



**circles uk**

linking circles of support  
and accountability

# Annual Review Summary 2024/25

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# Chair and CEO Foreword



As Chair and CEO of Circles UK, we are proud to present this Annual Review, which reflects a year of resilience, continuous development and unwavering commitment to our vision of no further victims of sexual abuse.

Since our founding in 2008, Circles UK has stood at the forefront of a pioneering model - Circles of Support and Accountability - that transforms lives and strengthens public safety. In 2024/25, we marked a significant milestone by celebrating 30 years since the first Circle was started in Ontario, Canada in 1994. Thereafter they spread to the UK, Europe and beyond. Each Circle represents a community's courageous decision to engage with individuals who have caused harm, offering structured support while holding them accountable. The impact is profound: reduced reoffending, improved emotional stability, and safer communities.

Our work is grounded in evidence, and independent evaluations continue to affirm the effectiveness of Circles. But numbers alone don't tell the full story. Behind every Circle is a Core Member striving for change, a group of Volunteers offering time and empathy, and a network of professionals ensuring safety and integrity. This human-centred approach is what makes Circles unique - and essential.

In 2024/25, we undertook a strategic review of our Vision, Mission and Values. Our updated Vision - "No more victims of sexual abuse" - reflects our sharpened focus. Our revised Mission defines our role as the national lead, quality assurer, and advocate for the Circles model. And our new Values speak to the heart of our work: hope, respect, integrity, and responsiveness in the face of evolving challenges.

Circles UK continued to play a vital leadership role towards the Circles Provider network, offering strategic guidance, operational support, and quality assurance to Circles Providers across England and Wales.

In 2024/25, our efforts focused on strengthening the network, navigating funding challenges, and investing in the people who make Circles possible.

We also continued to extend our global reach, supporting Circles programmes in nine European countries and chairing the CirclesEurope Association Board. This international collaboration reinforces our belief that preventing sexual harm is a shared responsibility - and that Circles can be a powerful tool worldwide.

Internally, we strengthened our governance and financial resilience. Despite funding challenges, we ended the year with a small budget surplus and made strategic progress on key initiatives, including Circles ReBoot and Faith Circles.

Looking ahead, our priorities remain clear: to support Circles Providers, uphold quality, expand access to Circles, and build a sustainable future. We will continue to advocate for evidence-based approaches to sexual harm prevention, challenge stigma, and foster hope - for victims and survivors, Core Members, and communities alike.

Thank you to everyone who makes this work possible. Your dedication, courage, and belief in us are the foundation of Circles UK's impact.

Together, we are building a safer, more compassionate society.

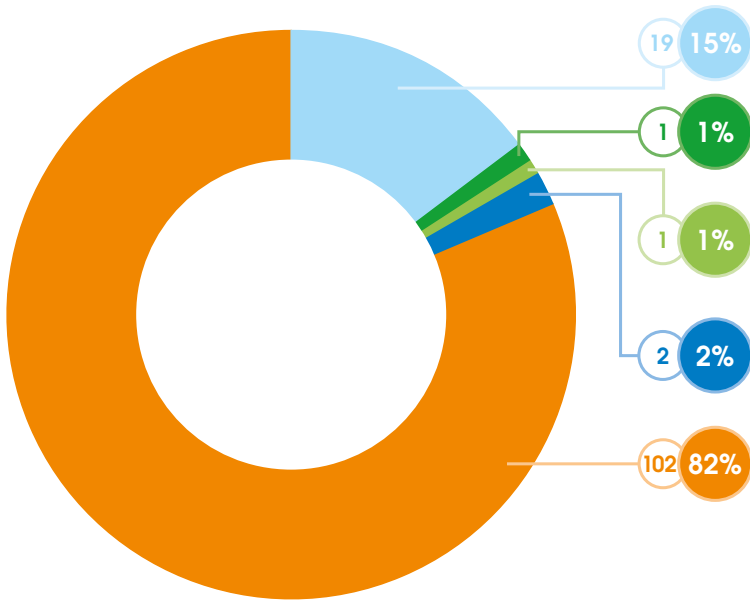
**Nigel Barnes and Riana Taylor**  
**Chair and Chief Executive Officer**  
**Circles UK**

# Circles Delivery

A Circle is a community-based intervention for someone with sexually harmful behaviours, (referred to as the Core Member), and usually for someone who has convictions for sexual harm. A group of four to six trained and supported Volunteers from a local community meet with the Core Member to provide support and hold them accountable. Each Circle is unique as it is designed around the needs of the Core Member.

