



Gloucestershire  
Gateway  
Trust



Welcoming Families,  
Connecting Communities.

Annual Review  
2024 - 2025

# Foreword



“What a year! We’ve celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the opening of Gloucester Services – not just looking back at progress made, but of possibilities for the future – with so many people that have been part of the journey. We held an event Westminster Hall in the Houses of Parliament to celebrate some of Gloucestershire Gateway Trust’s partnerships, hosted by the MPs for Gloucester and Stroud. The influencing of politicians into the benefits of the community development model with the backing of sympathetic business is so important.

We also saw another partnership which has long been in the making – the Gloucestershire Gateway Partnership (GGP) – come to life. One of the aims of the Trust has been to improve the lives of children and families, particularly in areas of financial deprivation, by providing adult employment. However this past financial year has provided two further opportunities to change lives for the better and through the GGP consortium, a successful bid led by GGT has seen the start of Youth Service provision and Children and Family Centre provision in Gloucester and the Forest of Dean. The roll out of the programme should bring these Children and Family Centres, so long underused, back into the forefront of communities.

Taking responsibility for Youth and Family Hub provision has seen our staff numbers jump from a small core team to over 50. The trustees are in awe of the capacity of the staff team in driving through so many changes during the year. Our thanks go to everyone who has made 2024/25 such a incredible year. You have been an inspiration.”

## Financial review of the year to 31 March 2025

GGT receives two types of income: Restricted Income which can only be used for certain specified purposes, and Unrestricted Income which can be used for GGT’s general charitable purposes, general running costs including identifying and obtaining new sources of income or can be added to reserves for use in future years.

In the year to March 2025 the total amount of Unrestricted Income increases significantly compared to the year to March 2024. However, in 2025 amounts were received in respect of a contract for our partnership to deliver Youth Services in Gloucester and the Forest of Dean. Although classified as Unrestricted it is the intent that all amounts received under this contract will be used to deliver youth services in the areas covered by the contract.

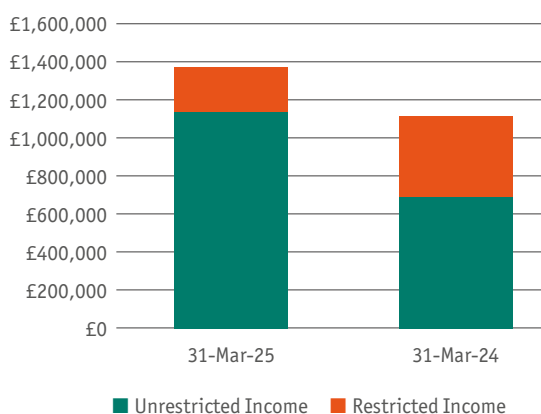
Other Unrestricted Income increased in the year from £700,000 in the year to March 2024, to £800,000 in the year to March 2025. This is primarily due to increases in payments received from Gloucester Services.

The reduction of Restricted Income was primarily due a reduction in the amount of funding received from the Household Support Fund and the end of the Thirty Percy funded project called Hotspots. Overall Restricted Income fell from £400,000 in the March 2024 year, to £250,000 in the March 2025 year.

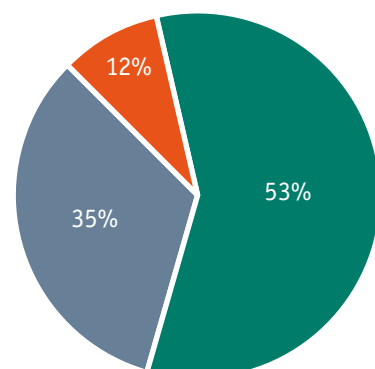
As a result of the increase in Unrestricted Income, charitable expenditure increased from £690,000 to £950,000. Just under £200,000 was added to reserves. As noted above, the main purpose of the increased reserves is for delivering youth services, which will be internally ringfenced.

Just under two thirds of Charitable Expenditure was directly spent on Charitable activities supporting the community. The balance was spent on staff costs.

Split of Income between Restricted and Unrestricted



Charitable expenditure



Community development Staff costs Other charitable costs



## Our vision

We are working towards a world of welcoming communities, comprising of motivated and connected individuals, whose strengths are recognised and shared. Residents feel enabled to live and work well within their neighbourhoods and can influence decisions affecting their lives.

## Our mission

To enable community-led transformation of local social, economic and environmental conditions, through encouragement, mutual respect and collaboration.



## Communities we work alongside

Gloucestershire Gateway Trust primarily focuses on the areas of social housing within the neighbourhoods of Matson, Robinswood, White City, Podsmead, Tuffley and Stonehouse/ the GL10 area, and as our work grows, we are also working in partnerships to build capacity and develop other communities in the surrounding areas within Gloucestershire.



