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# ANNUAL REPORT

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Alliance for Cohesion and Racial Equality  
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**Company No.**  
8248194

**Charity No**  
1149491

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# Chair's Report

## Dr Ejaz Elahi



Alliance for cohesion & racial equality (ACRE) was formed in October 2012, to promote equality, community engagement, community empowerment and cohesion in Reading.

At this point, it would be good to highlight some of our achievements in the recent past few years:

- 2021 – 2022:

ACRE, Utulivu and Mojatu Media collaborated to establish a community wellbeing hub. The Hub provides a safe place for people to meeting a relaxing environment, play games and receive help and support with common problems

- 2022 - 2023:

On going discussion with the Thames Valley Police on their Race Action Plan. ACRE produced two videos in partnership with RBC Community Services to promote the Community Wellbeing Hub. ACRE was chosen as one of the favourite charities by the Mayor of Reading, Cllr. Rachel Eden and was presented with 'Achievement Award 2023'.

- 2023 – 2024:

ACRE manages the Hate Crime Forum and liaises with Reading Police and RBC. ACRE in partnership with Reading Public Health Team have recruited and trained volunteers as Community Champions. ACRE curated an Arts Exhibition with local artists titled 'Art from the Heart'. This was hugely successful as many young ethnically diverse artists expressed their emotions in pictorial form.

It is important to reflect that July 2024 was a very special day for ACRE when two of its Trustees, Cllr. Glenn Dennis and Cllr. Alice Mpfu-Coles, who had been elected as Mayor and Deputy Mayor of RBC, were honoured in an impressive ceremony hosted by ACRE and attended by a large section of our community. ACRE, on behalf of all Trustees, staff and well-wishers would like to extend our tribute on their success.

- 2024-2025:

My sincere thanks go to our former CEO Victor Koroma for his outstanding efforts in shaping ACRE, our CEO, George Mathew, Shagufta Ali, Sarah O'Donnell and Ritu Shankardass for their hard work in running the organisation.

Sincere thanks also go to my longstanding colleagues on the Board of Trustees and a warm welcome of appreciation for our new Trustees.

My report would be incomplete if I did not mention our large team of volunteers for the invaluable assistance they have given both in the office and in the delivery of a large number of events and workshops across a diverse range of themes amongst them, the Community Health Champions, the hosting of the International Mens Day conference, Simply computing and many others . Quite frankly, we would not have been able to deliver as much as we did without their help.

Ejaz Elahi  
Chairman, Board of Trustees



# CEO's Report

## George Mathew



In the process of writing my first report, reviewing the period April 2024 to March 2025, I can, without question assert that it has been a major period of transition for ACRE. Foremost in mind was the retirement of ACRE's long-standing CEO, Victor Koroma at the end of December 2024. Since 2012 he established Acre, and his passion for justice and equality for all has had a positive impact on the residents, community groups and businesses in Reading.

As the previous ACRE Equality and Engagement Officer, Chief Operations Officer and now the Chief Executive Officer, there is an immediate recognition that Acre is a well-established and well-known voluntary community organisation and charity in Reading. Its primary focus is promoting equality; that people are treated fairly and equally which is the golden thread running through its development, objectives and activities. This vision and purpose are fundamental in creating a cohesive place and space in an ethnically diverse town such as Reading and specifically at our Community Wellbeing Hub (CWH) on Oxford Road.

Our core work therefore is to support ethnically diverse and marginalised communities, improving the health and wellbeing of individuals and families experiencing difficulties particularly with navigating statutory structures and statutory provision.

Historically, ACRE's development path is grounded on a service delivery model that is always community based, and community led. Once members of a community voice a specific need, the starting point is to conduct basic research taking account of cultural norms and sensitivities of that community. Based on that model the following are some of the services that Acre provided during this period at our CWH.

