

## **Trustees' Annual Report for the Year Ending 31 March 2025**

### **Stepping Stones Community Organisation**

Charity Number: 1145346

75 Raymond Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 4DP

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### **Introduction**

The Trustees of Stepping Stones Community Organisation are pleased to present the Annual Report for the financial year ending 31 March 2025. This year has been characterised by consolidation, growth and responsive community leadership. Building on the strong foundations established in previous years, the organisation has continued to expand its reach, deepen its impact and respond swiftly to emerging community needs.

The charity's work during 2024–2025 has focused on education, early years provision, community cohesion, safeguarding vulnerable communities, advocacy and systems leadership. Particular emphasis has been placed on violence reduction, community reassurance following periods of unrest, and collaborative place-based working through city-wide partnerships.

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### **Aims, Objectives and Public Benefit**

Stepping Stones Community Organisation was established to address persistent inequalities experienced by individuals and families, particularly those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The charity's aims are rooted in advancing education, reducing social isolation, improving wellbeing and enabling communities to thrive.

The organisation's objectives during 2024–2025 focused on:

- Advancing education through early years provision, accredited learning and skills development
- Supporting children, young people and families to reduce risk, harm and exclusion
- Strengthening community cohesion and resilience
- Amplifying community voice within decision-making systems
- Working collaboratively to tackle structural inequality

In delivering these objectives, Stepping Stones has provided clear public benefit by improving access to services, increasing participation, and supporting individuals who may otherwise face multiple barriers to engagement. Trustees have had due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and are satisfied that the charity's activities during the year were carried out for the benefit of the public.

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## Strategic Overview and Growth

During 2024–2025, Stepping Stones Community Organisation further consolidated its position as a trusted community anchor and system leader. The organisation’s credibility was reflected not only in inspection outcomes and delivery, but also in external recognition, civic responsibility and strategic representation.

In **March 2025**, Stepping Stones was formally **recognised by the High Sheriff of Staffordshire** for the valuable and sustained contribution it makes to communities across Stoke-on-Trent. This recognition acknowledged the organisation’s leadership, community trust and impact during periods of challenge and change.

The organisation was also formally identified as an **Emergency Hub for the City**, reflecting confidence from partners in Stepping Stones’ ability to respond rapidly, safely and effectively in emergency situations. This designation recognised existing strengths in safeguarding, coordination, communication and community reach, and reinforced the organisation’s role as a stabilising presence during crises.

Alongside this, Stepping Stones continued to strengthen its strategic influence through active participation on a range of **local and regional boards and forums**, where it represents:

- **Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities**
- **Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector voices**

Through this work, the organisation ensured that lived experience, inclusion and equity remained central to decision-making. Trustees note that this combination of recognition, responsibility and representation reflects a high level of trust in Stepping Stones’ leadership and governance.

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## Key Activities and Achievements

This section summarises the charity’s principal activities undertaken between **1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025**, reflecting delivery, leadership and impact across education, safeguarding, violence reduction, youth development and community cohesion.

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### Development of Birmingham-Based Projects

During 2024–2025, Stepping Stones undertook preparatory and developmental work to expand its reach beyond Stoke-on-Trent, with a particular focus on establishing future projects at the **Birmingham site**. This work was exploratory and strategic, aimed at ensuring that any expansion is sustainable, values-led and responsive to local need.

Activity during the year included:

- Early-stage needs analysis and community scoping
- Relationship-building with local partners and stakeholders

- Exploration of governance, safeguarding and delivery models suitable for the Birmingham context
- Identifying opportunities to replicate Stepping Stones' strengths in education, inclusion and community voice

Trustees closely monitored this work to ensure that development activity complemented, rather than detracted from, core delivery in Stoke-on-Trent. This measured approach reflects the organisation's commitment to responsible growth and quality assurance.

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### Youth Offer in Stoke-on-Trent

Stepping Stones continued to invest in its **youth offer in Stoke-on-Trent**, recognising young people as critical contributors to community resilience, leadership and future change. Work during 2024–2025 focused on creating safe, inclusive spaces where young people could develop confidence, voice and leadership skills.

Youth activity was closely aligned with the organisation's wider priorities around safeguarding, violence reduction and inclusion. Young people were supported to engage in dialogue around community safety, identity, belonging and civic participation.

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### Youth Leadership and Civic Representation

A significant highlight of the year was the election of a **young person from Stepping Stones' membership as the Leader of Stoke-on-Trent City Youth Council**. This achievement reflects both the individual's leadership capability and the organisation's long-term investment in youth development and empowerment.

The young person's election represents:

- Meaningful youth voice within civic decision-making structures
- Positive representation of diverse communities at city level
- Evidence that Stepping Stones' youth work supports pathways into leadership and influence

Trustees regard this outcome as a powerful indicator of impact, demonstrating how sustained, inclusive youth engagement can translate into real civic participation and system influence.

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### Quality, Inspection Outcomes and Assurance

During 2024–2025, Stepping Stones Community Organisation achieved a significant quality milestone when its early years provision was judged **Outstanding in all areas by Ofsted** following inspection on 16 July 2024.

The inspection resulted in **Outstanding** judgements for:

- Overall effectiveness
- Quality of education

- Behaviour and attitudes
- Personal development
- Leadership and management

Inspectors described the provision as “*outstanding*” and highlighted that “*children are exceptionally well cared for in this safe and stimulating environment*” and that “*staff greet them warmly and children settle very quickly.*” The report emphasised the strength of relationships, noting that “*children and staff develop close, caring relationships*” and that leaders and staff “*share the highest expectations and aspirations for all children.*”

The curriculum was praised as “*exceptionally well-designed*”, enabling all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to “*continuously acquire knowledge and skills*” and “*make rapid progress from their individual starting points.*” Inspectors observed that learning activities were “*planned at precisely the right level for children’s age and stage of development*” and that children showed “*high levels of concentration and resilience.*”

Leadership and management were identified as a key strength. Inspectors noted that leaders “*live out their vision of being at the heart of the community they serve*” and that staff are “*extremely well supported and valued.*” The inspection further confirmed that safeguarding arrangements are effective, supported by “*an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children’s interests first.*”

Parents’ views were overwhelmingly positive, with inspectors recording feedback that “*the staff go above and beyond to provide a nurturing home from home.*”

Trustees regard this Outstanding judgement as independent confirmation of the organisation’s commitment to excellence, inclusive practice and strong leadership. It provides assurance to families, commissioners and partners that Stepping Stones delivers services of the highest quality and operates with robust governance and safeguarding arrangements.