Find out more at: [circles-uk.org.uk/what-are-circles](https://circles-uk.org.uk/what-are-circles)

## Circles initiated in 2024-25:



125 Circles were initiated in 2024-2025, a 64% increase on the 76 of 2023-24

- Circles ReBoot\*
- ID Circles\*\*
- Young People Circles
- Faith Circles\*\*\*
- Adult Circles

\*Circles ReBoot is specifically for people who access Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Material (CSAEM).

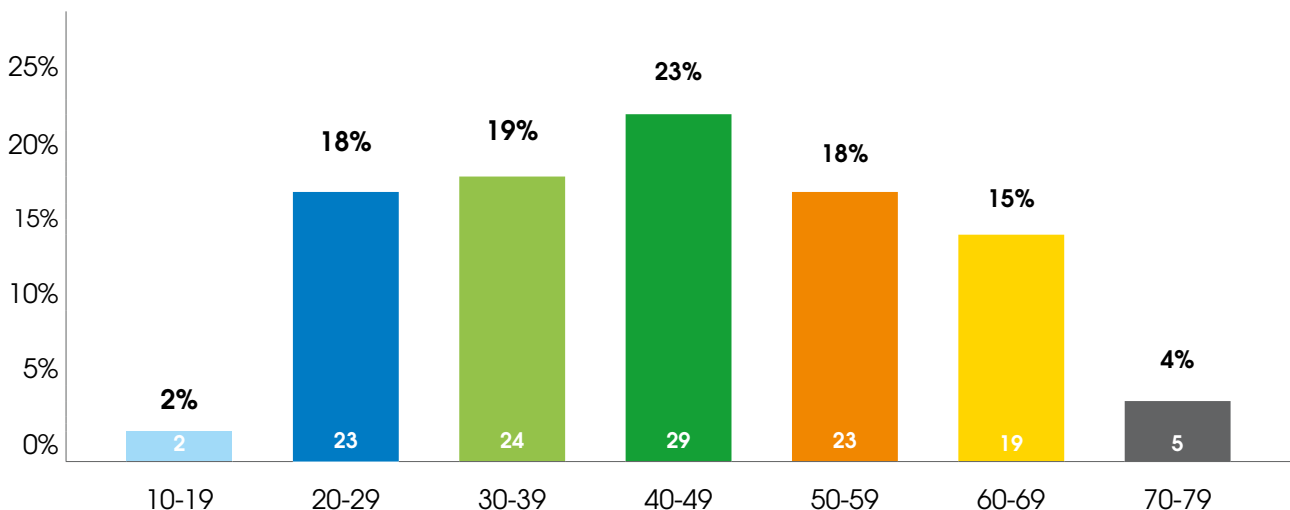
\*\*ID Circles are for People with Autism Spectrum Conditions, Intellectual Disability and/or Neurodivergence.

\*\*\*Faith Circles have an added element of faith which is shared by both the Core Member and the Volunteers.