1. **Weekly Coffee Mornings in partnership with Utulivu – a popular meet up for two hours with regular guest speakers on health and well-being. Interpreters are provided in Arabic and Urdu.**
2. **Peer Support Group meetings -Culturally specific groups (e.g. Refugees and asylum seekers, elderly, women only).**
3. **Computer Classes/Digital Access led by experienced IT Volunteers which are well attended but paused due to issues with Boardroom Hall where they were held.**
4. **Sewing Classes – Initiated by ACRE to break isolation after requests from mainly women who were isolated and wanted an activity that would motivate them to come out. Held once a week and led by an experienced tutor for a cycle of six weeks.**
5. **Grassroot Communities- Let's Talk Wellbeing – ACRE in partnership with Utulivu Women's Group scheduled weekly online session -recent topics have been – Dying Matters, Dementia and Trauma and Mental Health.**
6. **Signposting service – Guide people to existing resources for Mental Health service, Immigration service.**
7. **Outreach Events in Community Hubs, Health Centres and places of worship.**
8. **Bi-Monthly Health Checks held at CWH as part of the Community Wellness Outreach project.**

ACRE is committed to continuing our role as a strategic lead for organisations supporting ethnically diverse communities in Reading. We will build on our strong community infrastructure, extensive partnerships, and evidence-informed approach to ensure we deliver high-impact, culturally competent services that promote health and wellbeing.

Two excellent examples of collaborative work are the highly successful Reading Community Health Champions project and the Men2Men Project.

Reading Community Health Champions (CHCs)

The CHC Project is run and managed by the RBC Public Health Team in an equal and strong partnership with ACRE with New Directions College providing the training. ACRE leads on the community engagement and development strand of the project, recruiting community volunteers from a wide demographic reflecting Reading's diversity and getting them trained as Community Health Champions. Events organized throughout the year are highlighted below:



1. Gardening and Dementia Training – June 18. Led by Age UK
  2. Debunking Common Nutritional Myths – June 27. Webinar led by University of Reading
  3. Smoking & Alcohol in your Community Workshop - July 29.
- Led by RBC Public Health Programme Officers
4. Diabetes and Community Engagement Webinar – August 14
  5. What is Neurodiversity Webinar? – September 25
  6. Wellbeing Meeting at the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL) - October 23.
  7. Menopause Café – Initiated by the CHCs – October 7 & 21 at the Reading Central Library. This event was reported on BBC South News
  8. Whole Systems Approach to Health – with a section on Flu information and a chance to hear about research participation through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) – November 27
  9. Menopause Café “All things menopause” 10am – 12pm 1st and 3rd Friday of the month. Reading Central Library. The café idea was initiated and organised by Community Health Champions
  10. A monthly Bulletin of Reading Health Events and Information was published and distributed only to CHCs.

In addition, two outstanding events were organised by the CHCs:

**A Health Expo Day** was held at the **Hexham Road Community Centre** on September 14 to demonstrate how collaborative community action can bring about positive, lasting change for public health. Partnering local communities, organizations based in Reading and agencies in attendance were Utulivu Women’s Group, The Indian Community Association, BHFT, NHS BOB ICB, RISE, New Directions, Autism Berkshire, Brighter Future for Children, WCDA, Caversham Muslim Association, The Jamaica Society and Friends Reading and local organisations such as Temne Association of Reading, 7th Day Adventist’s groups, and the Hexham Youth group. A whole day event with at least 20 wide ranging presentations on health and well-being, it brought together residents from across Reading, fostering unity and inclusivity and celebrating the strength that comes from diversity of our local communities.

**Celebrating our Community Health Champions Awards Ceremony** was held on December 4 at the University of Reading, Loddon Campus from 6pm. With the successful target recruitment of 101 CHCs and with 20 volunteers on the waiting list, ACRE in partnership with the RBC Public Health Team, organised an Awards event. 18 CHCs were awarded certificates in special recognition of empowering their communities around health and wellbeing. ACRE hopes to continue to build on our existing effective and ongoing collaboration further by continuous participation in RBC’s Action Research meetings and strategic forums such as the Mental Wellbeing Group and Suicide Prevention Group. The challenge is to seek funding to continue the outstanding work done by all the stakeholders towards a comprehensive and sustainable future of the Reading CHC project.