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## Early Years, Education and Skills

Education has remained a cornerstone of Stepping Stones’ work throughout 2024–2025. A major achievement during the year was the organisation’s early years provision being judged **Outstanding in all areas by Ofsted** following inspection in July 2024.

The inspection confirmed **Outstanding** judgements for:

- Overall effectiveness
- Quality of education
- Behaviour and attitudes
- Personal development
- Leadership and management

Inspectors described the provision as “*outstanding*”, noting that “*children are exceptionally well cared for in this safe and stimulating environment*” and that staff and children “*develop close, caring relationships*”. The curriculum was recognised as “*exceptionally well-designed*”,

enabling all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to *“make rapid progress from their individual starting points.”*

The report highlighted that activities are *“planned at precisely the right level for children’s age and stage of development”*, with children becoming *“incredibly absorbed in their learning and sustain their concentration for prolonged periods.”* Inspectors also praised children’s behaviour, stating that *“the way children conduct themselves is exemplary”* and that children demonstrate *“high levels of resilience.”*

Leadership was identified as a key strength. Inspectors noted that the dedicated manager and leadership team *“live out their vision of being at the heart of the community they serve”* and that staff feel *“extremely well supported and valued.”* Parents were described as *“overwhelmingly positive”*, with one commenting that *“the staff go above and beyond to provide a nurturing home from home.”*

Communication and language development was recognised as exceptional, with children *“immersed in literacy at every opportunity”* and staff consistently using *“ambitious vocabulary”*. The inspection also commended the setting’s inclusive practice, cultural awareness and strong safeguarding culture, confirming that *“arrangements for safeguarding are effective”* and that there is *“an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children’s interests first.”*

This Outstanding judgement represents a significant milestone for Stepping Stones Community Organisation and reflects sustained investment in quality, leadership, workforce development and inclusive practice. It further strengthens the organisation’s reputation as a provider of excellence in early years education and community-based services.

### **Accredited Examination Centre and Inclusive Education Pathways**

Alongside its early years provision, Stepping Stones has continued to operate as an **approved examination centre**, providing access to recognised qualifications for young people who face barriers within mainstream education.

During 2024–2025, the exam centre supported young people to gain qualifications in core subjects such as English and mathematics, as well as other accredited courses aligned to individual learning pathways. This provision has been particularly important for learners who have experienced exclusion, disrupted education, school refusal, anxiety or other vulnerabilities that make traditional exam settings inaccessible.

The exam centre provided:

- A calm, smaller and supportive assessment environment
- A strong focus on emotional wellbeing and safeguarding
- Reasonable adjustments and access arrangements tailored to individual need

### **Partnership Working with Schools, Alternative Provision and SEND Services**

Stepping Stones worked in close partnership with schools, alternative provision providers and other education institutions to support **vulnerable learners and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)** to access and complete qualifications.

This collaborative approach included:

- Coordinating exam access for learners unable to sit assessments within their home institutions
- Supporting professionals and families to navigate access arrangements and reasonable adjustments
- Reducing anxiety through familiar environments and trusted relationships

For many learners, the exam centre provided a critical route to achieving qualifications that may otherwise have been out of reach. Trustees recognise this work as central to reducing educational inequality, improving life chances and supporting progression into further education, training or employment.

This inclusive assessment provision complements the organisation's Outstanding early years practice and wider education offer, reinforcing Stepping Stones' commitment to inclusive education across the life course.

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## **Violence Reduction and Community Safety – Women's Voices Collective (WVC)**

Between April 2024 and March 2025, Stepping Stones significantly expanded the scope, depth and influence of the **Women's Voices Collective (WVC)**. Supported by Staffordshire Police, this work moved beyond engagement into **evidence-led consultation, systems influence and policy-shaping activity**.

### **Consultation and Evidence Gathering**

During this period, Stepping Stones facilitated multiple structured consultations, focus groups and public engagement events with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) women. These consultations were undertaken in direct response to rising social tensions, community unrest and increased incidents of hostility following national and local riots.

Women shared detailed lived experiences relating to:

- **Personal safety and visibility**, particularly for visibly Muslim women wearing hijab
- **Fear and anxiety in public spaces**, including public transport and community venues
- **Impact on children**, including fear of racism, restricted mobility and internalised discrimination
- **Decline in participation** in long-standing community activities due to safety concerns

These insights provided critical qualitative evidence of how social unrest disproportionately affected CALD women and families.

### **Key Themes Identified Through WVC Work**

The WVC consultations identified consistent systemic barriers:

- **Digital exclusion**, including digital poverty and inaccessible online public sector platforms
- **Cultural competence gaps** within public services, leading to misinterpretation of parenting practices and family structures

- **Underrepresentation of women's voices**, with male-dominated institutions often speaking on behalf of communities
- **Erosion of trust** due to experiences of racism, lack of follow-up and fear of reporting incidents
- **Safety concerns**, particularly around harassment, transport and public visibility

Women reported modifying daily behaviour for safety, limiting independence and community participation.

### **Influence, Recommendations and System Impact**

The findings from the WVC were formally documented and shared with partners, contributing to:

- Clear, community-led **recommendations for violence reduction and safeguarding practice**
- Calls for **female-only safe spaces**, culturally sensitive mental health support and improved reporting mechanisms
- Advocacy for **direct engagement with women**, rather than reliance on male-dominated representative structures
- Promotion of early education, youth mentoring and cross-community dialogue to rebuild cohesion

Stepping Stones also delivered **Inclusive Community Engagement workshops and presentations** for public sector and VCSE professionals, translating community insight into practical, actionable learning. These sessions challenged assumptions about engagement, highlighted structural barriers and promoted co-production as best practice.

### **Strategic Significance**

Trustees recognise the WVC as a defining strand of the organisation's work in 2024–2025. The Collective strengthened safeguarding practice, informed violence reduction strategy and positioned Stepping Stones as a **trusted conduit between marginalised women and decision-makers**. This work directly informed wider responses to unrest, place-based partnership working and system reform.