## Core Member Demographics

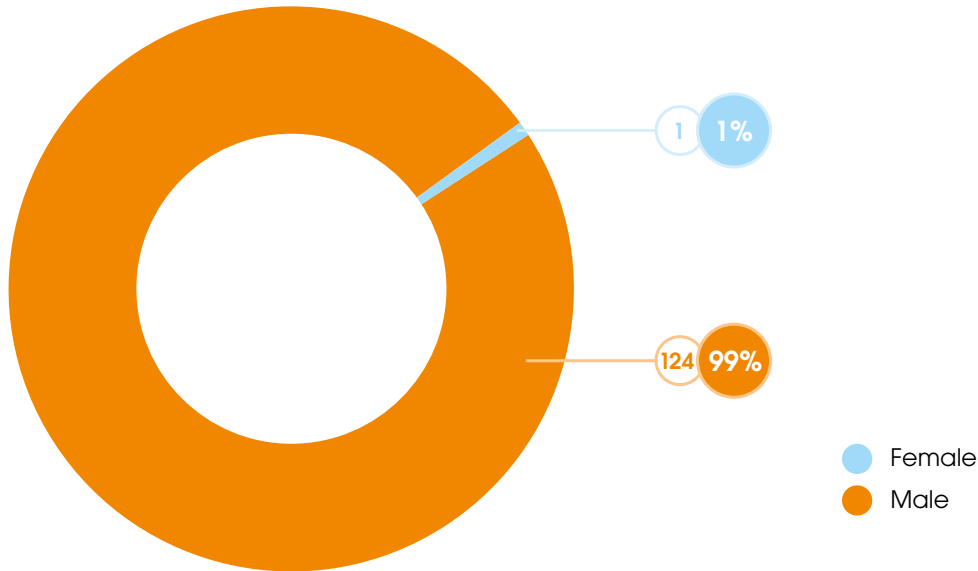
Fewer younger people attended a Circle than the year before (39% in the age range 10 to 39, in comparison to 44% in 2023-24). The number of older people (age 40 to 79) increased to 60% of the total number attending a Circle (in comparison to 57% in 2023-24). Older people (over 40) represent the largest age group attending a Circle. The age profile for Circles Core Members remained older than for people committing other types of offences, where younger age groups tend to dominate.

