



First Step Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland

Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Registered Number: 1165062

Annual Report and Financial Statements

for the year ended 31st March 2025

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Administrative Information

First Step, Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland (First Step) was registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, charity number 1165062, on 6th January 2016. The organisation operates under the rules of its constitution adopted on 6th January 2016.

First Step is located within the ground floor premises of a grade II listed building in the centre of Leicester city, facing onto an area of public open space within the Town Hall Square. There are three counselling rooms and a dedicated reception area within the office space. The property is leased from Leicester City Council.

The offices are open on Mondays to Thursdays 9am – 8pm to ensure that the service can be accessed by all clients including those who are in employment.

Charity Name	First Step Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland
Charity Registration No.	1165062
Registered Office & Operational Address	Alliance House, 6 Bishop Street, Leicester, LE1 6AF
Trustees	Jon Putnam (Chair) Mark Evans (Vice Chair) Mick Studley (Honorary Treasurer) Kirandip Gill Fauna Gill Barry Merryweather (appointed November 2024) (Rahoul Naik – resigned January 2025)
Staff	Beverley Radcliffe – CEO Michelle Green- Emotional Support Worker & Receptionist Stuart Levers - Clinical Lead/Clinical Coordinator Emma Booth – Admin Assistant (appointed September 2024)
Bankers	Lloyds Bank, High Street Leicester Branch (309497)
Independent Examiner	Paula Wilson, MAAT 2 Hickman Road, Galley Common, Nuneaton, CV10 9NQ

Trustees Annual Report

The Trustees present their Annual Report and independently examined financial statements for the year ending March 31st 2025.

Charitable Objects

First Step's charitable objects reflect the broad inclusivity of individuals engaging with First Step's services:

- To promote and protect the physical and mental health of male-identified and non-binary persons aged 13 years and above who have experienced sexual abuse, through the provision of counselling, support, information and practical advice.
- To promote and protect the physical and mental health of the supporters of male-identified and non-binary survivors of sexual abuse, through provision of support, information and practical advice.
- To advance the education of the public in the subject of all matters related to the sexual abuse of male-identified and non-binary survivors aged 13 years and above.

Our Vision

Our vision is for a world where survivors of sexual abuse are empowered to live life as they choose, where their experiences no longer define who they are and who they can become.

We are committed to helping to create a world in which survivors can talk freely about abuse without fear, pressure or judgement; a place where male survivors, alongside secondary survivors and supporters, can readily access the help they need. This includes therapeutic services, practical advice and support to meet their daily living needs. This help would be accessible, kind, safe, free, confidential, and based on acceptance. As a result, survivors would have a sense of hope and opportunity for their futures, embedded within a supportive community that is open, welcoming and understanding towards their experiences.

Public Benefit

Each year, the Trustees review the Charity's objectives and activities to ensure they continue to reflect First Step's aims. In carrying out this review the Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit. The Trustees confirm that First Step continues to meet its objectives and carries out its activities for public benefit through the provision of the following services:

- Adult Male Counselling Services
- Emotional Support Service
- Group Work
- Advocacy & Support Service
- Young People's Service
- Specialist Prison Counselling Service

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

First Step is a non-judgemental and fully inclusive organisation located in one of the most ethnically diverse areas of the UK. We welcome men and boys from all ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds, sexual identities and men and boys who have additional needs due to their neurodiversity or disabilities.

Throughout this document, use of the term 'male' includes all persons that identify as male or non-binary. Whilst terms may be used interchangeably depending on the narrative and context presented in this document, they each include all persons that identify in any of these ways.

Whilst First Step is primarily a male survivor organisation, we also actively support their male and female partners, family members and friends as secondary survivors. Additionally, we have also supported the male partners of females who are the primary survivors of sexual abuse and assault, as this was an unmet need that other services within the sector could not meet.

Key EDI Data:

- 20% of all clients stated they were from a non-white British background.
- 33% of all clients had a disability as defined by the 2010 Equality Act.
- 17% of all clients identified as being gay, bisexual or pansexual.

Achievements & Performance

This report covers the operational and financial activities undertaken by First Step, during the year 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025.

