

**EVERY
STORY**

Impact Report

2024 – 2025



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Executive Summary

Thank you for taking the time to read more about EveryStory (formerly Aurora Nexus) and the work we do to support people with learning disabilities, autistic people, and their families.

2024–2025 has been a significant year of change for EveryStory, with shifts in leadership, management, staffing, processes, and how we see ourselves as a charity. The past five years have brought major developments- a merger, a new CEO and senior management team, a change in chair and trustees, and most recently, a rebrand and new name.

What hasn't changed is our commitment to making life better for the people we support. At EveryStory, we put people at the heart of everything we do. Our support is always led by the individual, shaped around their goals, and tailored to their needs.

As a sector, we continue to face real concerns. Health and social care charities have never experienced challenges quite like those we face today. Recent figures show that 85% of providers report local authority fees failing to keep pace with increases to the national minimum wage. Three in ten providers are seeing delayed or unpaid fees, and 45% of organisations supporting people with learning disabilities have had to hand back contracts (*Sector Pulse Check, Jan 2025*).

As we move forward with our new three-year strategy, in what remains an incredibly difficult time for health and social care, our focus must stay firmly on achieving positive outcomes for the people we support.

With our new name comes a new chapter - and a strategy that sets a clear direction for quality, growth, our voice, reputation, and financial stability. As we navigate what may be the most challenging period yet for the sector, this strategy will give us the structure, tools, and confidence we need to succeed in uncertain times.

Our ambitions set out where we want to go as a charity and define the targets we're aiming for. But most importantly, they ensure that the people we support receive the very best care - and are happy, healthy, and safe in their homes.



Gill Bryant
CEO

Chair's Summary

This past year has been exciting and transformative for us under the excellent leadership of Gill Bryant.

Although we have seen another challenging year for the care sector, and these challenges are likely to continue into at least the next year of operation for us; we firmly believe that the re-shaped Executive Team and Board of Trustees (we have recruited a new Chair of Trustees, Treasurer and two additional Trustees), and the unique skills set of each individual will add value to the Management and Board and take us forward to achieve our goals and aspirations for the people we support.

Under Gill's leadership, the teams have worked hard to bring 'Aurora Nexus' into the next phase of its operation and care for the people we support. We are excited to be re-launching our services as 'EveryStory' alongside our new Business Plan and Strategy for the forthcoming year. None of this would be possible without the support and hard work of our teams at every level and as always, the personal contribution each person makes is recognised and appreciated.

I have enjoyed working as Interim Chair of Trustees alongside Gill and am pleased to be handing over the baton to James Radford who joined the Board in the summer of this year. My thanks to the whole team, and especially Gill, for the continued help and support they have given me. I am pleased to be staying as a Trustee to continue my support for the Charity which remains very close to my heart.



Jean Young
Interim Chair



James Radford
Board Chair

Thank you for engaging with our work at EveryStory, whether you are a longstanding friend and supporter, or, like me, just beginning to discover the depth of the impact and potential our charity has in supporting people with learning disabilities and autism. I've already been inspired by the difference the team is making and I know that as I get to know the people and families we serve and the staff providing support with such care there will be so much more to learn.

I was honoured to be appointed chair as we set out our three-year vision and strategy for EveryStory at a time where the financial headwinds our sector faces make our commitment to high quality standards and ensuring the voices of the people we support are heard even more vital. I look forward to working with the whole EveryStory community over the coming year as we begin to make that strategy a reality.

I want to echo Jean's tribute to the work of Gill, her executive team and all the staff at EveryStory for their positive impact over the last year and for their ongoing commitment to learning and developing the quality of our care for the people we support and their families. And I want to offer a special thank you to Jean for her careful interim stewardship of the charity and her support as I have arrived in post. She continues represent the values and ethos of EveryStory helping connect our future ambitions to our founding belief that people with learning disabilities and autistic people deserve lives full of choice, opportunity, and purpose.

★ Mission and Vision

We continue to ensure that our services are delivered with our new mission and vision at the heart of our values led approach.