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### **Response to Community Unrest and Riots**

During 2024–2025, national and local events contributed to periods of heightened community tension and unrest. Stepping Stones played an active role in supporting stability, reassurance and cohesion within affected communities.

The organisation's work during this period included:

- **Rapid community engagement:** Working directly with residents, families and community leaders to provide reassurance and trusted communication.
- **Countering misinformation:** Supporting partners to understand community concerns and address fear and speculation.

- **Trauma-informed support:** Providing space for individuals and families affected by anxiety, fear or distress linked to unrest.
- **De-escalation and dialogue:** Engaging young people and community members to reduce escalation and promote understanding.

Stepping Stones' established trust enabled it to respond quickly and sensitively, supporting both communities and statutory partners. Trustees view this work as a demonstration of the organisation's role as a stabilising presence during periods of heightened risk.

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### **One Stoke Partnership and Place-Based Working**

Throughout 2024–2025, Stepping Stones' place-based work through **One Stoke** was strengthened by evidence generated through the Women's Voices Collective and inclusive engagement activity.

The organisation contributed insight drawn directly from community consultations, ensuring that:

- CALD women's lived experiences informed strategic discussions
- Safety, trust and access were recognised as central to service design
- Engagement models moved beyond consultation towards co-production

Stepping Stones also supported professionals to reflect critically on engagement practice, challenging over-reliance on quantitative data, digital-only approaches and faith-based gatekeeping. This strengthened collective understanding of how systems can unintentionally exclude marginalised voices.

The Trustees note that this work reinforced Stepping Stones' role not only as a delivery partner, but as a **knowledge-holder and system influencer** within place-based working.

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### **Governance and Management**

Stepping Stones Community Organisation is governed by a committed Board of Trustees with collective expertise across education, safeguarding, community leadership, finance and governance. Trustees are responsible for setting strategic direction, ensuring compliance with charity law and regulatory frameworks, and safeguarding the charity's reputation and resources.

During 2024–2025, trustees placed a strong emphasis on **quality assurance and accountability**. The Ofsted Outstanding inspection provided independent assurance that governance arrangements, leadership oversight and safeguarding systems were operating effectively. Trustees reviewed inspection findings in detail and ensured that learning was embedded across the organisation.

Trustees met regularly to review performance, finance, risk and safeguarding. Clear reporting mechanisms enabled trustees to maintain oversight of delivery, staff wellbeing and external risk factors, including periods of community unrest.



Operational leadership remained strong, supported by clear accountability structures and investment in workforce development. Inspectors recognised that staff feel “*extremely well supported and valued*”, reinforcing trustees’ commitment to reflective supervision, professional learning and staff wellbeing as core components of effective governance.

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## **Financial Review**

The Trustees have reviewed the financial performance of the organisation for the year ending 31 March 2025 and are satisfied that Stepping Stones remains financially stable and well managed.

The year built upon the significant capital investment and infrastructure development achieved in the previous financial period. As a result, 2024–2025 focused on maximising the value of existing assets, embedding sustainable delivery models and ensuring resources were directed towards areas of highest impact.

Income continued to be drawn from a mix of grants, commissioned activity and service-related income, reducing reliance on any single funding source. Expenditure was closely monitored, with strong financial controls in place.

The Trustees are mindful of the ongoing financial pressures facing the voluntary and community sector and have taken steps to strengthen reserves planning, diversify income streams and maintain prudent oversight.

Detailed accounts and the independent examiner’s report are presented separately.

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## **Risk Management**

The Trustees maintained active oversight of organisational risk throughout the year. Key risks identified included safeguarding responsibilities, financial sustainability, workforce capacity and the impact of social and political instability within local communities.

The Ofsted Outstanding judgement provided external confirmation that safeguarding arrangements are effective and embedded within a positive organisational culture that “*puts children’s interests first*.” Trustees take assurance from this finding and continue to prioritise safeguarding as a standing agenda item.

Risk mitigation measures include:

- Regular financial monitoring and reserves planning
- Comprehensive safeguarding policies, training and reporting procedures
- Strong multi-agency partnerships to support early intervention
- Flexible delivery models capable of responding to crisis and unrest

The organisation’s effective response to community tensions and unrest during the year further demonstrated the strength of its leadership, decision-making and risk management processes.

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## Plans for the Future

Looking ahead, Stepping Stones Community Organisation will build on learning and evidence generated between April 2024 and March 2025. Trustees have identified the following priorities:

- Embedding learning from the Women's Voices Collective across safeguarding, violence reduction and engagement practice
- Supporting partners to implement inclusive, culturally competent engagement models
- Continuing to amplify CALD women's voices within decision-making systems
- Sustaining Ofsted Outstanding practice and applying quality assurance principles organisation-wide
- Strengthening community cohesion and resilience during periods of social tension
- Ensuring long-term organisational sustainability through strategic partnerships and income diversification

Trustees are committed to ensuring that future growth is informed by lived experience, evidence and co-production, maintaining the organisation's values-led approach.

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## Inspection Highlights (Ofsted, July 2024)

*"Children are exceptionally well cared for in this safe and stimulating environment."*

*"The curriculum is exceptionally well designed."*

*"Children make rapid progress from their individual starting points."*

*"Leaders live out their vision of being at the heart of the community they serve."*

*"There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first."*

## Trustees' Statement

The Trustees would like to thank the staff team, volunteers, partners and community members whose commitment and trust have made this work possible. The organisation enters the next year with confidence, clarity and a continued commitment to social justice and community empowerment.

This report is submitted on behalf of the Trustees.

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## Signed:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees

F. Rahman

R. Hossein

O. Salah

Z. Moheuddin

Date: 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

# Stepping Stones Community Organisation

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Head Quarters, 75 Raymond Street, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 4DP  
For the Year Ending 31 March 2025

Charity No: 1145346

## Income

Total Income: £780,365.00

Income during the financial year was derived from grants and commissioned contracts, education and examination services, training and consultation activity, and other service-related income aligned to the charity's objectives.