Service Delivery

Our activities across the year increased in addition to the development and growth of existing services. Our key performance data:

- **Referrals:** We received 196 new referrals during the year, resulting in 148 formal assessments after initial client evaluation.
- **Clients Supported:** Overall, we supported 237 clients and supporters across our 6 service areas (an increase of 28%) through 1857 sessions, compared with 1697 sessions in the previous year which is an increase of 9%. This includes 167 sessions delivered through our Prison Project, including face-to-face support, which is an increase of 12% from the previous year.
- **Our Impact:** We use several outcome measurement tools to demonstrate the impact of First Step including SWEMWBS (Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Score) at intermittent stages of the clients counselling journey. 75% of our clients reported an increase in their ability to cope and that their life had improved.

Staff, Volunteers, Sessional Workers and Trustees.

Staff (salaried):

The charity has enjoyed a successful year under the leadership of Chief Executive Officer Beverley Radcliffe, who formally took up the role in March 2024 after the departure of the previous CEO.

Stuart Levers continued to fulfil the role of Clinical Lead/Clinical Coordinator, and Michelle Green as Emotional Support Worker.

Due to the ongoing workload, the decision was made to recruit a finance and administrative officer, and Emma Booth joined the charity in September 2024.

Volunteers:

Overall, at the end of March 2024 we had 15 active trainee and qualified counsellors delivering counselling sessions to our clients and supporters.

With continued funding from the Ministry of Justice we have been able to continue to pay qualified counsellors to deliver counselling sessions to our most complex adult clients and boys aged 13-17 years who are referred into the service, thus ensuring that we do not have extensive waiting lists for counselling. This has enabled us to retain counsellors after their placements have finished thus ensuring their specialist expertise in counselling male survivors of sexual abuse stays within the service.

Sessional Workers & External Consultants:

- **Clinical Supervisors.** First Step ensures that all counsellors receive clinical supervision in line with BACP guidance, to maintain ethical and quality counselling practice as well as to ensure that counsellors own well-being is maintained whilst working with traumatised clients.
- **Sessional Workers.** At the end of March 2024, we had 4 sessional , qualified counsellors to deliver counselling to clients with complex needs. In addition we used the services of an external sessional worker to update our website and social media channels.
- **External Consultants:** We also use the services of an external management consultant from 3 Worlds Consulting to support us with our monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes in addition to outsourcing externally our IT, Payroll and accounting functions

Trustees:

Rahoul Naik resigned as a Trustee in January 2025, having served as a volunteer Trustee for two years.

Barry Merryweather was co-opted as volunteer Trustee in November 2024, and was duly elected as a Trustee by unanimous vote at the AGM.

In line with the organisation's policy on Trustee resigning their roles after three years, Mark Evans and Mick Studley stood down and immediately reapplied to serve as a volunteer Trustee. Both were re-elected by unanimous vote at the AGM.

Mark Evans stood down from Chair at the AGM, having served in the role for three years, and Jon Putnam was duly elected to the role of Chair. Mark Evans was duly elected to the role of Vice-Chair. Mick Studley was duly elected to the role of Honorary Treasurer.

Building on our Strong Heritage

First Step began as a survivor led community initiative set up by a small group of committed volunteers led by two male survivors. It has grown into a professionally run Charitable Incorporated Organisation with our own centre and specialist staff team.

We are the only organisation that solely supports male survivors of SA in the Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland area, and across the East Midlands region. In fact, there are only

seven primarily male survivor organisations in the whole of the UK. We strive to work closely with these organisations and are actively developing new partnership projects with them in order to strengthen the male survivor sector to meet the needs of men and boys. Locally, we work in close collaboration with services across the SV sector that provide support to female only survivors, Quetzal and Jasmine House - Leicester Rape Crisis and co-gendered providers of services including FreeVA, Juniper Lodge-SARC and Trade Sexual Health.

With a specialisation in therapeutic counselling, our work has evolved over the years to include a range of therapeutic support pathways for adult male survivors; a unique service for children and young people aged 13 years and above; therapeutic and peer support for secondary survivors (i.e. the friends and family of people who have experienced sexual abuse); and projects, such as our specialist counselling provision in HMPs Leicester and Stocken.

