



Impact Report



2026

**PROVIDING HOPE
AND BETTER LIVES**

Charity No. 1002224 Company No. 2540814

David Thomas

Chair of the Board



The last year has been hugely positive, with targets exceeded and a significant impact on the people we have supported.

Across Wales and South West England, over 45,000 adults were helped through our gambling harms treatment and prevention programmes, while almost 20,000 young people took part in our bespoke, research-based children and young people's programme, 'Ahead of the Game'. In addition, almost 3,000 education professionals and parents were trained to recognise gambling-related harms.

Our work to combat homelessness in Bristol has continued to grow. Ara remains the lead provider for Bristol City Council in tackling addiction-related homelessness, accommodating more than 280 people, supporting them into treatment, and helping many move on to sustain independent accommodation.

This year we also supported adults with entrenched patterns of rough sleeping into independent living across 28 flats provided by Ara and Bristol City Council. This required robust assessment and matching, intensive support for residents, and close partnership working with the local police.

Our prison in-reach work across 25 prisons helped 99 potentially homeless prisoners secure accommodation on release, contributing to a significant reduction in problem behaviour.

None of this would have been possible without our dedicated and highly skilled staff, over 30% of whom have lived experience and consistently go above and beyond to deliver Hope and Better Lives to the thousands of people we support.

Special thanks go to Graham England, who led Ara for nearly 20 years before taking early retirement.

The year 2026-27 has already brought challenges, with changes to the commissioning of gambling harms treatment and prevention resulting in the loss of our Welsh contracts and youth work across the South West. However, our core gambling harms work in the South West and homelessness services in Bristol remain strong, and the future is positive.



About Ara

We work to provide Hope and Better Lives for people across England and Wales. We have supported over 125,000 individuals in the past six years, including **43,481** last year, many from marginalised communities.

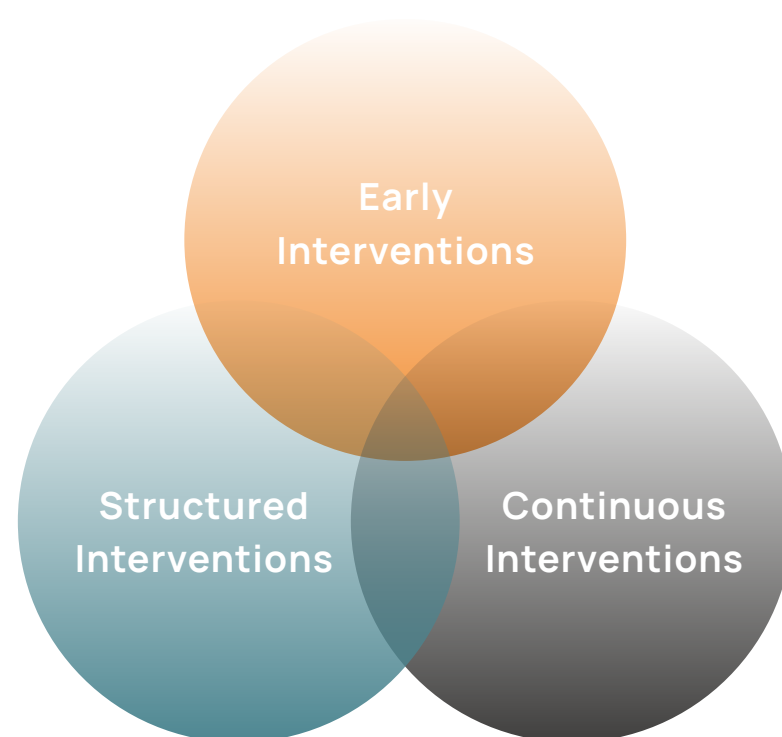
As a forward-thinking and fast-moving organisation, our values are at the heart of everything we do. Our actions consistently align with our mission to drive positive change and innovate solutions for the communities that we serve.