Community Health Champion Awards ceremony at Reading University



#### Men2Men Project

As part of ACRE’s ongoing work with its Men’s group, the immediate concern was that there was no noticeable coordinated/concerted approach to addressing men’s health concerns within minoritised and marginalised communities. This put them potentially at risk of mental and physical health deterioration. ACRE is thankful to the Reading Integration Board (RIB) for supporting our funding bid for the Men2Men project. Its aim is to provide an outreach service that will go into community settings and recruit potential beneficiaries with the activities designed by the project (see Men2Men Report).

## Community Engagement

### 1. The first ACRE Hate Crime Forum of 2024 took place on Thursday July 18 at the Reading

Council Chamber, Civic offices. It was dedicated to addressing and preventing hate crimes in our community with a focus on victims reporting it. A key takeaway was to continue to discuss the Police Race Action Plan (PRAP) to develop and build an anti-racist police service in Reading.

Just a few weeks later the series of violent flash mobs attacking hotels housing migrants, trying to set the buildings alight and pulling people from their cars took place across the country. An emergency IAG meeting was also held on August 6 to brief community leaders of the ongoing situation. Credit must be given to the Community and Diversity Officer (CADO) together with Reading and Thames Valley Police for taking the appropriate action to ensure the safety of Reading residents particularly from the minoritised communities.

### 2. ACRE was grateful to be invited to attend the University Globe Sculptures Launch on Wednesday 25 September; four new globe sculptures at the University of Reading's Whiteknights campus were installed to mark the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade. The artistic globes have been installed at prominent locations around Whiteknights and will create a Globe Trail that is part of a permanent public art on campus. ACRE has publicised the Globe sculptures through its community networks.

3. In early August, ACRE received a £2000 Household Support Grant from RBC to distribute to families in need. The decision was made to offer it to Alafia an ACRE organisation that supports ethnic diverse families caring for children and young people (0-25) on a wide spectrum of disabilities or additional needs. All their service users are carers who are on low income or benefits, and some are single parents.

Over the next few weeks Gift Bags were distributed to 30 Carers and Boots Gift Vouchers were distributed to a further 40 Carers. Acre also organised a workshop titled "Effective Budgeting and Money Saving Tips" Workshop which was presented by an experienced Financial Coach and Educator. 12 people attended.

4. As part of Black History Month, ACRE showcased its activities over the past year at the UoR campus on October 28 from 7 – 8.30pm. Highlights included examples of its Sewing classes, Poetry and Photography Project (Poetry was read), Community Health Champions work and finally a 20-minute video on the life of ACRE's CEO Victor Koroma followed by a Q&A session. 30 people attended.

5. Here I would like to recognise Equality Mastermind headed by Keith Seville, author and entrepreneur for organising, in partnership with ACRE, a Business Showcase event at the Civic Centre on October 8. Key speakers were Rachel Eden – a well-known Councillor but also an accountant and Shirley Anstis a popular author and coach.

6. ACRE as part of the Reading Holocaust Memorial Day Partnership organised 'An Evening of Remembrance and Reflection – the theme titled 'For a Better Future'. The key speakers were Charlie Knight, a historian delivering a talk connecting the narratives of those that remained in Germany with those that left for Britain. The second speaker was Bakhit Adam, Chairman of the Reading Sudanese Community who spoke about the current situation in Darfur, Sudan.

7. ACRE is now a regular contributor to the Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (BHFT) Anti-racism COMMUNITY Forum and attended the face-to-face event on November 5 from 10-3pm at the Bracknell Open Learning Centre. Some of the key talks and discussion was around Mental Health Detentions, a Multifaith project and a Theatre Forum. There were further speakers, and the event concluded with an interactive Art Workshop on well-being and reclaiming narratives.

In concluding this report I would like to attach importance to the numerous advantages in partnership working as we recognise the deep knowledge of ethnically diverse and marginalised communities stems from the numerous methods of engagement we utilise. Simply put ACRE would be in a difficult position to deliver on its strategic and operational objectives without collaboration with its trusted partners.

Let me start by thanking the Board of Trustees and my colleagues on the ACRE staff team- Ritu Shankardass, Tony Adejo, Barbara Diouri, Errol Masters, Adrianne Lowe and Sharif Adam.

My gratitude to Shagufta Ali for her dedication to Alafia and the Carers over so many years.