Future Plans

Looking ahead, key goals and aspirations First Step has aligned itself to include:

- Support activities to enable us to reach more male survivors of sexual violence and sexual abuse (SV/SA), including outreach to marginalised groups, young people and within different ethnic and religious sectors of our communities;
- Increase the number of Service Users we can support, accommodate clients with increasingly complex needs so they can take back control and live their best life;
- Continue our essential work in local prisons to support their goals to reduce reoffending by supporting those in custody who have experienced sexual abuse in the past;
- Continue to attract and secure the best possible counselling services so our clients receive the best possible support;
- Help children and young people affected by SV/SA to build positive and healthy lives, overcome their own stigma and barriers and help ease the pain they have endured;
- Enable those directly affected by SV/SA and their supporters to take back control and live healthier lives;
- Continue to review and develop robust safeguarding policies and procedures to minimise the risk and harm to vulnerable adults, children and young people;
- Continue to work with funders that are committed to supporting the work we do, maintain a stable financial position to ensure sustainable delivery and development of services to meet current and future needs.

Building our longer term strategic plan for development will remain a focus for the coming year, and future years, underpinned by a funding strategy that will futureproof our services in the face of a challenging financial environment. This will enable us to both continue and develop the great work we do, reach more people in need of support, educate others on all matters related to the sexual abuse of men, and extend the public benefit we deliver to society as a whole.

Structure Governance & Management

First Step, Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland was registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, charity number 1165062, on 6th January 2016. The organisation operates under the rules of its Constitution adopted on 6th January 2016.

Overall strategic management and governance of the charity is the responsibility of the board of Trustees who are elected by members. Day to day operational activity is managed and carried out by paid staff and volunteers.

One third of Trustees retire by rotation every year and can stand for re-election with no limit on terms. Existing trustees can co-opt additional Trustees but these must stand for election at the next AGM.

Methods of recruitment and appointment of Trustees are set out in the Constitution and the Trustee Recruitment Policy and Procedure. This includes identifying the additional skills and/or capacity required by the board and proactively seeking suitable candidates through networks and advertising on websites such as Reach Volunteering. Short-listed candidates are interviewed to explore their fit to the ethos and values of the organisation and to clarify the skills, experience and capacity they can add to the board.

All Trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed are set out in note 7 to the accounts.

The Board of Trustees meet every two months, with the CEO providing an operational report and attending the meeting. The agenda for every meeting includes a standing item of Financial Updates and any additional information can be requested by the external accountant.

Statement on Reserves

The Charity's policy on reserves

The Trustees believe the minimum level of reserves should be the equivalent of three months operating costs calculated and reviewed annually.

On 31st March 2025, free reserves (unrestricted funds) amounted to £59,043 representing five months of annual expenditure.

Signed on behalf of the charity's Trustees:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Putnam', written over a horizontal line.

Signed:

J Putnam, Chair

Date: 28th January 2026

Independent Examiners Report

Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of First Step Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland for the year ended 31 March 2025

I report on the accounts of First Step, Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland for the year ended 31 March 2025, which are set out on pages 11 to 15.

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 section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 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 the 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 you as 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 2011 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 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: 

Paula Wilson, MAAT

Date: 28 January 2026

Statement of Financial Activities

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2025 Total Funds	2024 Total Funds
	Note	£	£	£	£
Incoming resources					
Grants	2	-	303,827	303,827	209,184
Other Income		515	-	515	881
Total incoming resources		515	303,827	304,342	210,065
Resources expended					
Salaries, NI	7	-	94,274	94,274	101,595
Sessional Workers		-	8,117	8,117	840
Staff Wellbeing		-	580	580	1,153
Rent & Room Hire		-	13,000	13,000	13,000
Training		-	7,362	7,362	5,093
Volunteer Expenses		-	5,173	5,173	3,970
Staff Expenses		-	25	25	3,040
Insurance		-	1,336	1,336	1,379
Marketing		-	16,950	16,950	241
IT & Comms		-	12,389	12,389	7,791
Office Costs		-	8,410	8,410	5,076
Client Hardship Fund & Client Activities		-	1,724	1,724	2,578
Professional fees (clinical)		-	12,203	12,203	13,465
Trustee Expenses	8	-	725	725	893
Consultancy and Evaluation		-	900	900	2,742
Accounts & Independent Examination	9	-	500	500	362
Paid Counsellors Adult		-	42,933	42,933	23,391
Paid Counsellors CYP		-	2,050	2,050	5,445
Paid Counsellors Prison		-	38,021	38,021	36,387
Miscellaneous Expenses		-	356	356	55
Professional Fees		-	864	864	2,619
Events		-	911	911	1,072
Bank Charges		-	103	103	96
Total resources expended		-	268,906	268,906	232,284
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources		515	34,921	35,436	(22,219)
Transfers between funds	6	-	-	-	-
Funds b/f	6	58,528	82,278	140,806	163,026
Total funds carried forward		59,043	117,199	176,242	140,806