Our mission



To support people with learning disabilities and autism by offering personalised care that respects their individuality encourages them to try new experiences and helps them face new challenges without fear.

Whether it's building confidence, improving mental wellbeing, finding meaningful employment, or pursuing activities they truly enjoy, we are there every step of the way. Through a family-like approach we create safe spaces where everyone feels secure, valued, and free to express their true selves.

Our vision



To set the standard for a world where people with learning disabilities and autism are defined by their personalities, encouraged to take bold steps and free to be whoever they want to be.



Key Achievements

Fundraising

Over the past year, we have made a purposeful shift towards broadening our income streams by launching a dedicated Trusts and Foundations fundraising arm. This strategic move reflects our commitment to protecting and growing the services most valued by the people we support, their families, and our wider stakeholders. By strengthening our financial resilience and investing in long-term sustainability, we're laying the groundwork for a future built on stability and growth. Above all, this initiative helps us align income generation more closely with our mission – opening new opportunities for high-impact projects that create real change in our communities.

We're hugely grateful to everyone who has supported EveryStory this year – whether through direct donations or by taking part in fundraising activities. Fundraising plays a vital role in our sustainability, and we're committed to upholding the highest standards to maintain the trust and confidence of our supporters. We were proud to re-register with the Fundraising Regulator, meet their Code of Practice, and uphold the Fundraising Promise – reflecting the strong values we already hold as a charity.



Income Generation – Awards, Donations and Gifts in Kind

Our services have been enriched this year thanks to generous donations and community support.



A brand-new £200 projector has brought cinema magic to the Johnson Court community, making weekly movie nights and shared activities a real highlight.



The Card Making Service was delighted to receive £50 towards a karaoke machine – bringing music, laughter, and plenty of sing-along moments to everyone involved.



A £250 donation funded a new garden shed at Ravensbourne Road, replacing a well-worn one and creating a fresh, practical space for storage and creativity.



A donated bath chair has made bath-times safer and more comfortable for one of our residents, reinforcing our commitment to accessible and dignified care.

These contributions, big and small, continue to make a meaningful difference to the people we support and the quality of our shared spaces.

South East London EDI Committee Awards

EveryStory was proud to be part of the South East London EDI Committee Awards, which brought together NHS Trusts, Foundations, and other care providers from across the region to celebrate progress in equality, diversity, and inclusion. As part of the judging panel, we helped review nominations and select the winners. We also had the privilege of presenting several awards on the day, giving us the opportunity to share more about EveryStory and the work we do with a wider audience. Taking part in the event helped raise our profile across the sector and strengthened our networks with other organisations who share our values.

Improving Our Systems

We launched a new online training portal, CareSkills, making it easier for staff to access courses and improving how we track and report on training. We've also enhanced our HR management system, BrightHR, allowing for more accurate recording, better reporting, and stronger oversight of key information.

Our Year in Numbers



People supported:

175



Training courses completed:

2,254



Support hours delivered:

320,285



Internal promotions:

5



Families supported:

175



Staff turnover:

16%



New staff employed:

48



Staff retention:

86%

★ Key Highlights

Sponsored Walk

In Spring 2025, we focused on creating more opportunities for the people we support to come together, something people had highlighted in recent surveys. People told us they wanted more chances to socialise as a wider community.

Following a series of discussions and ideas, the concept of a Sports Day was developed. To help fund the event and the equipment needed, we organised a sponsored walk. This became a fantastic example of teamwork and community spirit.

Held on a sunny spring day, the sponsored walk saw great participation from the people we support and staff, with lots of smiles and enthusiasm. Thanks to everyone's efforts, we successfully raised the money needed to make our first EveryStory sports day become a reality.



Financial Overview

Our main sources of income are from spot contracts, day services, floating support services (outreach) and housing management.

Our principal funder is Lewisham Council; we also receive funding from other Local Authorities, namely Bromley and Southwark.

Our main area of expenditure is staff costs directly attributed to meeting the support needs of people we support. Our central management costs which are aimed at providing vital support, administration, and management to the core support functions.