### Age



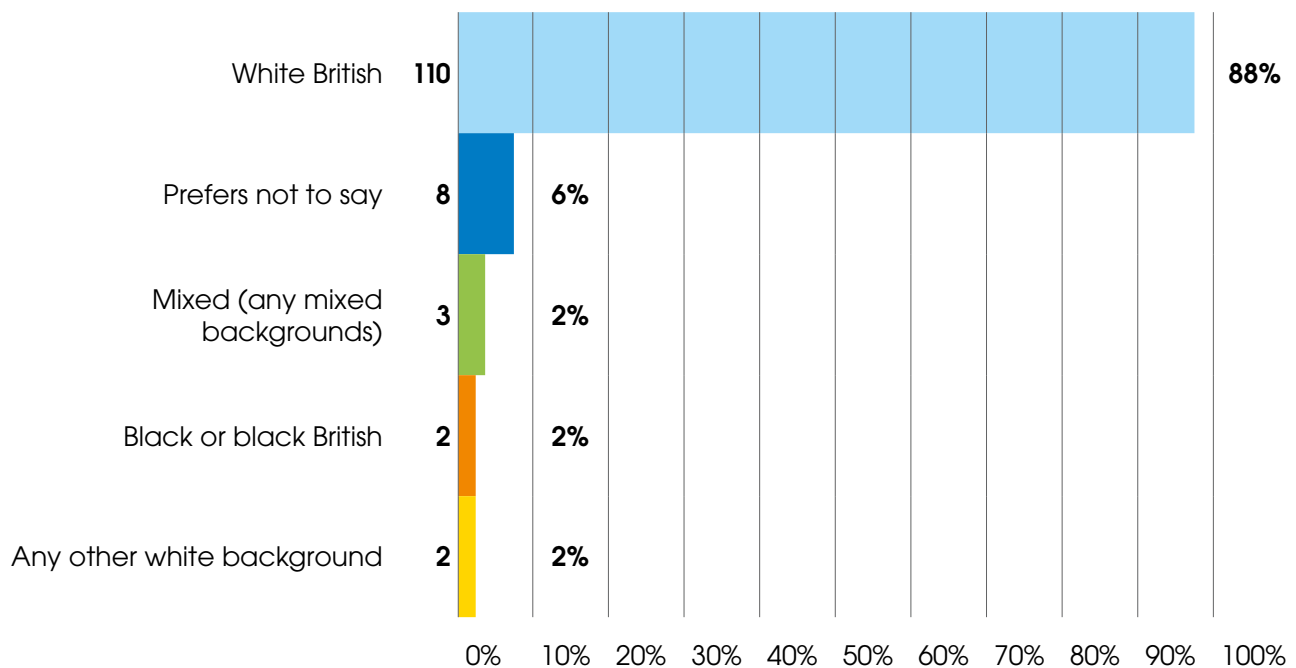
## Gender

The percentage of males accessing a Circle has remained stable in comparison to the previous year. Only one person identified as female in 2024-25 and no one identified as 'Other'.



## Ethnicity

The demographic composition of Core Members is largely shaped by referral patterns, which predominantly originate from the criminal justice system. In 2024/25, the proportion of White British Core Members participating in Circles remained the same as in 2023/24 at 88% (89% in 2023/24). The percentage of Black or Black British Core Members also remained at a similar level (2% in comparison to 1% in 2023/24).

