on physical assistance.

### For VCSEs

Gained diverse perspectives from UCL's international student body

Received practical solutions and capacity support at no cost

Strengthened visibility and confidence engaging with academic partners

### For Students

Developed leadership, communication and problem-solving skills

Experienced high-impact volunteering with small, mission-driven charities

Built long-term relationships beyond their studies



## The ELFT Charity...

Is the charitable arm of ELFT, raising funds to go beyond what the NHS can provide – supporting staff, service users, and local communities through grassroots projects.



### Strengthened by Compass Wellbeing

This year we reinforced the charity's foundations by expanding reach and improving fundraising. We appointed the first full-time fundraising lead at Compass Wellbeing, who is leading improvements across grant award bids, Gift Aid and Microhive – enabling better support for ELFT's work.

**Impact so far:** Over the last three years, ELFT Charity have invested **£360,000 into 140 local projects** with our support. Raised funds go directly to local projects supporting staff, service users and their communities.

**Why this matters:** This work delivers practical, local impact that supports wellbeing and daily life. Funds provide direct support for staff and service users through grassroots projects.

**“The grants awarded across the year ranged from small local ideas to innovative initiatives, all making a real difference to people’s wellbeing and daily lives.”**

Peter Cornforth, Chair of the ELFT Charity committee



### Hope Garden

Hope Garden is a thriving community garden offering gardening therapy and classes on healthy and affordable living. Service users can grow their own vegetables, seek social connection, or just take a moment to unwind.

We've seen remarkable results. One man with depression and anxiety, initially reluctant to accept hospital discharge, was supported by the Home Treatment Team, who used Hope Garden to encourage outdoor time and horticulture. This was transformational; his symptoms quickly improved and he was able to transition back home smoothly.

### Barista Training

Delivered with Redemption Roasters, provides practical training and a pathway into employment for **10 ELFT service users** (seven completed the programme in full). All achieved trial shifts in central London cafes, gaining real-world professional experience and three secured employment, which shows how the initiative builds confidence and job readiness.

While the national average for **reoffending is 38%, for Redemption Roasters' graduates it is just 3%**, demonstrating the programme's capacity to support long-term positive change.

**“With a grant from the charity, Redemption Roasters tailored courses to meet our service users’ needs and were incredibly responsive when issues arose. The funding provided opportunities ELFT service users wouldn’t be able to find elsewhere – some are even in managerial roles.”**

Jezebel Button - Lead Occupational Therapist, Newham



# Supporting ELFT in Medical Device Management

Medical devices are essential for safe, effective care – and as reliance on technology grows, keeping them safe, compliant and easy-to-use is vital.

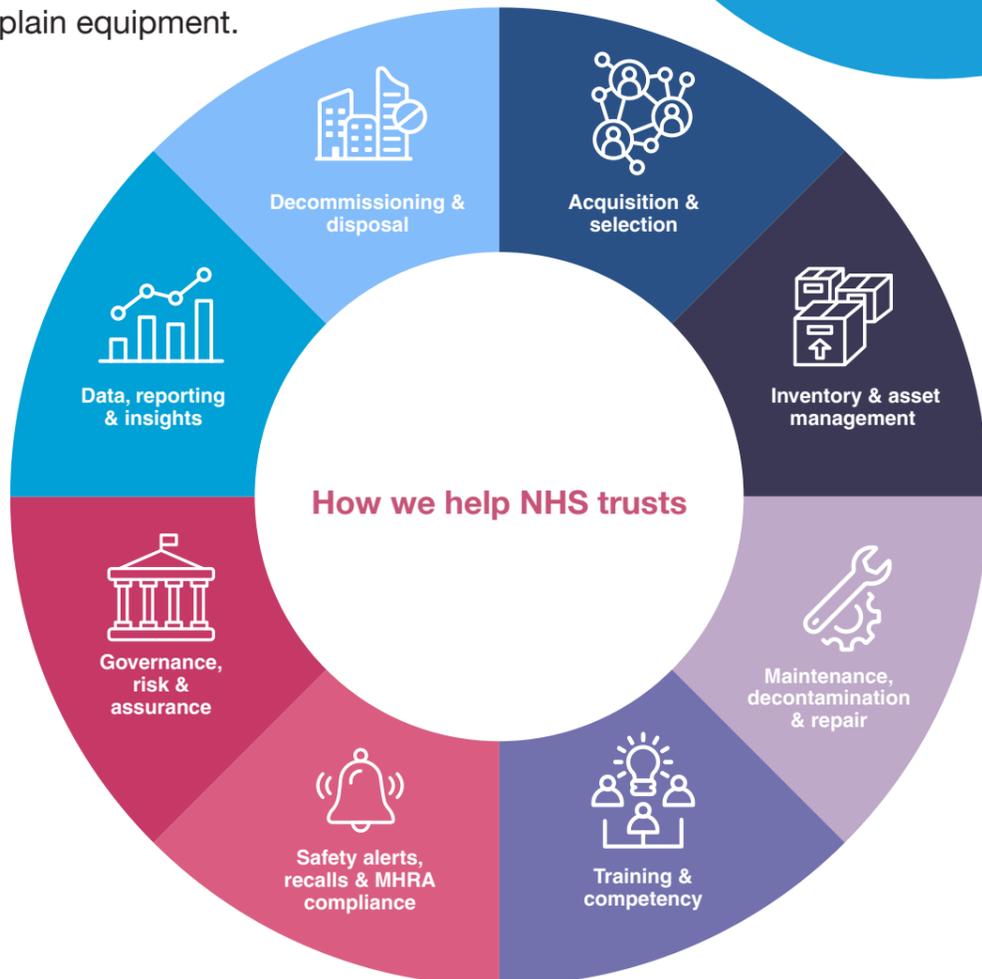
We support ELFT with a **robust, future-focused approach to managing 8,000+ devices across 110 sites** that aligns with national standards and guidance from bodies such as the CQC and MHRA. Guided by the Marmot principles we focus on education, sustainability and empowerment, ensuring staff feel confident and consistent in how they use and explain equipment.