The charity is committed to reducing the operating deficit and developing its financial resilience over the next 36 months and this is part of their strategic document.

Income

Income Sources of Income Financial year 25:

Supported Living	£6,922,322
Registered Care	£644,522
Day services	£217,037
Floating support services (Outreach)	£158,024
Housing management	£ 949,469
Card making income	£36,804
Investment Income	£33,055
Other income	£1,773
Voluntary income	£333
Total Income:	£8,963,339

Expenses

Direct Support Costs	£7,813,997
Direct Housing Costs	£717,700
Central Overhead Costs	£733,577
Total Expenses:	£9,265,274

Financial Health

Net Assets	£1,345,555
Cash	£1,979,586
Reserves (this includes a £510k property reserve)	£1,855,555

The main ethos of our financial strategy is stability. We are working towards becoming financially robust and sustainable.

The plans to ensure financial sustainability for future periods include ensuring that by March 2027, we no longer run any contracts which do not make a minimum contribution to central costs. We will review our funding streams and uplifts awarded in these projects in line with the rise in costs associated with delivering these. We will focus on looking at retaining projects for future years but equally looking at the projects with little or no prospect of additional resources which will result in financial loss and simply financially weaken the charity in the longer term.

We will continue to regularly reforecast budgets in line with uplifts in National Living Wage, London Living Wage, Commissioners' uplifts, internal factors like recruitment and agency use and government legislation.

We will use these forecasts to ensure we are better prepared for the unpredictable and volatile nature of the sector.

We will continue innovating to find creative ways to increase financial sustainability. These will include increased donations, fundraising on a larger scale, higher value grant applications, expanding our housing management services, tendering across a wider geographic location and in more areas like children's services and specialist dementia services.

Where possible, we will look at cost reduction strategy in terms of operating expenditure and central management. We will always ensure there is no compromise with quality and risk management.

The charity's policy is to hold at least 2 months of annual income to enable the organisation to survive in the event of a "market shock" and to help the charity operate effectively. The reserves policy and the level of reserves are held under review in line with the risk register updates.

EveryStory defines free reserves as unrestricted funds. As at 31st March 2025, this value is £1.86 m (£1.35 plus £510,000). This includes a designated property reserve of £510k which the organisation holds. This reserve relates to the revaluation of Geoffrey Road, a three-bedded property owned by the Charity since 1996. We estimate 60% of the current market value (£850k as at November 23) can be used as collateral in the event of a loss of liquidity.

Cash not required in the short or medium term is invested in fixed deposit accounts for 3 to 12 months agreed fixed terms. This is designed to raise interest income. This is situated with reputable banks in the UK providing the best interest rates with minimum risk of loss. Any cash surplus to our daily requirements but which is needed to fund on-going working capital is invested in an instant access savings account.



★ Stories of Impact

Suzanne's Story

A year ago, Suzanne rarely left her room. Staff often encouraged her to go out, but she would usually say no.

She spent a lot of her time indoors, making tea and keeping to herself. She didn't use her garden or want to take part in activities outside the house. Staff wanted to support Suzanne to build a more fulfilling life, so they focused on getting to know her better and understanding what was getting in the way.



she joined in, but with gentle encouragement, she began to take part- planting tomatoes, peppers, potatoes and pumpkins. Before long, she was digging, planting, and proudly checking on her fruit and veg patch.

One day, after a food shop, staff asked if she fancied lunch at the pub. Suzanne said yes, and really enjoyed it. Not long after, when her



Suzanne's staff team noticed that if it looked like it might rain, or if the ground was wet, Suzanne didn't want to go out. So, they decided to start gently, taking short car rides on rainy days to help her feel more comfortable being outside in different weather. Gradually, Suzanne became more used to going out and started feeling more confident about leaving the house.

Staff picked up on Suzanne's interest in cooking and suggested using the garden to grow her own ingredients. At first, Suzanne watched more than



housemates went to enrol in college classes, staff suggested she come along. Once there, Suzanne told the tutor herself that she wanted to join a cooking class. She now attends every week and says her favourite thing to do there is bake cakes.