Description	Amount (£)
SLC	£629,658.00
Nursery Education Grant	£56,258.00
Service, assessment and administrative charges	£94,449.00
Total Income	£780,365.00

## Expenditure

Total Expenditure: £748,282.00

### Premises, Utilities and Infrastructure

Description	Amount (£)
Rent & Utilities (3 properties)	£109,150.00
Building Improvements	£82,000.00
Construction Costs	£24,000.00
Braithwaite Road Project	£23,200.00
Total Premises & Infrastructure	£238,350.00

The charity operated from three properties supporting early years provision, education, community engagement and partnership work. Capital investment ensured premises were safe, accessible and fit for purpose.

### Staffing – Salaries and Wages

Description	Amount (£)
Total Salaries & Wages	£289,740.00

### Programme-Level Staffing Breakdown

Programme Area	Amount (£)
Two Nurseries (Sessional Staff)	£107,000.00
Youth Mentoring Programme	£25,000.00
Women's Empowerment Workshops	£15,000.00

ESOL & Language Support Classes	£17,500.00
Cultural & Heritage Engagement	£18,500.00
Sports & Wellbeing Initiatives	£24,500.00
Community Advocacy & Support Services	£17,400.00
Parenting & Family Support Sessions	£15,500.00
Employment & Skills Training	£10,000.00
Arts, Crafts & Creative Engagement	£24,340.00
Community Health & Mental Wellbeing	£15,000.00

Staffing costs reflect employment of sessional staff delivering frontline services across education, youth, women's and community programmes.

### Education and Examination Costs

Description	Amount (£)
Examination & Assessment Costs	£58,392.00

### Operational and Administrative Costs

Description	Amount (£)
Operational Expenses	£67,800.00
Administration & Core Office Costs	£43,000.00
Insurance	£8,320.00
Professional Services	£18,000.00
Miscellaneous	£24,680.00
Total Operational & Professional Costs	£161,800.00

### Surplus for the Year

Description	Amount (£)
Surplus	£43,697.00

### Financial Position

Description	Amount (£)
Opening Balance (1 April 2024)	£11,614.00
Total Income	£780,365.00
Total Expenditure	£748,282.00
Closing Balance (31 March 2025)	£43,697.00

### Description

#### Premises, Utilities and Infrastructure

**Total: £238,350.00**

#### Rent & Utilities (3 properties) - £109,150.00

This expenditure covered rent, utilities and essential services across **three properties**, which supported:

- Outstanding-rated early years provision
- Education and examination delivery

- Youth, women's and community programmes
- Partnership meetings and system leadership activity

The properties provided **safe, accessible and culturally appropriate spaces** for children, young people, women and families, many of whom face barriers to accessing mainstream services.

### **Building Improvements – £82,000.00**

Building improvement costs related to planned capital works to ensure premises were:

- Fully compliant with health and safety requirements
- Accessible for children, families and individuals with SEND
- Fit for purpose for multi-use delivery, including education, safeguarding and community engagement

This investment reflects a **long-term commitment to community infrastructure**, ensuring sustainability and safe delivery environments.

### **Construction Costs – £24,000.00**

Construction expenditure supported structural and compliance-related works required to adapt premises for expanded service delivery. This included works necessary to meet regulatory standards and accommodate increased demand for services.

### **Braithwaite Road Project – £23,200.00**

This expenditure related specifically to development works at the **Braithwaite Road site**, enabling it to function as a dedicated community and education space. The project supported the organisation's growth and its ability to respond to local need.

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### **Staffing – Salaries and Wages**

#### **Total: £289,740.00**

Staffing costs reflect the organisation's **people-centred delivery model**, with sessional staff employed to deliver frontline services across education, youth, women's and community programmes.

#### **Two Nurseries (Sessional Staff) – £107,000.00**

This supported early years staffing to deliver high-quality provision, which was independently validated through an **Outstanding Ofsted judgement**. Staffing ensured safe ratios, strong safeguarding practice and high-quality learning experiences.

#### **Youth Mentoring Programme – £25,000.00**

Funding supported youth workers delivering mentoring, leadership development and engagement activities, contributing to positive outcomes including **youth civic participation and leadership pathways**.

**Women's Empowerment Workshops – £15,000.00**

This supported facilitation of women-led spaces addressing safety, wellbeing, confidence and voice, including work linked to violence reduction and safeguarding.

**ESOL & Language Support Classes – £17,500.00**

Staffing enabled delivery of language and communication support for adults, reducing isolation and improving access to services, education and employment.

**Cultural & Heritage Engagement – £18,500.00**

This funded staff delivering culturally responsive activities that strengthened identity, belonging and intergenerational engagement within communities.

**Sports & Wellbeing Initiatives – £24,500.00**

Staffing supported inclusive wellbeing activities that promoted physical health, confidence and social connection, particularly for groups underrepresented in mainstream provision.

**Community Advocacy & Support Services – £17,400.00**

This enabled staff to provide advocacy, guidance and signposting, supporting individuals and families to navigate complex systems safely.

**Parenting & Family Support Sessions – £15,500.00**

Staff delivered family-focused sessions supporting parenting skills, safeguarding awareness and early intervention.

**Employment & Skills Training – £10,000.00**

This supported staff delivering employability and skills development activity, contributing to improved life chances and progression.

**Arts, Crafts & Creative Engagement – £24,340.00**

Staffing enabled creative programmes supporting emotional wellbeing, expression and inclusion across age groups.

**Community Health & Mental Wellbeing – £15,000.00**

This funded delivery of wellbeing-focused activity addressing stress, anxiety and mental health, particularly during periods of social tension.

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**Education and Examination Costs**

**Total: £58,392.00**

This expenditure supported Stepping Stones' role as an **approved examination centre**, enabling vulnerable and SEND learners to access recognised qualifications.

Costs included:

- Examination entry and awarding body charges
- Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments
- Assessment administration and delivery costs

This investment removed barriers for learners unable to access traditional exam environments.

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### **Operational and Administrative Costs**

**Total: £161,800.00**

#### **Operational Expenses – £67,800.00**

Covered day-to-day delivery costs including materials, resources, IT, travel and programme-related operational support.

#### **Administration & Core Office Costs – £43,000.00**

Supported governance, coordination, record keeping, reporting and compliance, ensuring safe and effective organisational operation.