Beneficiary contact & access points

We have a whole-system approach to service provision, from Early Interventions in the community, to Structured Interventions and Continuous Interventions that allow people to sustain a better quality of life. We do this by providing:

- Criminal justice interventions & resettlement
- Structured talking therapies & group work
- Community engagement & social prescribing
- Education & training
- Information, advice & guidance
- Specialist Housing Support (SHS)
- Peer mentoring
- Social inclusion
- Recovery management



Our Values

Aspiring

We are ambitious for clients, act with purpose, are motivated and eager for change. We are committed to enterprising solutions and the best possible outcomes.

Brave

Brave, confident and courageous in our actions. We are fearless in finding positive solutions and calling out prejudice. We are excited, vigorous and energetic in helping our beneficiaries achieve better lives.

Competent

Competent, capable, skilled and accomplished in our service provision, seeking the best. Expert, adept and professional in everything we do. We seek excellence in our service provision, actions and outcomes, always seeking to become better.

Determined

Determined, persistent and consistent with our beneficiaries. We are unceasing in our passion for learning and growth. We are relentless in our ambition for sustained and continuous improvements. We are tenacious in our pursuit of better lives and hope for our beneficiaries.



Homelessness

Pathway 4

Ara is the lead provider for Bristol Homelessness Pathway 4. Our Housing Support Practitioners help clients to build recovery from drugs and alcohol, attain independence, and maintain stable housing.

Clients are supported to engage with a range of initiatives including drug and alcohol treatment, training courses, access to employment, physical health activities, trauma counselling, cultural activities, developing life skills, rebuilding family connections and more.



“I love being here in the environment. The staff care and I am in the same boat as my peers.”

“I am really looking forward to my future now.”

“It’s helped with my confidence and positivity.”

“I know what I need to do to move on and make progress with my recovery.”

“I feel the happiest I have felt in many years.”

“I know I can access support and talk about my problems.”