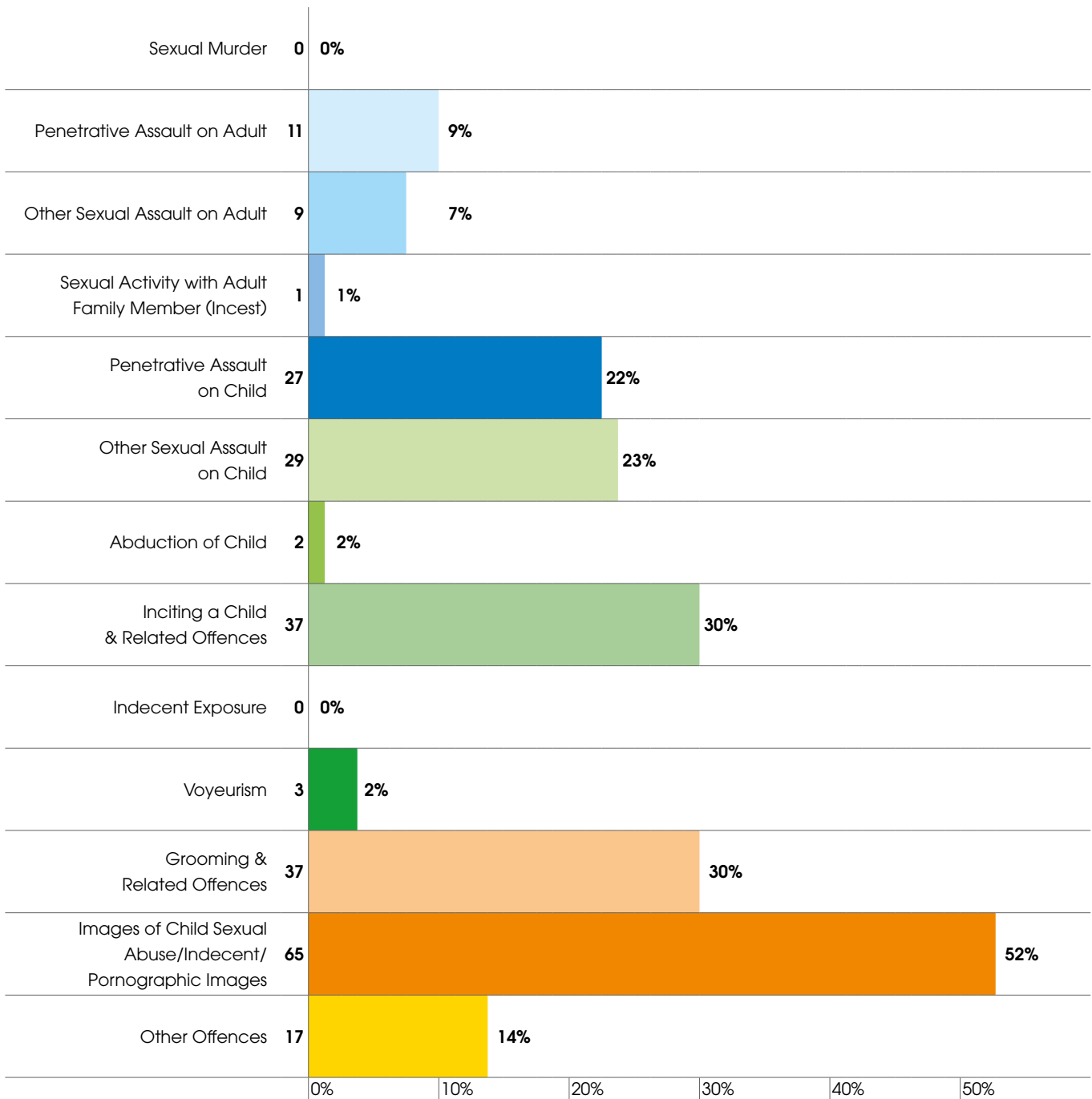


## Index Offences

The majority of offences committed by Core Members participating in Circles during 2024/25 involved crimes against children, including the viewing of child sexual abuse and exploitation material. It is important to note that some Core Members have committed offences across multiple categories.

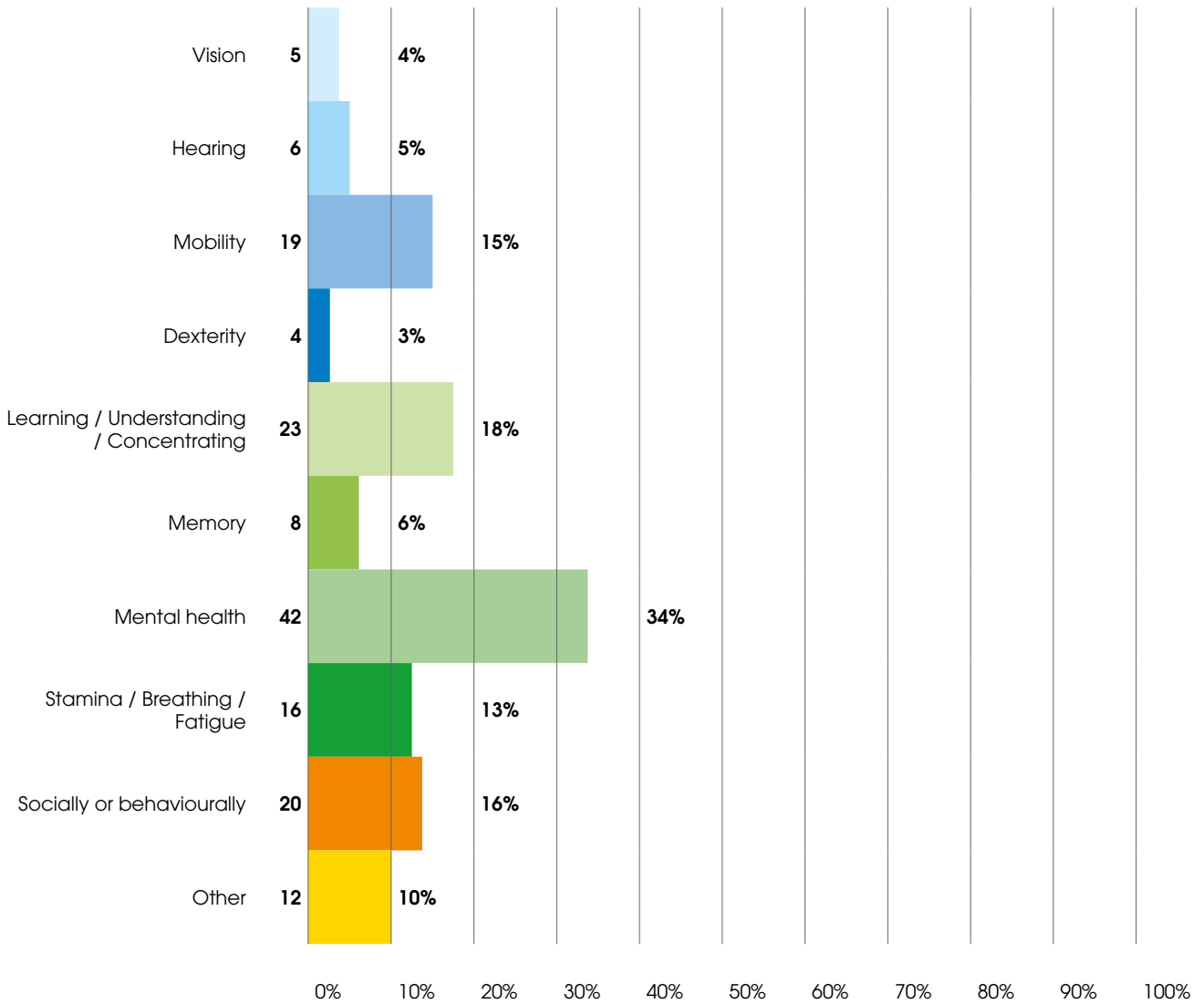
The proportion of Core Members convicted for viewing illegal images remained consistent with the previous year, accounting for 52% of Core Members (compared to 53% in 2023/24). Grooming and related offences continued their upward trend, rising from 3% in 2022/23 to 21% in 2023/24, reaching 30% in 2024/25. In contrast, incidences of indecent exposure declined sharply to 0%, from 7% the previous year.