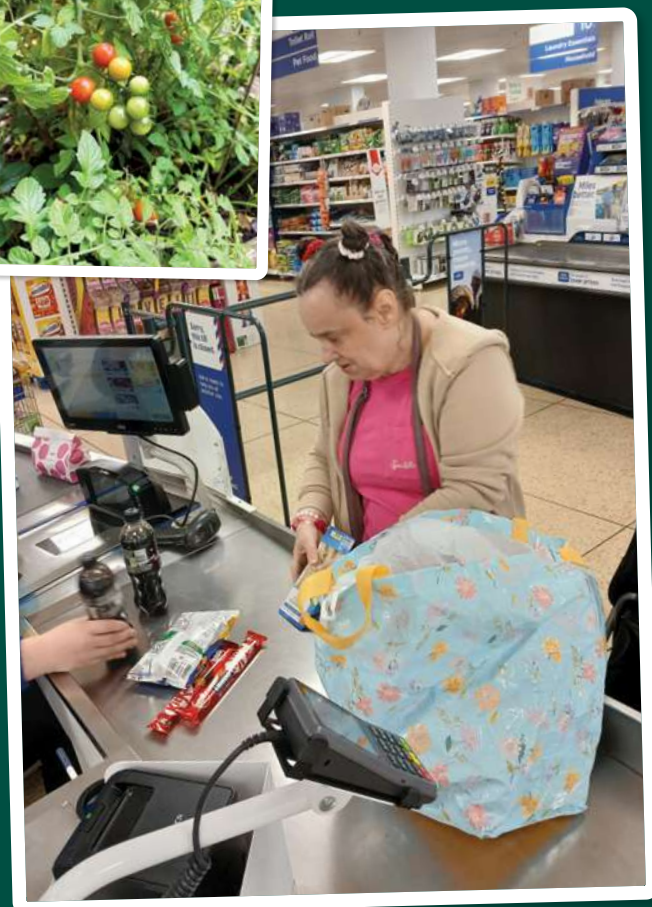
Suzanne's life now looks very different. She's been on seaside trips, visited car boot sales, shopping centres and joined music sessions. She is already excited about the EveryStory Christmas party – something she would have avoided before.

Staff say the change in her is remarkable:

“

There's such a big difference in Suzanne. She's a very happy person, she just makes everyone laugh.”

With the right support, encouragement and patience, Suzanne has gone from staying inside to living a life full of things she enjoys.



Strengthening Our Leadership Structure

To remain financially sustainable and strengthen the way we deliver services, we carried out a management restructure this year.

The goal was to streamline the management team, ensuring each manager oversees a group of services with the support of a Senior Support Worker. This structure not only improved efficiency but also introduced a clear route for staff development and progression within EveryStory.

Managers were allocated services they hadn't previously led, giving them a fresh perspective on how different teams operate and helping us identify ways to standardise processes across the organisation. While the restructure delivered financial savings, the primary aim was to encourage innovation, consistency, and growth.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Art Exhibition

In October 2024, we held an Art Exhibition attended by over 100 people, including the people we support, their families, staff, and stakeholders. It was a joyful and vibrant event where many of the people we support proudly showcased their artwork, crafts, and jewellery. The atmosphere was electric, filled with creativity, laughter, and pride. The sense of achievement and happiness among everyone who took part was clear to see.





Lewisham Police Station Visit

In March, our Card Making Group visited Lewisham Police Station to learn more about policing in their local community and to sell handmade cards for Mother's Day. It was a fantastic opportunity for the people we support to ask questions, share their views on local issues, and get a behind-the-scenes look at police work- including meeting the police horses and watching some mock arrests! We're very grateful to the Met Police for hosting us and creating such a memorable experience.

Partnership Working

Our Key Partners

Brighter Horizons • Lewisham Speaking Up •
Lewisham Council • Southwark Council • Bromley
Council • Get Set UK • Lewisham Works • Carehires
• VODG • Autism Alliance • Skills for Care

Local Authorities

We continue to work directly with the London Boroughs of Lewisham, Southwark, and Bromley, while developing new relationships with Bexley, Redbridge, Westminster, and Kensington & Chelsea.