Many Thanks to our brilliant Utulivu Partners: Cecily Mwaniki, Eva Karanja, Raveena Harjun Sahota, Shama Cora and Benedicta Omoarebun.

I would like to acknowledge both Dr. Hilda Eshieshi -the CHC Lead and Chelsea Otto - CHC Coordinator for their immense contribution in developing the CHCs right till the end of the Project; Dayna White the Neighbourhood and Partnerships Manager - Public Health for her consistent support of the CHC Project; all the wonderful 100+ CHCs volunteers Healthwatch Reading for their tremendous work as the independent champion for putting people at the heart of care who use health and social care services.

Alice Kunjappy-Clifton -the Lead Officer for her incisive questions and positive response through action.

Tariq Gomma – Engagement Officer – Always willing to give a helping hand.

Zainab Koroma – Engagement Officer -For the informative discussions around health.

Sincere thanks to James S Momoh for his invaluable service as a CBT Practitioner to ACRE's Men's group; Trip Pannu – the CADO Officer - Reading Police for his timely support during a tense time in July; James M. Mugo once again for providing pro-bono advice to ACRE clients and CWH participants; all ACRE volunteers.

Thank you to the many dedicated community organisations such as Reading Muslim, Caribbean Association Group, Sudanese Group, Citizen Advice Reading, Compass Recovery, Berkshire Active, Healthwatch, RVA, Connect Reading and RAN and many others.

As always thanks and gratitude to all our funders – RBC, RIB, ICB and BHFT

Good luck and the very best to whatever you do Dr. Victor Koroma.

### **Men 2 Men Launch**





# Alafia Family Support Service Report



## Shagufta Ali

### Executive Summary

Alafia supports Ethnic Minority families caring for children 0-25 with disabilities or additional needs.

### Summary of Delivery

509 family Contacts: Contacts cases with diverse issues supported to get what they needed, and sometimes referred to appropriate agencies.

### Face to Face support

Face to Face support provided i.e Help with form filling / support provided/signposted 121 contacts.

- 4x Universal Credit claims
- 17x DLA applications/ renewals / appeals
- 7x PIP renewal
- 3x universal credit applications
- 4x renewal of concessionary bus pass
- 1x Referral to Cowshed Charity
- 1x Dental Cost Exemption application
- 1x Assault on student at school guidance provided
- 1x assist with carers assessment by Reading Mencap
- 3x support provided regarding issues with school transport
- 5x blue badge application
- 8x families support to apply for funding from trusts and charities for additional equipment, including specialist furniture and wheel chairs for their children.
- 6x New Family referral to Alafia Service – 6 families
- 5x Support letter for housing
- 3x Concessions Bus Pass application/ replacement of lost bus pass
- 1x Toll Charges Exemption application
- 2x Carers Allowance application
- 9x Family Fund Charity Applications
- 1x Dental Charge Exemption Application
- 1x Community Grant applications
- 1x ECHP plan guidance provided
- 4x Letters to school for permission to attend Jungle Mania soft play sessions
- 1x ECHP plan guidance provided

## Face to Parents Support Group Sessions:

Workshop was focused on money saving tips for electric and gas bills and general energy advice attended by 11 carers. Effective Budgeting and Money Saving Tips Workshop presented by Charmaine Simpson who is a passionate Personal Financial Coach and Financial Educator.

(Charmaine is focused on helping clients achieve financial wellbeing by teaching empowering and inspiring their goals and help them find practical solutions to money challenges and help clients to save money, create a budget, pay off debts or improve their financial literacy in general. The workshop attended by 12 carers proved useful for everyone dealing with household budgeting on daily basis).

### Effective Budgeting and Money Saving Tips September 2024

The session was very useful, including removing labels with names and address and barcodes from packaging and boxes before throwing them away to prevent identity fraud.

Writing down budgeting plans of income and outgoings is an effective way to budget. This is a good way to reduce spending and save money.

Making budgeting plans should be a family task, sharing it with children to teach them about money management is a good tip. Practical tips like switching off lights, turning down heating and making sure your home is well insulated to save on utility bills. Check letters that are sent to your address with a different name should be opened and checked. This can prevent fraud and identity theft.