Offences involving incitement of a child and related behaviours remained at the same level as the year before at 30%. Meanwhile, penetrative sexual assault against adults increased to 9%, and other forms of sexual assault against adults rose to 7% - up from 0% and 3%, respectively, in 2023/24.



# Disability

The disability profile of Core Members remained similar to previous years. Although the percentage with mental health and learning issues decreased from 61% in 2023-24 to 52% in 2024-25, it continued to remain the largest disability category for Core Members accessing a Circle.

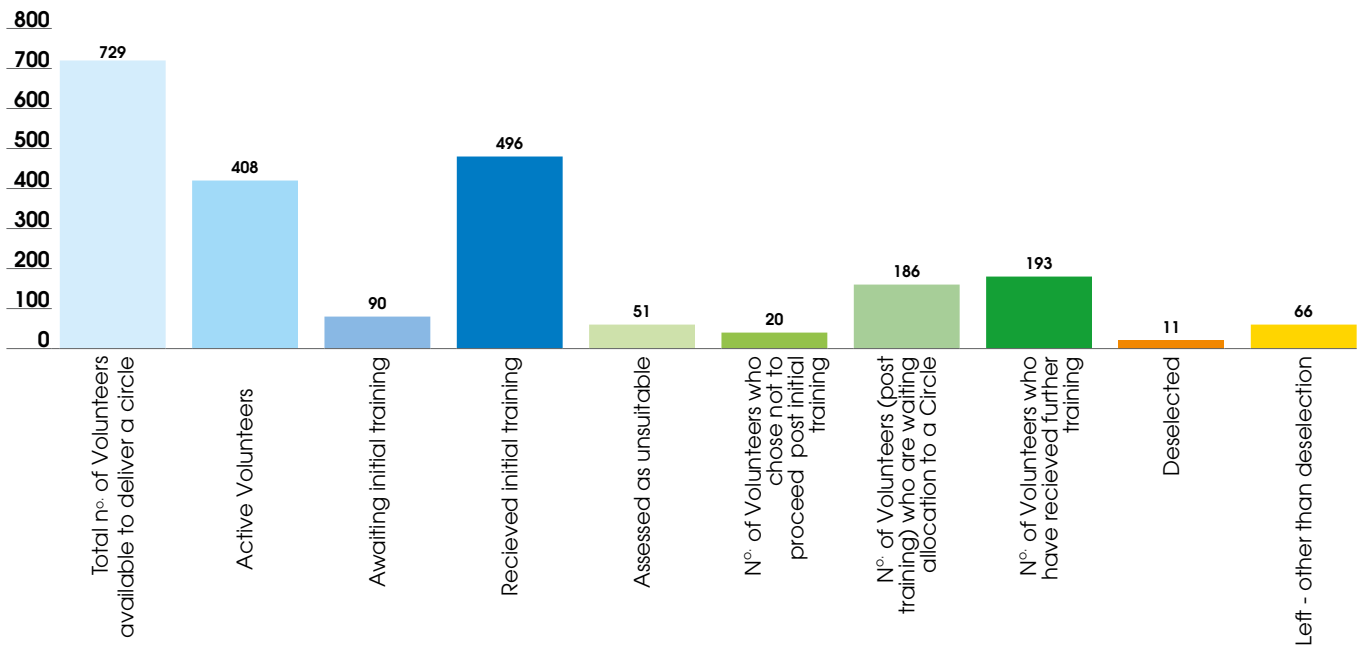


## Our Volunteers

There are currently over 700 people trained as Circle Volunteers, without whom, we cannot do the valuable work we do. Their work with Core Members is at the centre of our provision, providing the regular support and accountability that leads to change.

Volunteers receive 16 hours of compulsory, in-depth initial training, followed by comprehensive ongoing training and development opportunities, regular and ad hoc access to supervision and access to a supportive team.

Over the last year, our Providers have continued to recruit into these vital roles.



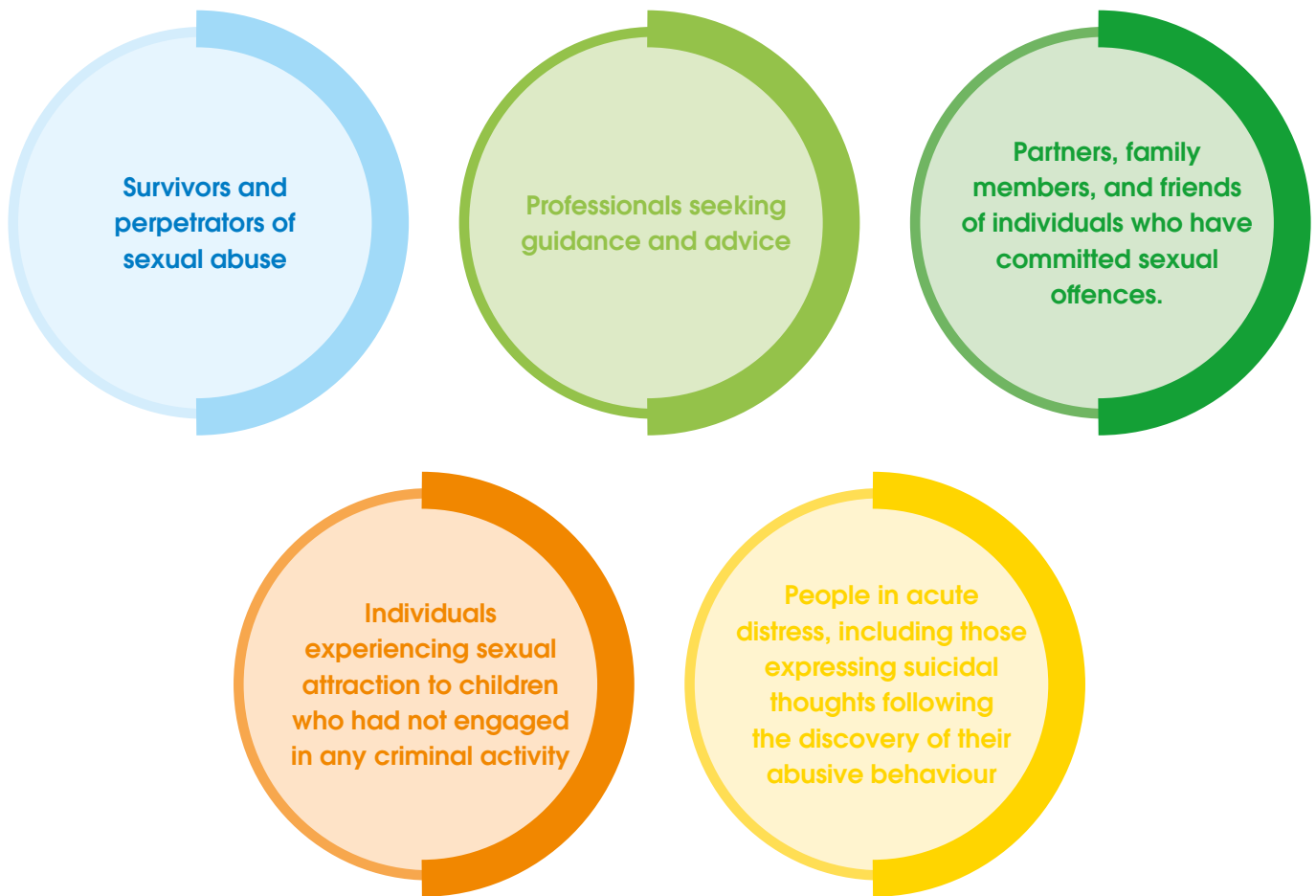
*We said goodbye to the NW12 Circle after 12 months, and the wonderful friendships and support that have come with volunteering my time to Circles.*