Get Set UK

We've developed a strong new partnership with Get Set UK, an employment services provider that helps people out of work access training and find careers. They help us identify potential candidates, support them through the recruitment process, and provide shortlists for interview. This partnership has already made a real difference — helping us recruit dedicated support staff while raising EveryStory's profile across the local community. We look forward to expanding our collaboration in the future.

Future Plans and Goals

We've agreed a new strategic plan that will guide EveryStory through to 2028.

The ambitions within this strategy set a clear direction for the charity — keeping the people we support at the heart of everything we do.

Our focus will be on continuous improvement, quality, growth, and financial stability, ensuring we can build on our progress and keep delivering the best possible support. This plan will help us strengthen our foundations, seize new opportunities, and stay true to our mission of making life better for the people we support.

To underpin this work, we've implemented enhanced procedures to ensure ethical fundraising, full transparency, and strong compliance—reinforcing our commitment to genuine, values-led service.

Our fundraising focus is guided by clearly identified areas of need, with priority placed on:

- Family Support Services
- Dementia Care
- Respite Services
- Tailored support for younger people with learning disabilities and autistic people

We're also proud to be developing a new Resource Hub & Directory, designed to integrate with our upcoming website and enhance the overall experience for the people we support, their families, and our wider community.

The addition of Trusts and Foundations fundraising marks a major milestone in our journey towards financial sustainability and operational excellence. It strengthens our ability to deliver meaningful, lasting change— not just today, but well into the future.

New Business

Looking ahead, we plan to develop new tenders to help us grow and expand into nearby London boroughs. Broadening our geographical reach will enable us to support even more people who need our services, while also strengthening the charity's financial stability.

This expansion will help us build on the strong reputation we've already earned, spreading awareness of our work and deepening our impact across London.

Our 5 Ambitions



Quality and Excellence



Growth



Inclusion



Financial Stability



Reputation and Voice

Income Diversification

The introduction of voluntary income streams has sharpened our strategic direction and laid the groundwork for exciting developments ahead.

Teams across EveryStory are working together to craft strong, evidence-based, and ambitious funding proposals that respond directly to the evolving needs of the people we support.

Acknowledgments

Staff and Board Members

Staff: Gill Bryant (Chief Executive Officer) Stephen O'Brien (Director of Operations and Development) Fahmeeda Amode (Director of Finance and Housing) Mich Jewell (Director of Resource and Governance) Lauren Fiddes (Quality, Inclusion and Communications Manager) Alex Barker (Personal Assistant to CEO), Seval Sekeroglu (Operations Manager) Gail Clowsley (Operations Manager)

Board Members: James Radford (Chair), Nicole Allwood, Jean Young, Jessamy Baird, Hetal Desai, Ava Zadkhorvash, Ray Jhattu (Leavers: Phil Alvey, James Robertson, John Anderson)



Testimonials

Hear from the people we support

"EveryStory and their staff do an amazing job."

"The staff are very supportive and kind."

"I am happy with the support I receive."

“

I love that XX has a great social life despite the extra assistance he needs. He requires consistency and routine and he gets both very well. It's wonderful that he has had the same support staff for many years which helps in his wellbeing and building relationships."

“

I couldn't be more pleased with the level of support and care my brother receives. His routines are consistent which is what he requires, and he has built great relationships with all the staff at the home"

“

Victoria absolutely loves Leemore Day Centre. She gets friendship out of it and she does her one-to-one exercises. They stick together and go shopping, she comes home happy. Sometimes she gets upset because she says she wants to go back! She gets everything that she wants out of it and more."

✦ Our Promise for the Future

Finally, we want to leave you with our new tagline:

“A place where **who you are** matters most.”

This reflects what EveryStory stands for today. We see each person as an individual and place the people we support at the centre of everything we do. It's a simple statement that guides how we work, make decisions, and deliver support every day.

As we move forward, we're embedding this approach across all our services- ensuring our beliefs are reflected not just in what we say, but in what we do.



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