## Shortbreaks for families

1. **Camp Mohawk** - Facilitated day out for families at Camp Mohawk (A multi - functional day centre for children with special needs children and their families) opportunity provided by Reading Family. A Big thank you on behalf of ACRE/Alafia staff and trustees. This provided opportunity for families to have quality time together, network with other families and form friendship, attended by 10 families (44 individuals).  
Feedback from families;  
Thank you Alafia/Reading Family Aid for your support. My daughter had a wonderful day particularly loved the paddling pool. Thanks for arranging the outing for us!, Thanks for the lovely day out, kids had a fab time!, Trip was wonderful and enjoyed by everyone.
2. **Family Day at Marwell Zoo** - Total of 19 families attended (30 Carers and 41 children including 15 children with additional needs. This was an opportunity for families to spend quality time together and network with other families. Families on low income and single parent families had an opportunity to visit the Park who otherwise cannot afford a family day out. Sincere thanks to Happy Days Children's Charity for providing funding towards the Trip. Feedback from families;  
It was a lovely day out for me and the children. Really appreciate your effort.  
Thank you for your support and trip was very nice and enjoyable  
Enjoyed a very productive day out with the family. Thankyou.  
Everyone really enjoyed the food, thank you for bringing a smile to Children's face!  
Thanks Alafia and RFA for providing such a fantastic opportunity for isolated families



3. **Bournemouth Seaside Trip**: ACRE funded the Trip under the banner of the Community Wellbeing Hub and coordinated by Utilivu as partners. Trip proved very popular as was attended by 15 families ( 63 individuals).  
Comments and Feedback from families:  
Thanks Alafia and for organising the trip. It was a very enjoyable day out for my family. Special appreciation goes to the staff who work tirelessly to ensure that everyone is looked after and contented. You do amazing job and you are the unsaid hero!. Staff always polite and calm and dealing with so many people is not easy job. Always bring smile on everyone's face! Thank you for a wonderful trip to the seaside! The atmosphere was calm and refreshing, and beautiful that made every moment feel special. The fresh sea breeze, the sound of the waves, and the peaceful escape. Everything was well-organised and comfortable, which made the experience even more enjoyable. I came back feeling relaxed, recharged, and full with great memories!



4. **End of the year Lunch at Cosmo Restaurant, Reading** to mark the end of year and enjoy festive lunch together. Attended by 66 Carers & children. Families met other families and enjoyed cuisine from different countries.  
Feedback from families:  
Everyone really enjoyed the food, thank you for bringing a smile to Children's face!  
Thank you for a wonderful dining experience at this restaurant. The atmosphere was warm and welcoming; you made many people have smiles on their faces which made the dining more memorable. The food was fresh, flavourful and beautifully made. I left not only satisfied but I am looking forward to coming back and I just wanted to say thank you again for taking us to fantastic restaurant.

5. **Christmas Pantomime and live performance at Reading Rep Theatre** enjoying live performances extend out thanks to Reading Family Aid for supporting the Alafia families.  
Attended by 10 families (32 carers and children).

Comments from families:

Kids had a wonderful time and always look forward to watching the panto at Christmas Time.

The Reading Rep Performance was great we appreciate your help and support!



#### 6. **Soft Play Sessions at Junglemania Reading**

Soft play sessions resumed for children with special needs and their siblings. These take place once a month term time only, 10 Sessions have been attended this year with average of 20 people attending each session which include carers and their children. Children get a chance to play together in a safe environment and parents can network and relax.

Household Support Fund Grant supported by Reading Borough Council 121 Alafia families were supported by Household Support Fund Grant. Funds were made available to provide Tesco Gift Vouchers/ Gift bags containing household essential and toiletries.

#### **Christmas Toy Donation**

Reading Family Aid Toy Appeal donated toys for children. This was really beneficial for families who otherwise find it difficult to buy toys for their children during the Festive season. Toys were donated to 11 families.

Meetings attended by Support Worker: Regular meeting with Reading Families Forum, Strand 5 Group, monitoring meetings with Reading Mencap LD partnership group, staff meetings and IASS meetings.

Information shared with families: 97 Families on What's App group. Other families receive information by post or email. Information shared with families - 140 families each time.