 **878**

One-to-one psychosocial sessions with at-risk clients

 **52**

Positive planned departures from Ara accommodation

 **131**

Clients benefitted from community engagement activities & events

 **301**

Structured treatment groups delivered by Ara



218

Clients housed in our recovery
community accommodation

57

Positive move-ons, including
obtaining private rented
accommodation in the city

100%

of clients reported satisfaction
with the service they received

98%

would recommend the
service to others



20

People moved into
rented accommodation



8

People moved into
rehabilitation or
abstinent housing



24

Clients moved
from Prep
into Change



11

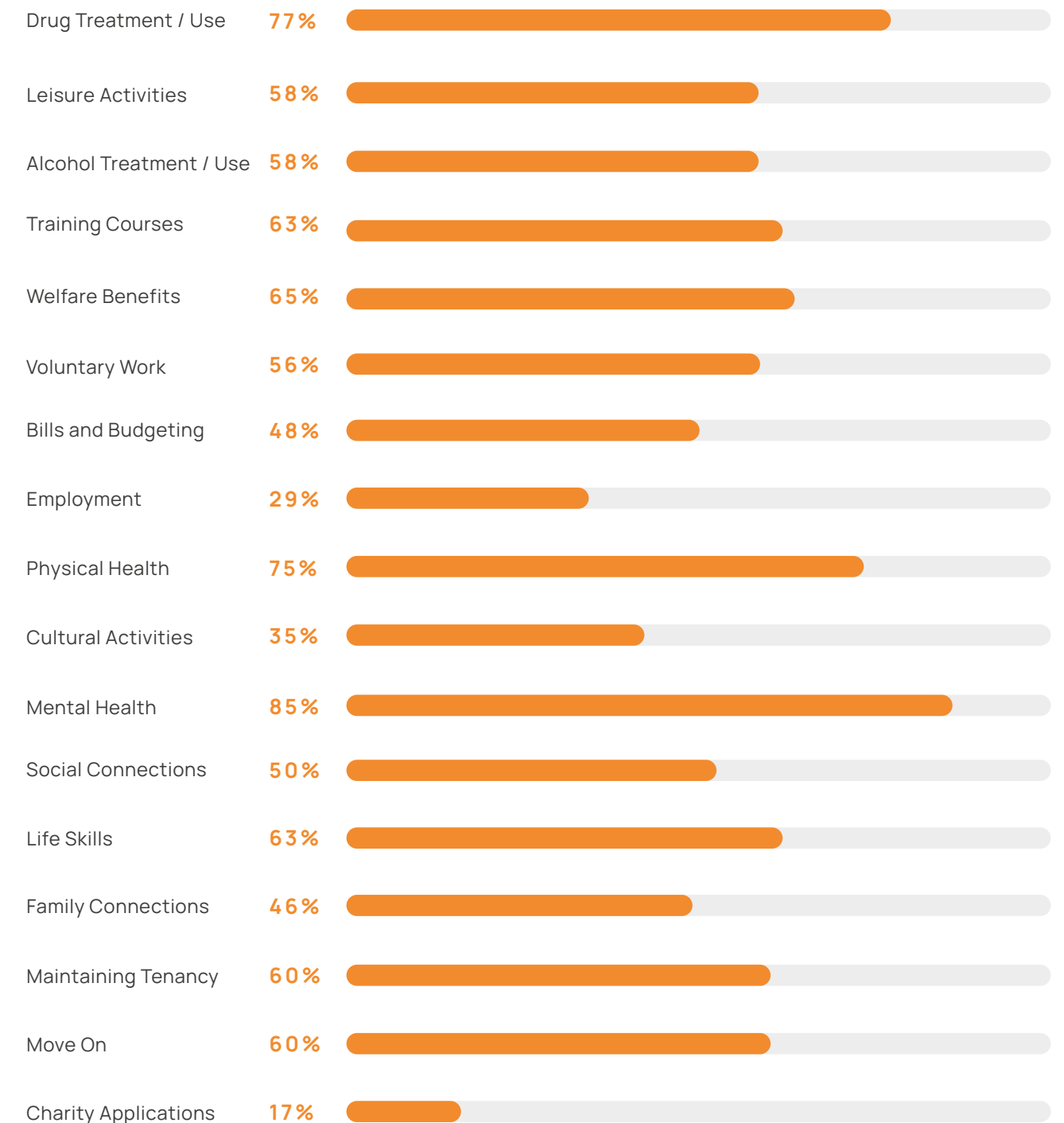
Clients moved
from Change
into Abstinent

Pathway 4 supports clients through three stages of recovery: Prep, Change and Abstinent. As clients progress, they move from preparing for change, to actively making it, to sustaining an abstinent lifestyle.

Breadth of Ara Support

Our Housing Support Practitioners helped clients to access a wide range of activities and life skills to boost their recovery:

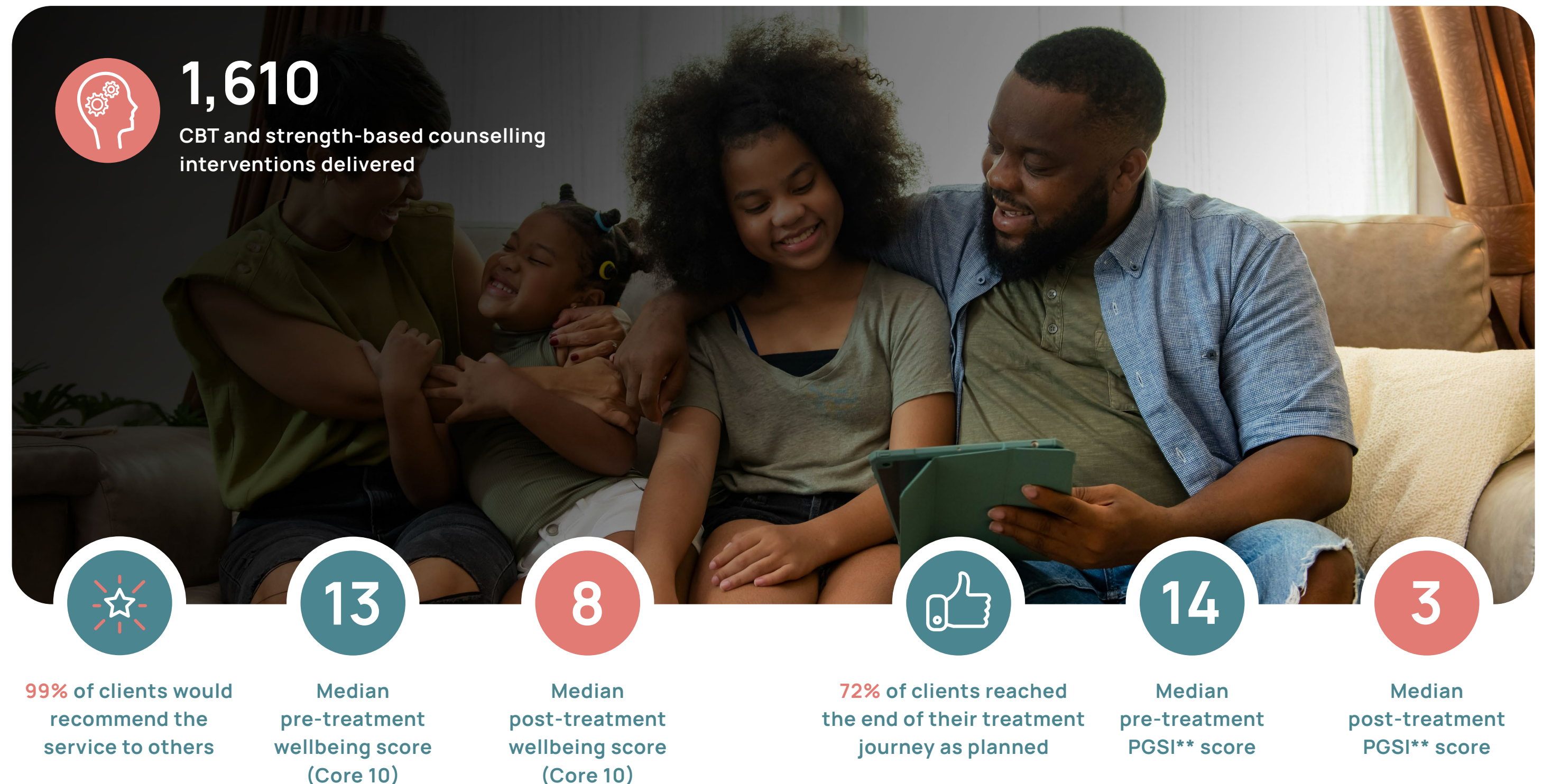
What clients worked on with their support worker



Gambling Treatment

Ara's Gambling Harms Treatment Service provides free and confidential support to anyone directly affected by gambling and their loved ones. Our services include one-to-one counselling, brief interventions, CBT groupwork and resources for gamblers and affected others to minimise harm.

On average, clients waited just **7 days** from referral to their first clinical appointment.



*Core 10 is a clinical measure of psychological distress and general wellbeing. A lower score indicates improved wellbeing.

**PGSI = the Problem Gambling Severity Index. A score of 8 and over represents severe gambling harms.

Gambling Prevention

Raising awareness is at the heart of our prevention work. By reaching into communities, workplaces, the Armed Forces and partner organisations, we help people recognise the signs of gambling harm and know where to turn for support before things escalate.

43,481

Total people reached through our prevention work across the country

18,386

People offered information, advice and guidance about gambling harms

210

Members of the Armed Forces and veterans trained to recognise gambling harms

6

Workplace charters signed with organisations committed to tackling gambling harms

“I honestly can say that I’m overwhelmed with the support I’ve been given.”

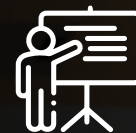
“Ara is a dedicated and effective partner whose work has a clear and positive impact.”

“We found staff were respectful and non-judgemental.”



2,872

Professionals trained through our Bet You Can Help programme



1,739

Brief interventions delivered in community settings



245

Regional organisations we collaborated with on prevention activities

Children & Young People

Ahead of the Game is Ara's dedicated youth education division. Our Education and Training Leads work with young people and the professionals who support them to raise awareness of the risks related to gambling. We aim to build resilience, improve understanding and ensure that help is easy to access. Our initiatives include free workshops and outreach for education professionals across South West England and Wales.