“Our neighbourhood based work with children, families and young people is rooted in human connection, interdependence and kindness. We believe communities can thrive much better if there is an intelligent combination of person-centred, locally designed services alongside a range of strong, caring social networks.”

**Martin Simon, Trustee**

# The year 2024/2025 in numbers



9



Children and Family Centres now in community management through GGT



2,500

people attended our Children and Family Centre opening events

250

families supported in the first quarter



478

youth work sessions delivered



Over

30

youth clubs up and running



£35,000

Summer Youth Fund co-created with young people to commission activities



£5m



income generated through Gloucester Services for community development since 2017

13

GGT community partners confirmed to receive



£1.5m

of community investment over the next three years

10

years of Gloucester Services in operation



50+

GGP partners receiving over £1m of community investment over the next three years through contracts secured



3

Bridging the Gap employment skills courses with



77%

of participants offered jobs



142

Gloucester Services colleagues attended a wellbeing walk or workshop hosted by GGT and GL Communities



1,000

samosas supplied to Gloucester Services every month and



2

more local people employed at community producer Shakera Catering

283

people attended community learning through Spark and Multiply courses



63

people received individual mentoring through Spark



80%

going on to training volunteering or employment



# Children, families and youth services

All of our resident led community research over the last 10 years has informed us that communities are most concerned about the provision and opportunities for families, children and young people. We have already invested over £2 million of our own earned income from our Gloucester Services project into community-based services which support these groups locally, but we wanted to do more.

## A huge boost to youth services

In 2023 we brought together a community consortium of young people's organisations to successfully bid for the delivery of open access Youth Services in Gloucester and the Forest of Dean, beginning delivery on 1st October 2024 through The Venture Community Hub and the Forest Voluntary Action Forum (FVAF).

Available to everyone and accessible for all, our youth provision is focused on and driven by the needs of the local community, bringing back more traditional youth clubs, whilst developing new youth club locations and delivering detached street-based activities.

## A whole neighbourhood approach

In 2024 GGT put forward another community-led bid to manage the provision of Children and Family Centres in the same two districts. Bringing together a powerful consortium of local schools, community organisations and statutory and specialist partners in every area where the centres operate, called the Gloucestershire Gateway Partnership, the bid promised a **'whole neighbourhood approach'** to ensure a sustainable, innovative and inclusive community-led service is provided to children and families across these two districts.

We were delighted to be successful and began delivery of service in 2025, across nine Children and Family Centres, and with it growing our team from eight to over 50.



Gloucestershire  
Gateway  
Partnership

“GGT is continually working towards creating stronger, more resilient and welcoming communities. Our aim is to support, encourage and strengthen neighbourhoods, by raising people’s aspirations and better connecting them with their local area, to ensure that everyone is valued and has the opportunity to influence decisions that impact their lives whilst creating lasting solutions to local challenges.”

**Mark Gale, Founder,  
Gloucestershire Gateway Trust.**

Planting seeds at a Children and Family Centre open event





Alison Walker joined us at the start of the year to become Director of Children and Family Centres and Youth Services, bringing with her over 30 years of experience working with children and young people.

“Throughout my career and personal life, I have always believed in making things better for children and their families. This was either as a class teacher, headteacher or working in the voluntary sector for children’s orphanages across Africa, Asia and Australia.

I was so excited to be offered this new role working with Gloucestershire Gateway Trust. Their values and ethos aligned with my beliefs and vision for both new contracts; it is such an amazing opportunity to make a difference to so many children and young people.

With so many families finding the current climate such a challenge, I am looking forward to how we can offer a service which will connect people to their community and establish positive, supportive relationships.”

## Children and Family Centres

- Though we only began service delivery of the Children and Family Centres on 1st April 2025, we were able to transition a strong staff team into GGT and continued to deliver a targeted service during a period of change so no families were unsupported.
- To mark the start of our service delivery, we welcomed over 2,500 children and families into open day events at each centre, to enjoy free activities and food, and to hear about the groups, activities and support available at the centres going forwards.
- We have involved families and partner organisations in shaping the universal service and what’s on offer, with groups and activities connecting people and building relationships, alongside access to Early Help.

## Youth Services

- Over 400 youth work sessions were delivered and over 30 youth clubs are now up and running across Gloucester and the Forest of Dean.
- Volunteering and community development has been an area of growth. In the Forest of Dean the youth contract’s participation in community groups and partnerships has already had an impact on the identification of the needs of young people and now we can support them in their local spaces and places.
- In Gloucester the youth contract has funded partners and supported them with governance processes, data recording practices, and capacity building. These have included Blackbridge CCBS, Redwell Youth Centre, Sportily, The Friendship Café, Jigsaw, Gloucestershire Young Carers, GAS and Diverse-City.