Newsletters about Stop Loan Shark, Reading SEND summer, Reading SEND Offer, Community Wellbeing , Nature (spending time in nature does wonders for our wellbeing), Community Wellbeing.

Events: Reading Children's Festival, Reading University Community Festival, Community Festival at Forbury Gardens, Ridgeline Trust's Autumn Fete and Plant Sale, Parent Carer Health Engagement Day, Suicide Prevention Conference, Community Health Champions Health Expo Day, Reading Mela, Welcome to Reading Coffee Mornings, Women's Football for Mental Wellbeing, Ready Friends Befriending Forum, Reading Weekly Seated Exercise and Wellbeing Program with GBA, Rose Circle Women's Group, Indian Community Senior Citizens Club, Reading Families Forum Information and Fun Day at YMCA, Services Marketplace (network with local organisations, charities, and community groups supporting children with special needs and their families, Tea and Coffee Morning by Utulivu, Women's Health Conference, Health Men's International Day 2024, Holocaust Memorial Day 2025, Reading Families Forum Coffee Morning, Reading Job Fest 2025 hosted by Reading Borough Council.

Workshops: Managing money & mental health workshop, Mindfulness Workshop by Reading Community Outreach, Hate Crime Forum, Art Stories, Autism and our Education System, Technology enabled care drop in workshop, Building Berkshire Together Community Workshop, Support for School uniform (Cowshed Charity), Community Wellness Outreach, Cost of living - Money matters, Together for Mental Wellbeing Art Workshop, Surplus Food Project supported by Whitley Community Development Association

Feedback: Health Watch Reading (share experience of being billed for NHS treatment wrongly), Reading Mencap Carers Support Group Drop in Parenting Special Children Requested an interpreter but not given one share experience, Health Watch Reading (share experience of being billed for NHS treatment wrongly)

Information shared: Hexham Road Community Centre Updates, Readings Community Safety survey, Reading Food partnership. Flyers shared: Support for victims of domestic abuse , Stop Loan Sharks, Coffee Morning With Parenting Special Children, Parenting Special Children Recruiting Community Language Volunteer, Parenting Special Children Fun Kids Party, Reading Mencap Carers Support Group Drop, Parenting special children coffee mornings, Together for Mental Wellbeing Finding your Voice through Poetry Workshop, Reading Community conversation on dying matters event, Broad Street Health Centre Smear Test, Carers Get together by Carers Partnership, Carers Get together by Carers Partnership, Reading Community conversation on dying matters event, Reading Mental Health Awareness Week (Community: Through my Eyes) workshop, Survey for 5-25 years with additional needs. Reading Services Guide Newsletter, Community Wellbeing Newsletter, energy advice project workshop by Reading Mencap.

The following events attended to raise awareness of the services available in Reading for children with Disabilities and their families and publicize the work of ACRE/Alafia:

Community and Sustainability Fair @ University of Reading, Reading Children's Festival @ Forbury Gardens, Community Festival at University of Reading, Community Festival at Forbury Gardens, Festive Lunch at ACRE, ACRE AGM, Holocaust Memorial Day, Services Marketplace (network with local organisations, charities and community groups supporting children with special needs and their families, Carers Day Event hosted by Reading Mencap.

# Men 2 Men Project Report

**Errol Masters and Tony Adejo**

The Men2Men Project continues to serve as a vital platform for men across Reading to engage in open dialogue on mental health, wellbeing, and life challenges. Between November 2024 and April 2025, the project delivered a range of impactful activities, combining conferences, social gatherings, and educational online sessions. These events not only provided knowledge and awareness but also created a supportive community network where men feel seen, valued, and empowered. Some of the events we have successful had so far are:

**International Men's Day Conference – 30th of November 2024**

A landmark event held at The Warehouse, Reading, bringing together community leaders, health practitioners, and local men to discuss themes of masculinity, mental health, and social responsibility. The conference highlighted the importance of safe spaces for men to address stigma around mental wellbeing. Health checks were also carried out on the day by the MEETPEET health team.

**Social Gathering at Emmanuel Methodist Church – 17th of December 2024**

A festive community event that encouraged social connection, reduced isolation during the holiday season, and fostered a sense of belonging. Attendees expressed appreciation for the opportunity to connect outside of formal sessions.