17,748

Young people educated about gambling-related harms across South West England and Wales



2,711

Professionals working with young people educated to spot gambling harms and the overlap between gaming and gambling



161

Parents trained to support young people through gambling-related conversations at home



10

Universities engaged to extend our reach into higher-education settings

99%

of young people aged 11 to 24 know where to find support if they need it

100%

Felt able to apply what they had learned (professionals and parents)

100%

Increased confidence in starting a conversation

99%

Improvement in knowledge about gambling-related harms (11-24)

"It was very well presented and very informative."

"It was amazing, very informative. I was engaged and learned a lot."

Wales

Across Wales, we deliver targeted training and prevention activities to raise awareness of gambling harms and strengthen the networks of community organisations, services and individuals who support those affected.



11,447

Young people in Wales took part in our prevention programmes



637

Structured treatment interventions delivered for gambling harms in Wales

100%

would recommend our service to others

72%

of clients completed treatment as planned

189

Organisations across Wales engaged in our prevention activities

97%

of clients reported a positive change in their lives

100%

of clients would contact us again if needed

99.5%

of clients were satisfied with our service



Prison Resettlement Services

What we do

Ara operates a prison release service in a range of UK prisons.

Our specialist workers work both within and outside of prisons to secure accommodation for ex-offenders with a local connection to Bristol, helping to prevent rough sleeping and reoffending while supporting positive resettlement.



447

Total referrals of homeless prison leavers



We recorded a **42%** reduction in or total cessation of anti-social behaviour in our clients.



99

Clients were directly accommodated by Ara workers upon release from prison.



Clients were met at the prison gate on their release



Prisons across the UK work with Ara



67%

of our clients maintained financial stability after working with us



21%

of our clients reported better physical health after working with us

Specialist Housing Support

Ara's SHS Team promote tenancy sustainment and prevent homelessness in clients with drug and alcohol needs by providing targeted psychosocial interventions, promoting inclusivity and social integration, and meeting the needs of marginalised groups.



243

Clients supported
across the SHS service

100%

of SHS clients
received tailored
one-to-one support

36 clients had their homelessness prevented through tailored one-to-one support across drug, alcohol, mental health and accommodation needs.



265

Clients engaged in
a bespoke timetable
of activities



178

Agency partnerships
built through community
engagement

Our Specialist Women's Worker supported **15 of the most vulnerable, disadvantaged women in Bristol** to address their tenancy needs and access treatment.

78 clients were supported to leave prison or treatment and successfully **sustain their accommodation**.

27%

of clients reported
feeling less isolated
in their day-to-day
lives since engaging
with our service.

27%

of clients reported
a stronger sense of
belonging in their
local community
since engaging with
our service.

29%

of clients reported
feeling happier with
the structure and
routine of their daily
lives since engaging
with our service.



"What an amazing service. It wouldn't be the service it is without the team it has. The individuals that work at Ara are the core of the community and what makes Bristol, Bristol. Thank you for all of the wonderful work you do for all of us."