#### **Insurance – £8,320.00**

Provided appropriate cover for premises, staff, volunteers and service users, reflecting risk management responsibilities.

#### **Professional Services – £18,000.00**

Included accountancy, independent examination, garden maintenance, catering, events management and other professional services.

#### **Miscellaneous – £24,680.00**

Covered essential but variable costs linked to service delivery, community engagement and operational needs.

Electronically Signed:

Name	Date
F Rahman	20/01/25
Z Moheuddin	20/01/25

O Salah

20/01/25

R Hossein

20/01/25



Report to the trustees/  
members of

Charity Name: Stepping Stones Community  
Organisation

On accounts for the year  
ended

March 2025

Charity no  
(if any)

1145346



## Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Set out on pages 3 to 7

Respective  
responsibilities of  
trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent  
examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent  
examiner's statement

- In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention
1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
    - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
    - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
  2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Date:

30/01/2025

Name:

Mr Almoize Ahmed

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):

AAT (Association of Accounting)

**AA Accountancy**

Accountant & Tax Adviser  
Unit 14, 66 - 68 Stratford Road,  
Birmingham, B11 1AN

Address: 66-68 Stratford Road, Birmingham, B11 1AN

e: info@aaaccountancy.co.uk  
t: 0121 238 0194

**Section B**

**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material problems.

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

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Operational Expenses	£67,800.00
Administration & Core Office Costs	£43,000.00
Insurance	£8,320.00
Professional Services	£18,000.00
Miscellaneous	£24,680.00
Total Operational & Professional Costs	£161,800.00

## Surplus for the Year

Description	Amount (£)
Surplus	£43,697.00

## Financial Position

Description	Amount (£)
Opening Balance (1 April 2024)	£11,614.00
Total Income	£780,365.00
Total Expenditure	£748,282.00
Closing Balance (31 March 2025)	£43,697.00

### Description

#### Premises, Utilities and Infrastructure

**Total: £238,350.00**

#### Rent & Utilities (3 properties) – £109,150.00

This expenditure covered rent, utilities and essential services across **three properties**, which supported:

- Outstanding-rated early years provision
- Education and examination delivery
- Youth, women's and community programmes
- Partnership meetings and system leadership activity

The properties provided **safe, accessible and culturally appropriate spaces** for children, young people, women and families, many of whom face barriers to accessing mainstream services.

### **Building Improvements – £82,000.00**

Building improvement costs related to planned capital works to ensure premises were:

- Fully compliant with health and safety requirements
- Accessible for children, families and individuals with SEND
- Fit for purpose for multi-use delivery, including education, safeguarding and community engagement

This investment reflects a **long-term commitment to community infrastructure**, ensuring sustainability and safe delivery environments.

### **Construction Costs – £24,000.00**

Construction expenditure supported structural and compliance-related works required to adapt premises for expanded service delivery. This included works necessary to meet regulatory standards and accommodate increased demand for services.

### **Braithwaite Road Project – £23,200.00**

This expenditure related specifically to development works at the **Braithwaite Road site**, enabling it to function as a dedicated community and education space. The project supported the organisation's growth and its ability to respond to local need.

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## **Staffing – Salaries and Wages**

### **Total: £289,740.00**

Staffing costs reflect the organisation's **people-centred delivery model**, with sessional staff employed to deliver frontline services across education, youth, women's and community programmes.

### **Two Nurseries (Sessional Staff) – £107,000.00**

This supported early years staffing to deliver high-quality provision, which was independently validated through an **Outstanding Ofsted judgement**. Staffing ensured safe ratios, strong safeguarding practice and high-quality learning experiences.

### **Youth Mentoring Programme – £25,000.00**

Funding supported youth workers delivering mentoring, leadership development and engagement activities, contributing to positive outcomes including **youth civic participation and leadership pathways**.

### **Women's Empowerment Workshops – £15,000.00**

This supported facilitation of women-led spaces addressing safety, wellbeing, confidence and voice, including work linked to violence reduction and safeguarding.

### **ESOL & Language Support Classes – £17,500.00**

Staffing enabled delivery of language and communication support for adults, reducing isolation and improving access to services, education and employment.

#### **Cultural & Heritage Engagement – £18,500.00**

This funded staff delivering culturally responsive activities that strengthened identity, belonging and intergenerational engagement within communities.

#### **Sports & Wellbeing Initiatives – £24,500.00**

Staffing supported inclusive wellbeing activities that promoted physical health, confidence and social connection, particularly for groups underrepresented in mainstream provision.

#### **Community Advocacy & Support Services – £17,400.00**

This enabled staff to provide advocacy, guidance and signposting, supporting individuals and families to navigate complex systems safely.

#### **Parenting & Family Support Sessions – £15,500.00**

Staff delivered family-focused sessions supporting parenting skills, safeguarding awareness and early intervention.

#### **Employment & Skills Training – £10,000.00**

This supported staff delivering employability and skills development activity, contributing to improved life chances and progression.

#### **Arts, Crafts & Creative Engagement – £24,340.00**

Staffing enabled creative programmes supporting emotional wellbeing, expression and inclusion across age groups.

#### **Community Health & Mental Wellbeing – £15,000.00**

This funded delivery of wellbeing-focused activity addressing stress, anxiety and mental health, particularly during periods of social tension.

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### **Education and Examination Costs**

#### **Total: £58,392.00**

This expenditure supported Stepping Stones' role as an **approved examination centre**, enabling vulnerable and SEND learners to access recognised qualifications.

Costs included:

- Examination entry and awarding body charges
- Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments
- Assessment administration and delivery costs

This investment removed barriers for learners unable to access traditional exam environments.

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### **Operational and Administrative Costs**

**Total: £161,800.00**

**Operational Expenses – £67,800.00**

Covered day-to-day delivery costs including materials, resources, IT, travel and programme-related operational support.

**Administration & Core Office Costs – £43,000.00**

Supported governance, coordination, record keeping, reporting and compliance, ensuring safe and effective organisational operation.

**Insurance – £8,320.00**

Provided appropriate cover for premises, staff, volunteers and service users, reflecting risk management responsibilities.

**Professional Services – £18,000.00**

Included accountancy, independent examination, garden maintenance, catering, events management and other professional services.