Roller disco for young people at The Vibe Youth Club in Gloucester



# Partnerships



## Our business partnership

- In summer 2024 we celebrated 10 years since Gloucester Services first opened, and followed on with an event at the House of Commons to showcase how innovative cross-sector partnerships can build strong communities from the bottom-up.
- Our partnership working with Westmorland Family and Gloucester Services went from strength to strength as we ran another three Bridging the Gap employability skills courses creating life-changing new employment opportunities; our third Limited Edition business skills course with students from Gloucester Academy who launched their new Smokin' Beets sauce in the Farmshops; and saw community producers upscale their businesses and employ new people after the success of their products in the Farmshops.
- We also continued to connect Gloucester Services colleagues and producers with community partners through visits, as well as wellbeing support through bitesize walks and opportunities to grow or make on breaks or after work.



Gloucester Services colleagues planting microgreens to take home on a wellbeing session with GGT and GL Communities

## Our community partnership

- Made possible by our business partnership, in April we started a new three-year programme of community investment, guaranteeing funding of up to £69,000 over the period for each our core-funded community partners and added Blackbridge Charitable Community Benefit Society (CCBS) as our 13th partner.
- Blackbridge CCBS is the legacy organisation set up to continue the community development work started in Podsmead in Gloucester by the Podsmead Big Local, who led the development of the brand new Blackbridge Community and Sports Hub, supported by GGT.
- The new hub is also home to the Blackbridge CCBS youth work team, who will receive an additional £100,000 per year funding from GGT.



Trying out jobs at Gloucester Services on the Bridging the Gap course



The Westmorland Leadership Team and GGT at The Ewe Space in Matson

# Looking forward



Jason Dunsford and Mark Gale pictured at Gloucester Services

“When talking about community action I often say to people that our biggest challenge is our own imagination and self-belief. Too often we are encouraged to leave decisions to others because they are the official or the expert.

Actually, communities and their own organisations are the experts in the lives of their neighbourhoods. Nothing has illustrated this better than the amazing partnership of 40+ community organisations and schools brought together by GGT to form the Gloucestershire Gateway Partnership (GGP) in 2024/25. With GGT’s support this unique partnership has taken ‘ownership’ of the open access youth services in Gloucester and the Forest of Dean and transformed them into much improved provision within 6 months.

Further at the end of the reporting period, GGT and GGP have together also taken on the management of nine Children and Family Centres across Gloucester and the Forest of Dean and all the early signs are that these are now already dramatically improving local support for families and children.

Bringing this provision into community management is a radical step but one that is already showing clear signs that communities know best how to manage this provision. This is not because our Trust is the sole owner of the ‘right’ path to improving communities but more because we build partnerships with a purpose – that purpose is to pool our collective skills, knowledge and networks so that together

we have the strength and capacity to own the plans and decisions that are important to our neighbourhoods. The youth provision delivery is led by The Venture Community Hub in Gloucester and Forest Voluntary Action Forum (FVAF) in the Forest of Dean on behalf of GGT and GGP, who are rooted in our neighbourhoods, trusted and have already shown how these services can be dramatically improved.

Never has this been more important, as councils and health services re-organise in 2025/26 and it will be tempting for public sector bodies to be inward looking and focused on their own self-preservation. So, in these tricky economic times it is important to build the foundations for stronger independent communities. We encourage residents to have a voice and self-organise for the things they think are important. Bringing key local services into community management is a key part of this process.

In uncertain economic and political times we are working to help communities change the balance of power in their favour. Change is always difficult but we all need to face this so that our organisations and communities are fit for the future. The creation of GGP is underpinned by great faith in our communities to be welcoming, trusting and co-operative. GGT will also need to keep changing in the coming year to support this development. However I have no doubt our staff team and trustees will continue to rise to the challenge as they always have done.

Change is coming. Together let’s make sure it is positive change and led from the bottom up in every neighbourhood so that residents voices and actions lead the way.

Change impacts on everyone personally and collectively. For me at a personal level after 18 years leading the charity I’m excited to say that from 1st October 2025 I will be stepping into a part-time advisory role as GGT Founder and Jason Dunsford will become GGT’s new Chief Executive....and so another chapter in GGT’s story will begin!”

**Mark Gale, Founder of Gloucestershire Gateway Trust**

[www.gloucestershiregatewaytrust.org.uk](http://www.gloucestershiregatewaytrust.org.uk)

[office@ggtrust.org](mailto:office@ggtrust.org)

[@GlosGatewayTrust](#) |  [@GlosGatewayTrust](#) |  [@Gloucestershire Gateway Trust](#)

Registered office address: Wiggin Osborne Fullerlove, 95 The Promenade, Cheltenham, GL50 1HH

Correspondence address: City Works, Alfred Street, Gloucester, GL1 4DF

Registered Charity number: 1140440. Company limited by guarantee number: 6857427



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