**Advance Care Planning – 5th of February 2025**

This virtual workshop provided guidance on planning for future health needs and decision-making. The session was particularly valued by older men and those with long-term conditions, equipping them with practical tools for navigating sensitive issues.

**Ageing & Dementia Workshop (Andropause Focus) – 18th of March 2025**

Delivered in partnership with health researcher, this workshop explored how ageing affects men's mental and physical health. The session broke taboos around andropause and highlighted support services for ageing care as well as Hormone Replace Therapy like osteoporosis.

**Diet and Nutrition Session – 30th April 2025**

A practical workshop emphasising how lifestyle and dietary choices directly impact men's mental wellbeing, resilience, and overall health. Participants shared personal stories of lifestyle changes inspired by the session.

The Men2Men project has significantly grown in popularity, with attendance steadily increasing across events and online sessions.

Notably: Many men from diverse backgrounds now see Men2Men as a trusted space to speak openly about depression, isolation, and health issues.

Sessions have helped men identify early signs of mental health challenges, reducing stigma and encouraging them to seek professional help.

Peer connections fostered through gatherings and workshops have reduced loneliness and created informal support networks.

The project has recorded tremendous successes. We have been to establish Men2Men as a recognised and growing online community initiative in Reading with well over 70 men, actively engaged in our WhatsApp platform. This has helped us to delivered high-quality, culturally sensitive workshops addressing health and wellbeing issues often overlooked among men.

During this period, the Men2Men Project has demonstrated its relevance, impact, and potential for long-term sustainability. It has become a trusted safe space for Reading men to discuss sensitive issues, build resilience, and support one another. Despite challenges, its successes far outweigh its difficulties, with the project steadily transforming attitudes, reducing isolation, and fostering healthier communities.

Moving forward, in the next couple of weeks, we will begin the online bi-weekly men's mental health and depression talks sessions which will continue to create awareness as well as encourage men to identify, speak up and seek help from professionals. This is because the successes recorded have created a momentum for continuity and expansion, with demand growing for additional sessions and broader topics. In the summer, we will host another social gathering for members to socialise and network face to face. In November, we will host another conference to mark the 2025 international men's day and in December to end the year with another social gathering.

Finally, we extend our sincere appreciation to our funders, the Reading Integration Board (RIB), whose support has made this project possible. We also acknowledge the invaluable collaboration of our partners: Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (BHFT-CBT), MEET PEET, Macmillan Cancer Support, Community Health Champions (CHC), Utulivu Women's Group, and Angels Outreach. Their continuous support, expertise, partnership, and shared commitment in tackling health inequalities have been instrumental in the successes of the Men2Men Project so far.



# Administration Report

## Ritu Shankardass



April 2024 to March 2025

As always, Acre being an active and vibrant organisation, the administrator has reflected this. The organisation increased the support provided to individuals and community groups. These include but are not limited to people and groups needing help / advise / wanting to hire rooms for meetings / coffee mornings / computer classes / Women's Circle / Ukulele Classes / Sewing classes, free Health Checks bi-monthly.

Support is also provided to internal business and engagement activities with statutory partners and community groups.

Trustees' Meetings held in person or virtually:

25th April 2024

11th July 2024

22nd August 2024

3rd October 2024

Major conferences / workshops held either in person or virtually:

Art Workshop on 04/04/2024	(66 attendees)
Art Workshop on 11/04/2024	(5 attendees)
Art Workshop on 18/04/2025	(7 attendees)