**Miscellaneous – £24,680.00**

Covered essential but variable costs linked to service delivery, community engagement and operational needs.

Electronically Signed:

Name	Date
F Rahman	20/01/25
Z Moheuddin	20/01/25
O Salah	20/01/25
R Hossein	20/01/25

## **Trustees' Annual Report for the Year Ending 31 March 2025**

### **Stepping Stones Community Organisation**

Charity Number: 1145346

75 Raymond Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 4DP

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### **Introduction**

The Trustees of Stepping Stones Community Organisation are pleased to present the Annual Report for the financial year ending 31 March 2025. This year has been characterised by consolidation, growth and responsive community leadership. Building on the strong foundations established in previous years, the organisation has continued to expand its reach, deepen its impact and respond swiftly to emerging community needs.

The charity's work during 2024–2025 has focused on education, early years provision, community cohesion, safeguarding vulnerable communities, advocacy and systems leadership. Particular emphasis has been placed on violence reduction, community reassurance following periods of unrest, and collaborative place-based working through city-wide partnerships.

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### **Aims, Objectives and Public Benefit**

Stepping Stones Community Organisation was established to address persistent inequalities experienced by individuals and families, particularly those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The charity's aims are rooted in advancing education, reducing social isolation, improving wellbeing and enabling communities to thrive.

The organisation's objectives during 2024–2025 focused on:

- Advancing education through early years provision, accredited learning and skills development
- Supporting children, young people and families to reduce risk, harm and exclusion
- Strengthening community cohesion and resilience
- Amplifying community voice within decision-making systems
- Working collaboratively to tackle structural inequality

In delivering these objectives, Stepping Stones has provided clear public benefit by improving access to services, increasing participation, and supporting individuals who may otherwise face multiple barriers to engagement. Trustees have had due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and are satisfied that the charity's activities during the year were carried out for the benefit of the public.

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## Strategic Overview and Growth

During 2024–2025, Stepping Stones Community Organisation further consolidated its position as a trusted community anchor and system leader. The organisation's credibility was reflected not only in inspection outcomes and delivery, but also in external recognition, civic responsibility and strategic representation.

In **March 2025**, Stepping Stones was formally **recognised by the High Sheriff of Staffordshire** for the valuable and sustained contribution it makes to communities across Stoke-on-Trent. This recognition acknowledged the organisation's leadership, community trust and impact during periods of challenge and change.

The organisation was also formally identified as an **Emergency Hub for the City**, reflecting confidence from partners in Stepping Stones' ability to respond rapidly, safely and effectively in emergency situations. This designation recognised existing strengths in safeguarding, coordination, communication and community reach, and reinforced the organisation's role as a stabilising presence during crises.

Alongside this, Stepping Stones continued to strengthen its strategic influence through active participation on a range of **local and regional boards and forums**, where it represents:

- **Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities**
- **Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector voices**

Through this work, the organisation ensured that lived experience, inclusion and equity remained central to decision-making. Trustees note that this combination of recognition, responsibility and representation reflects a high level of trust in Stepping Stones' leadership and governance.

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## Key Activities and Achievements

This section summarises the charity's principal activities undertaken between **1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025**, reflecting delivery, leadership and impact across education, safeguarding, violence reduction, youth development and community cohesion.

This section summarises the charity's principal activities undertaken between **1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025**, reflecting delivery, leadership and impact across education, safeguarding, violence reduction and community cohesion.

### Development of Birmingham-Based Projects

During 2024–2025, Stepping Stones undertook preparatory and developmental work to expand its reach beyond Stoke-on-Trent, with a particular focus on establishing future projects at the **Birmingham site**. This work was exploratory and strategic, aimed at ensuring that any expansion is sustainable, values-led and responsive to local need.

Activity during the year included:

- Early-stage needs analysis and community scoping
- Relationship-building with local partners and stakeholders
- Exploration of governance, safeguarding and delivery models suitable for the Birmingham context

- Identifying opportunities to replicate Stepping Stones’ strengths in education, inclusion and community voice

Trustees closely monitored this work to ensure that development activity complemented, rather than detracted from, core delivery in Stoke-on-Trent. This measured approach reflects the organisation’s commitment to responsible growth and quality assurance.

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### Youth Offer in Stoke-on-Trent

Stepping Stones continued to invest in its **youth offer in Stoke-on-Trent**, recognising young people as critical contributors to community resilience, leadership and future change. Work during 2024–2025 focused on creating safe, inclusive spaces where young people could develop confidence, voice and leadership skills.

Youth activity was closely aligned with the organisation’s wider priorities around safeguarding, violence reduction and inclusion. Young people were supported to engage in dialogue around community safety, identity, belonging and civic participation.

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### Youth Leadership and Civic Representation

A significant highlight of the year was the election of a **young person from Stepping Stones’ membership as the Leader of Stoke-on-Trent City Youth Council**. This achievement reflects both the individual’s leadership capability and the organisation’s long-term investment in youth development and empowerment.

The young person’s election represents:

- Meaningful youth voice within civic decision-making structures
- Positive representation of diverse communities at city level
- Evidence that Stepping Stones’ youth work supports pathways into leadership and influence

Trustees regard this outcome as a powerful indicator of impact, demonstrating how sustained, inclusive youth engagement can translate into real civic participation and system influence.

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### Quality, Inspection Outcomes and Assurance

During 2024–2025, Stepping Stones Community Organisation achieved a significant quality milestone when its early years provision was judged **Outstanding in all areas by Ofsted** following inspection on 16 July 2024.