## Why this matters, for:

**NHS Trusts:** Keeps ELFT compliant, reduces risk, and makes better use of funds

**Services & staff:** Clear, consistent processes and training so teams can use and explain equipment with confidence

**Patients:** Safer care, clearer information, and more say in their treatment builds independence



## → Impact so far 24/25

**Device optimisation:** Proactively removed over 1,500 devices as part of our equipment lifecycle management.

**Maintenance and safety:** Enforced preventive maintenance with enhanced risk-management and data-led insight.

**Asset management:** Improved registration, traceability and site-visit procedures, giving teams clear, up-to-date registers.

**Financial stewardship:** Delivered £60,000+ year-to-date savings through efficient audits and proactive interventions.

- £60,000+ savings to-date
- 8,000+ devices managed
- 110 locations across 6 boroughs served

## Strategic focuses for 25/26 →

**Reducing Risk:** Through systematic equipment lifecycle management and enhanced maintenance protocols.

**Savings & Reporting:** Using trust-wide audits and data-led insights to improve safety, efficiency and value.

**Improving Processes & Clinical Outcomes:** Standardising asset management and running targeted site audits.



Steppingley Hospital in Bedford

# Looking Ahead



# Looking Ahead

## A reflection from Shona Sinclair, Chair of the Board

**Building on what works. As Compass Wellbeing looks towards 2025 and beyond, we're proud to reflect on a year defined by collaboration, creativity, and growth. Enabling £4.38m worth of funding to flow into our communities represents more than financial support – it's an investment in hope, resilience and equity.**

### **Supporting people and communities' remains at the heart of what we do.**

Empowering people to overcome challenges, live a valued life of their choosing, and be active members of their communities remains central to our work and our commitment to becoming a Marmot Trust – providing a systematic and strategic focus on equity and tackling the root causes of poor health, from housing and employment to social connection. We do this directly through our routes into employment and more widely by our support for organisations who understand their local communities' core needs.

For example, our work placements and other career initiatives enable people with lived experience of health challenges gain the confidence and skills needed to ease the transition back into work, allowing us to also learn from the true experts: those with lived experience. We will continue to welcome new work experience students this year to empower young talent to grow.

Our commitment to sustainability remains a priority; fair pay and inclusive employment practices are embedded throughout our work, alongside actions to achieve our Net Zero target by 2030.

**We continue to champion the power of collaboration**, strengthening our working relationships with partners to create demonstrable benefits for our communities. Our work with NCEL CAMHS Small Grants allowed for the distribution of £1.5 million to children and young people, aiding their access to tailored mental health support through organisations who demonstrate how community-led innovation sparks lasting change. Our ongoing membership of Social Enterprise UK (SEUK) expands our reach by connecting us to a national network of social changemakers.

**Exciting times ahead.** A full year of activity lies ahead as we: evaluate NCEL CAMHS projects with UCL PhD volunteers; publish an interim report; host a joint learning conference and launch Year 4 of the grassroots funding scheme. Just some examples of our plans for 2025/26.

We'll continue to work closely with organisations across and beyond London, alongside developing a portfolio offer for funders who wish to engage more meaningfully with the VCSE sector, and will be acting as a bridge between corporate organisations and VCSEs, providing opportunities for businesses to support the communities within which they work.

**Our approach remains simple:** reduce barriers, collaborate and make sure community voices are at the heart of decisions. All of this supports our ultimate mission to help all types and sizes of voluntary, community, faith and social enterprises (VCSEs), including smaller grassroots and community-led organisations, thrive so they can better serve their communities and build lasting resilience.

It's what we all care deeply about, and we look forward to continuing this work – together – in the years that follow.

### **Shona Sinclair**

Chair of the Board, Compass Wellbeing CIC



Shona  
Sinclair





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