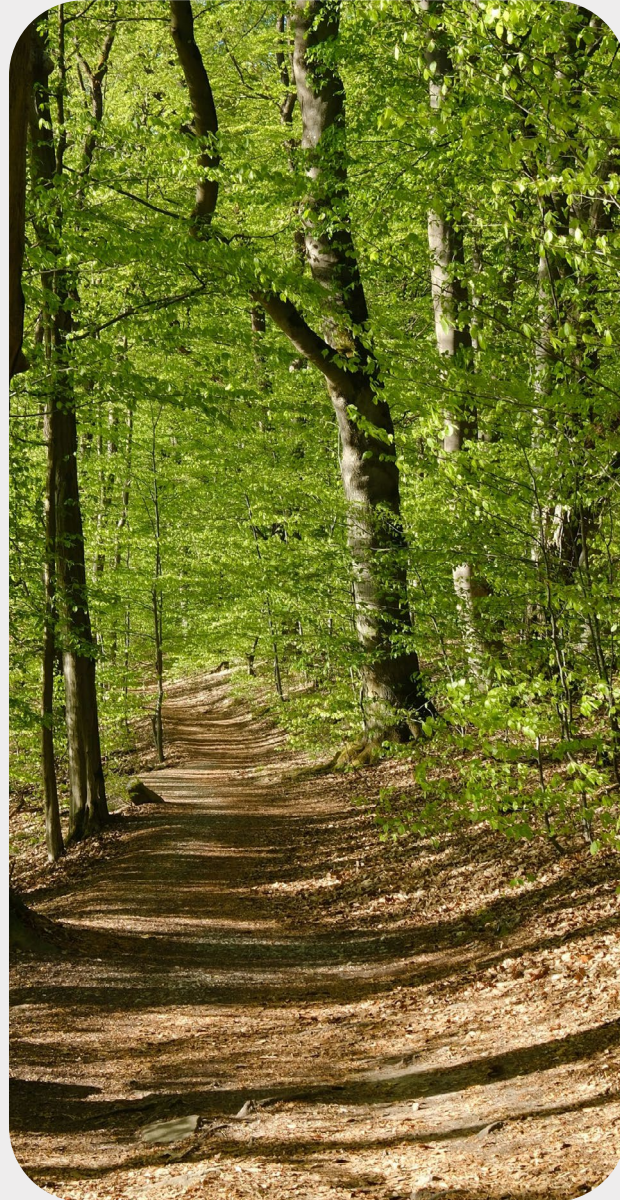
Peer Academy

The Ara Peer Academy is our structured programme for people with lived experience of recovery who want to support others on their journey.

Through training, supervision and hands-on practice across our services, our Peers develop the skills and confidence to make a real difference, while strengthening the role of lived experience across our organisation.

6

Peers in our first Ara Peer Academy cohort, all with lived experience of recovery



93%

Training attendance across the cohort, reflecting strong engagement

100%

of Peers report improved confidence, wellbeing and a sense of purpose

75%

Supervision attendance, supporting Peers throughout their journey



36

Hours of structured group training delivered to our Peer Cohort

42

Pathway 4 client interactions led by our Peers

6

Peer-led sessions and activities delivered across our services

2

Peers progressing into further training, volunteering or employment

Ara Housing First

Ara's Housing First service supports people who have histories of entrenched or repeat rough sleeping, often with multiple and serious support needs, for whom traditional homelessness approaches have not been successful. Clients have access to long-term, permanent housing, and Ara workers take an active engagement approach to provide flexible support that varies by the individual's needs, characteristics and experiences. Housing First is a multi-agency response coordinated by Ara, working with clients to choose where, when and how engagement with services happens.



28

Clients housed in self-contained, permanent flats through our Housing First service



17

Clients now registered with a GP, reconnecting with primary care



Clients engaging with drug and alcohol services



Clients engaging with physical health services



12

Clients engaging with support around offending or anti-social behaviour



4

Clients accessing mental health services as part of their wider support



4

Clients engaged in education, training, employment or volunteering



1

Client receiving dedicated support tailored to their learning disability

“Thank you for everything you have done and are doing. It is still sinking in.”



Employee Survey

Ara is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion both in the workplace and when recruiting employees. We are keen to provide a safe and empowering work environment for all members of the Ara team.

30%

of employees have direct lived experience of the issues that we support people with

89%

of employees say that they are proud to work at Ara

95%

of employees say that they have positive relationships with their colleagues



“I’m proud to work for Ara. Feels like we work together very well across the organisation to contribute to best practice and growth of our services.”

“I genuinely enjoy coming to work. I’m kept busy, supported and encouraged to learn new things. The training course has helped me build skills to do my job well, and it also makes me feel valued and appreciated.”

“I love working here. It feels different to other places I’ve been at, there’s a real sense of trying to do the best for people, no matter what.”

95%

of staff can see how they make a positive difference to the lives of the people we support



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info@recovery4all.co.uk