The inspection resulted in **Outstanding** judgements for:

- Overall effectiveness
- Quality of education
- Behaviour and attitudes
- Personal development
- Leadership and management

Inspectors described the provision as “*outstanding*” and highlighted that “*children are exceptionally well cared for in this safe and stimulating environment*” and that “*staff greet them warmly and children settle very quickly.*” The report emphasised the strength of relationships, noting that “*children and staff develop close, caring relationships*” and that leaders and staff “*share the highest expectations and aspirations for all children.*”

The curriculum was praised as “*exceptionally well-designed*”, enabling all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to “*continuously acquire knowledge and skills*” and “*make rapid progress from their individual starting points.*” Inspectors observed that learning activities were “*planned at precisely the right level for children’s age and stage of development*” and that children showed “*high levels of concentration and resilience.*”

Leadership and management were identified as a key strength. Inspectors noted that leaders “*live out their vision of being at the heart of the community they serve*” and that staff are “*extremely well supported and valued.*” The inspection further confirmed that safeguarding arrangements are effective, supported by “*an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children’s interests first.*”

Parents’ views were overwhelmingly positive, with inspectors recording feedback that “*the staff go above and beyond to provide a nurturing home from home.*”

Trustees regard this Outstanding judgement as independent confirmation of the organisation’s commitment to excellence, inclusive practice and strong leadership. It provides assurance to families, commissioners and partners that Stepping Stones delivers services of the highest quality and operates with robust governance and safeguarding arrangements.

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## **Early Years, Education and Skills**

Education has remained a cornerstone of Stepping Stones’ work throughout 2024–2025. A major achievement during the year was the organisation’s early years provision being judged **Outstanding in all areas by Ofsted** following inspection in July 2024.

The inspection confirmed **Outstanding** judgements for:

- Overall effectiveness
- Quality of education
- Behaviour and attitudes
- Personal development
- Leadership and management

Inspectors described the provision as “*outstanding*”, noting that “*children are exceptionally well cared for in this safe and stimulating environment*” and that staff and children “*develop close, caring relationships*”. The curriculum was recognised as “*exceptionally well-designed*”, enabling all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to “*make rapid progress from their individual starting points.*”

The report highlighted that activities are “*planned at precisely the right level for children’s age and stage of development*”, with children becoming “*incredibly absorbed in their learning and sustain their concentration for prolonged periods.*” Inspectors also praised children’s behaviour, stating that “*the way children conduct themselves is exemplary*” and that children demonstrate “*high levels of resilience.*”

Leadership was identified as a key strength. Inspectors noted that the dedicated manager and leadership team “*live out their vision of being at the heart of the community they serve*” and that staff feel “*extremely well supported and valued.*” Parents were described as “*overwhelmingly positive*”, with one commenting that “*the staff go above and beyond to provide a nurturing home from home.*”

Communication and language development was recognised as exceptional, with children “*immersed in literacy at every opportunity*” and staff consistently using “*ambitious vocabulary*”. The inspection also commended the setting’s inclusive practice, cultural awareness and strong safeguarding culture, confirming that “*arrangements for safeguarding are effective*” and that there is “*an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children’s interests first.*”

This Outstanding judgement represents a significant milestone for Stepping Stones Community Organisation and reflects sustained investment in quality, leadership, workforce development and inclusive practice. It further strengthens the organisation’s reputation as a provider of excellence in early years education and community-based services.

### **Accredited Examination Centre and Inclusive Education Pathways**

Alongside its early years provision, Stepping Stones has continued to operate as an **approved examination centre**, providing access to recognised qualifications for young people who face barriers within mainstream education.

During 2024–2025, the exam centre supported young people to gain qualifications in core subjects such as English and mathematics, as well as other accredited courses aligned to individual learning pathways. This provision has been particularly important for learners who have experienced exclusion, disrupted education, school refusal, anxiety or other vulnerabilities that make traditional exam settings inaccessible.

The exam centre provided:

- A calm, smaller and supportive assessment environment
- A strong focus on emotional wellbeing and safeguarding
- Reasonable adjustments and access arrangements tailored to individual need

### **Partnership Working with Schools, Alternative Provision and SEND Services**

Stepping Stones worked in close partnership with schools, alternative provision providers and other education institutions to support **vulnerable learners and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)** to access and complete qualifications.

This collaborative approach included:

- Coordinating exam access for learners unable to sit assessments within their home institutions
- Supporting professionals and families to navigate access arrangements and reasonable adjustments
- Reducing anxiety through familiar environments and trusted relationships

For many learners, the exam centre provided a critical route to achieving qualifications that may otherwise have been out of reach. Trustees recognise this work as central to reducing educational inequality, improving life chances and supporting progression into further education, training or employment.

This inclusive assessment provision complements the organisation's Outstanding early years practice and wider education offer, reinforcing Stepping Stones' commitment to inclusive education across the life course.

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## **Violence Reduction and Community Safety – Women's Voices Collective (WVC)**

Between April 2024 and March 2025, Stepping Stones significantly expanded the scope, depth and influence of the **Women's Voices Collective (WVC)**. Supported by Staffordshire Police, this work moved beyond engagement into **evidence-led consultation, systems influence and policy-shaping activity**.

### **Consultation and Evidence Gathering**

During this period, Stepping Stones facilitated multiple structured consultations, focus groups and public engagement events with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) women. These consultations were undertaken in direct response to rising social tensions, community unrest and increased incidents of hostility following national and local riots.

Women shared detailed lived experiences relating to:

- **Personal safety and visibility**, particularly for visibly Muslim women wearing hijab
- **Fear and anxiety in public spaces**, including public transport and community venues
- **Impact on children**, including fear of racism, restricted mobility and internalised discrimination
- **Decline in participation** in long-standing community activities due to safety concerns

These insights provided critical qualitative evidence of how social unrest disproportionately affected CALD women and families.

### **Key Themes Identified Through WVC Work**

The WVC consultations identified consistent systemic barriers:

- **Digital exclusion**, including digital poverty and inaccessible online public sector platforms
- **Cultural competence gaps** within public services, leading to misinterpretation of parenting practices and family structures
- **Underrepresentation of women's voices**, with male-dominated institutions often speaking on behalf of communities
- **Erosion of trust** due to experiences of racism, lack of follow-up and fear of reporting incidents
- **Safety concerns**, particularly around harassment, transport and public visibility

Women reported modifying daily behaviour for safety, limiting independence and community participation.

### **Influence, Recommendations and System Impact**

The findings from the WVC were formally documented and shared with partners, contributing to:

- Clear, community-led **recommendations for violence reduction and safeguarding practice**
- Calls for **female-only safe spaces**, culturally sensitive mental health support and improved reporting mechanisms
- Advocacy for **direct engagement with women**, rather than reliance on male-dominated representative structures
- Promotion of early education, youth mentoring and cross-community dialogue to rebuild cohesion

Stepping Stones also delivered **Inclusive Community Engagement workshops and presentations** for public sector and VCSE professionals, translating community insight into practical, actionable learning. These sessions challenged assumptions about engagement, highlighted structural barriers and promoted co-production as best practice.