Funding Workshop on 23/05/2024	(20 attendees)
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Suicide First Aid Training on 31/05/2024	(8 attendees)
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Mental Health Awareness on 07/06/2024	(31 attendees)
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Hate Crime Forum on 18/07/2024	(30 attendees)
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Celebrations for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Reading on 23/07/2024	(40 attendees)
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Housing Support Funding – Budgeting Workshop on 17/09/2024	(10 attendees)
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ACRE Annual General Meeting 2024 on 17/10/2024	(40 attendees)
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Community Engagement Exhibitions – BHM on 28/10/2024	(30 attendees)
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Community Awards 2024 on 31/10/2024	(80 attendees)
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Women's Health Conference on 22/11/2024	(55 attendees)
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International Men's Day on 30/11/2024	(40 attendees)
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Holocaust Memorial Day 2025 on 22/01/2025	(90 attendees)
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Men2Men – Ageing & Dementia Workshop on 18/03/2025	(8 attendees)
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Health Inequalities Conference 2025 on 28/03/2025	(40 attendees)
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From April 2024 - March 2025: We coordinated 34 Grassroot Communities Conversations via Zoom, as given below – a weekly on-line discussion session held every Thursday, and delivered in partnership with Utulivu Women's Group and Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust. Recorded 510 attendances.

18/04/2024	: Health Weight Management
25/04/2024	: Mental Health – UK's Black Maternal Health Awareness Week
02/05/2024	: Mental Health – Anxiety
09/05/2024	: Dying Matters
16/05/2024	: Dementia Week
23/05/2024	: Thriving through Resilience
30/05/2024	: Trauma & Mental Health
06/06/2024	: Self-care & Trauma
13/06/2024	: Loneliness Awareness Week
20/06/2024	: Cervical Screening
27/06/2024	: Menopause

18/07/2024	: Celebrating Oneself & others in building resilience
01/08/2024	: Disappointment in life
05/09/2024	: Friendship & self-care
12/09/2024	: Suicide Prevention Conference
19/09/2024	: Youth & Suicide Prevention
26/09/2024	: Women's Health
10/10/2024	: Domestic Violence
24/10/2024	: Menopause Awareness Month
07/11/2024	: Stress Awareness Week
14/11/2024	: Stress Awareness Week
21/11/2024	: Vaccination for our wellbeing – Flu & Covid
28/11/2024	: Gender Based Violence
05/12/2024	: Self-care & Safety
12/12/2024	: Managing our wellbeing during festive season
16/01/2025	: Building Resilience
23/01/2025	: Estate Planning
06/02/2025	: FGM Conference
20/02/2025	: Young people Safety & wellbeing
27/02/2025	: Mental Health Stigma
06/03/2025	: International Women's Day
13/03/2025	: Positively managing loneliness & isolation
20/03/2025	: Interaction with Nature & Gardening – Nutrition and Hydration

**Total attendance for Tea / Coffee Mornings – 737**

**Received 68 business correspondence/letters; majority of the communication is through emails either to admin or sent directly to staff.**

**People visiting the ACRE for other reasons – 90**

### **CHC Health Expo Day - Hexham Road Community Centre**



## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	NOTES	UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	RESTRICTED FUNDS	TOTAL 2025	TOTAL 2024
Income		£	£	£	£
Donations and legacies	2	5,330	19,994	25,324	30,805
Charitable activities	3	0	72,207	72,207	305,052
Investments					
<b>Total income</b>		<b>5,330</b>	<b>92,201</b>	<b>97,531</b>	<b>335,857</b>
Expenditures					
Charitable activities	5	10,551	182,509	193,061	230,418
<b>Total expenditures</b>		<b>10,551</b>	<b>182,509.1</b>	<b>193,061</b>	<b>233,455</b>
Net income / (expenditures)		-5,221	-90,308	-95,529	105,439
Net movement in funds		-5,221	-90,308	-95,529	105,439
Reconciliation of funds	14				
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>		<b>29,513.4</b>	<b>176,981</b>	<b>206,495</b>	<b>101,056</b>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>24,292.4</b>	<b>86,673</b>	<b>110,966</b>	<b>206,495</b>

## Balance sheet as at 31 March 2025

	Notes	Total 2025	Total 2024
<b>Current assets</b>		£	£
Debtors	11	55,145	163,484
Cash at bank	12	79,163	68,715
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>134,308</b>	<b>232,200</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
Creditors: amount falling due within one year	13	-23,342	-25,705
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>110,966</b>	<b>206,495</b>
The funds of the charity	14		
<b>Unrestricted</b>			
General reserve		24,292	29,513
<b>Restricted</b>			
General reserve		86,673	176,981
<b>Total Funds</b>		<b>110,966</b>	<b>206,495</b>

## Funders & Supporters



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## Delivery Partners