Balance Sheet

Balance sheet at 31 March 2025

	Note	£	2025 £	£	2024 £
Current assets					
Cash at bank and in hand		174,820		137,592	
Accrued income	3	2,292		-	
Prepayments	4	3,591		3,564	
Total current assets			180,703		141,156
Liabilities					
Creditors:					
amounts falling due within one year	5		(4,462)		(350)
Net Current Assets					
Net Assets			176,242		140,806
The funds of the charity					
Unrestricted income funds	6		59,043		58,528
Restricted income funds	6		117,199		82,278
Total funds			176,242		140,806

These financial statements are accepted on behalf of the charity by:



Signed

J Putnam, Chair

Dated: 28th January 2026

Notes to the Accounts

1. Accounting Policies

Basis of the preparation of the accounts

These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and with the Charities Act.

Incoming resources

All material incoming resources have been included on a receivable basis – i.e. they are included if the date receivable falls within the period covered by these accounts.

Resources expended

These have been analysed using a natural classification.

2. Grants & donations

	2025	2024
	£	£
Big Lottery	-	19,392
Ministry of Justice - Core	-	49,472
Ministry of Justice - Core	-	3,309
Leicester Police	-	3,475
Henry Smith	50,000	-
Ministry of Justice - Adult	41,172	24,505
Ministry of Justice - CYP	30,920	18,911
OPCC	29,450	29,450
Home Office	49,852	35,670
Lloyds Bank Foundation	25,000	25,000
DOH - Suicide Prevention	60,233	-
James Tudor Trust	10,000	-
Clothworkers Foundation	7,200	-
	<u>303,827</u>	<u>209,184</u>

3. Accrued Income

	2025	2024
	£	£
Home Office	2,292	-
	<u>2,292</u>	<u>-</u>

Funding received in May 2025.

4. Prepayments

	2025	2024
	£	£
LCC Rent	3,250	3,250
Insurance	341	314
	3,591	3,564

5. Creditors

	2025	2024
	£	£
Pension	-	-
Accounts & IE	500	350
	500	350

6. Movements in Funds

	Opening balance 01.04.24 £	Incoming resources £	(Resources expended) £	Transfers between fund	Closing balance 31.03.25 £
Unrestricted funds	58,528	515	-	-	59,043
	58,528	515	-	-	59,043
Restricted funds					
Henry Smith	-	50,000	(27,340)	-	22,660
National Lottery	45,863	-	(45,863)	-	-
Ministry of Justice - Core	-	-	-	-	-
Ministry of Justice - CSA	21,188	-	-	-	21,188.38
Ministry of Justice - Uplift	1,697	-	-	-	1,696.68
MOJ - Core Apr - July	2,493	-	-	-	2,493.27
Ministry of Justice Adult	-	41,172	(54,660)	-	(13,488)
Ministry of Justice CYP	-	30,920	(17,555)	-	13,365
OPCC	49	29,450	(29,499)	-	-
Home Office	(2,292)	49,852	(47,560)	-	-
DoH Suicide Prevention	(11,723)	60,233	(46,431)	-	2,079
Lloyds Bank Foundation	25,000	25,000	-	-	50,000
James Tudor Trust	-	10,000	-	-	10,000
Clothworkers Foundation	-	7,200	-	-	7,200
	82,276	303,827	(268,907)	-	117,199
Total Funds	140,806	304,342	(268,907)	-	176,242

7. Staff Costs and Numbers

	2025 £	2024 £
Wages	102,392	101,595
	<u>102,392</u>	<u>101,595</u>

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000.

The average weekly number of employees during the year was 3.2 full time equivalent (2023: 2.2).

8. Trustees' remuneration, benefits and expenses

Two trustees received out of pocket expenses of £724.59, (2023: £893.43) during the year.

9. Independent examination and accountancy services

During the period, the cost of the examination and accountancy services was £350.

10. Glossary of terms

Creditors:	These are amounts owed by the charity, but not paid during the accounting period.
Debtors:	These are amounts owed to the charity, but not received in the accounting period.
Prepayments:	These are services that the charity has paid for in advance, but not used during the accounting period.
Restricted funds:	These are funds given to the charity, subject to specific restrictions set by the donor, but still within the general objects of the charity.