### Strategic Significance

Trustees recognise the WVC as a defining strand of the organisation's work in 2024–2025. The Collective strengthened safeguarding practice, informed violence reduction strategy and positioned Stepping Stones as a **trusted conduit between marginalised women and decision-makers**. This work directly informed wider responses to unrest, place-based partnership working and system reform.

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### Response to Community Unrest and Riots

During 2024–2025, national and local events contributed to periods of heightened community tension and unrest. Stepping Stones played an active role in supporting stability, reassurance and cohesion within affected communities.

The organisation's work during this period included:

- **Rapid community engagement:** Working directly with residents, families and community leaders to provide reassurance and trusted communication.
- **Countering misinformation:** Supporting partners to understand community concerns and address fear and speculation.
- **Trauma-informed support:** Providing space for individuals and families affected by anxiety, fear or distress linked to unrest.
- **De-escalation and dialogue:** Engaging young people and community members to reduce escalation and promote understanding.

Stepping Stones' established trust enabled it to respond quickly and sensitively, supporting both communities and statutory partners. Trustees view this work as a demonstration of the organisation's role as a stabilising presence during periods of heightened risk.

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### One Stoke Partnership and Place-Based Working

Throughout 2024–2025, Stepping Stones' place-based work through **One Stoke** was strengthened by evidence generated through the Women's Voices Collective and inclusive engagement activity.

The organisation contributed insight drawn directly from community consultations, ensuring that:

- CALD women's lived experiences informed strategic discussions
- Safety, trust and access were recognised as central to service design
- Engagement models moved beyond consultation towards co-production

Stepping Stones also supported professionals to reflect critically on engagement practice, challenging over-reliance on quantitative data, digital-only approaches and faith-based gatekeeping. This strengthened collective understanding of how systems can unintentionally exclude marginalised voices.

The Trustees note that this work reinforced Stepping Stones' role not only as a delivery partner, but as a **knowledge-holder and system influencer** within place-based working.

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## Governance and Management

Stepping Stones Community Organisation is governed by a committed Board of Trustees with collective expertise across education, safeguarding, community leadership, finance and governance. Trustees are responsible for setting strategic direction, ensuring compliance with charity law and regulatory frameworks, and safeguarding the charity's reputation and resources.

During 2024–2025, trustees placed a strong emphasis on **quality assurance and accountability**. The Ofsted Outstanding inspection provided independent assurance that governance arrangements, leadership oversight and safeguarding systems were operating effectively. Trustees reviewed inspection findings in detail and ensured that learning was embedded across the organisation.

Trustees met regularly to review performance, finance, risk and safeguarding. Clear reporting mechanisms enabled trustees to maintain oversight of delivery, staff wellbeing and external risk factors, including periods of community unrest.

Operational leadership remained strong, supported by clear accountability structures and investment in workforce development. Inspectors recognised that staff feel *“extremely well supported and valued”*, reinforcing trustees' commitment to reflective supervision, professional learning and staff wellbeing as core components of effective governance.

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## Financial Review

The Trustees have reviewed the financial performance of the organisation for the year ending 31 March 2025 and are satisfied that Stepping Stones remains financially stable and well managed.

The year built upon the significant capital investment and infrastructure development achieved in the previous financial period. As a result, 2024–2025 focused on maximising the value of existing assets, embedding sustainable delivery models and ensuring resources were directed towards areas of highest impact.

Income continued to be drawn from a mix of grants, commissioned activity and service-related income, reducing reliance on any single funding source. Expenditure was closely monitored, with strong financial controls in place.

The Trustees are mindful of the ongoing financial pressures facing the voluntary and community sector and have taken steps to strengthen reserves planning, diversify income streams and maintain prudent oversight.

Detailed accounts and the independent examiner's report are presented separately.

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## **Risk Management**

The Trustees maintained active oversight of organisational risk throughout the year. Key risks identified included safeguarding responsibilities, financial sustainability, workforce capacity and the impact of social and political instability within local communities.

The Ofsted Outstanding judgement provided external confirmation that safeguarding arrangements are effective and embedded within a positive organisational culture that *"puts children's interests first."* Trustees take assurance from this finding and continue to prioritise safeguarding as a standing agenda item.

Risk mitigation measures include:

- Regular financial monitoring and reserves planning
- Comprehensive safeguarding policies, training and reporting procedures
- Strong multi-agency partnerships to support early intervention
- Flexible delivery models capable of responding to crisis and unrest

The organisation's effective response to community tensions and unrest during the year further demonstrated the strength of its leadership, decision-making and risk management processes.

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## **Plans for the Future**

Looking ahead, Stepping Stones Community Organisation will build on learning and evidence generated between April 2024 and March 2025. Trustees have identified the following priorities:

- Embedding learning from the Women's Voices Collective across safeguarding, violence reduction and engagement practice
- Supporting partners to implement inclusive, culturally competent engagement models
- Continuing to amplify CALD women's voices within decision-making systems
- Sustaining Ofsted Outstanding practice and applying quality assurance principles organisation-wide
- Strengthening community cohesion and resilience during periods of social tension
- Ensuring long-term organisational sustainability through strategic partnerships and income diversification

Trustees are committed to ensuring that future growth is informed by lived experience, evidence and co-production, maintaining the organisation's values-led approach.

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## **Inspection Highlights (Ofsted, July 2024)**

*"Children are exceptionally well cared for in this safe and stimulating environment."*



*“The curriculum is exceptionally well designed.”*

*“Children make rapid progress from their individual starting points.”*

*“Leaders live out their vision of being at the heart of the community they serve.”*

*“There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children’s interests first.”*

### **Trustees’ Statement**

The Trustees would like to thank the staff team, volunteers, partners and community members whose commitment and trust have made this work possible. The organisation enters the next year with confidence, clarity and a continued commitment to social justice and community empowerment.

This report is submitted on behalf of the Trustees.

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### **Signed:**

On behalf of the Board of Trustees

F. Rahman

R. Hossein

O. Salah

Z. Moheuddin

Date: 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025