*Supporting people with convictions for sexual offences is not for everyone - something we found out along the way having lost a couple of our Volunteers, but we did it. We helped, listened, supported, and empowered our Core Member as best we could - forging an alliance with him that will, hopefully, assist in his journey reintegrating back into society socially.*



## Compassionate Support for All

We continue to receive calls and enquiries from a wide range of people. In 2024/25, These contacts came from:



This underscores the urgent need for accessible, preventative services - and the trust placed in Circles UK as a source of informed, compassionate support, despite not offering a helpline service.

Category of individual making enquiry	Number	%
Professional needing information or advice	80	32.40%
Person with Harmful Sexual Behaviour seeking help	40	16.20%
Potential Volunteer	36	14.60%
Family / Partner / Friend of someone who has committed a sexual offence	21	8.50%
Student or Researcher	15	6.10%
Media, Training requests and other Enquiries	52	21.00%
Prison Chaplain	2	0.80%
Potential Supporter	1	0.40%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>247</b>	

# Promoting Understanding, Inspiring Change

We continue to elevate the profile of the Circles model and its impact. Our efforts focused on increasing visibility, deepening public understanding, and reinforcing the critical importance of working with perpetrators to prevent further harm. We did this in the following ways:

## SHARING KNOWLEDGE ON GLOBAL STAGES

We maintained a strong presence at key conferences and seminars, showcasing our work and contributing to international dialogue:

- Presented early findings from *Circles ReBoot* at the **PIER24 Tackling Online Harms International Conference**.
- Participated in a **Sextortion webinar and Working Group** hosted by the Network Contagion Research Institute (USA).
- Delivered a keynote presentation at the **2025 national MOSOVO conference**, attended by delegates from 41 of the 43 Police areas in England and Wales.

## ADVOCATING FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

We have continued to engage with high-level inquiries and commissions, forging strategic relationships and influencing policy. These engagements reflect our growing influence and commitment to shaping safer, more informed justice systems:

- Presented evidence to the **Angiolini Inquiry** on violence against women in public spaces.
- Met with **Charlie Taylor**, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, to discuss Circles' impact and the role of Volunteers.
- Contributed to the **Independent Sentencing Review**, led by Rt Hon David Gauke, through a collaborative submission developed with Circles Providers.

## EXPANDING OUR DIGITAL PRESENCE

We continue to grow our social media reach across X, Facebook and Instagram. We also launched LinkedIn and Bluesky accounts. These platforms help us:

- Promote our work and impact.
- Counter misinformation.
- Share research and updates to improve public awareness.

## Honouring the Past, Inspiring the Future

On 8 November 2024, we hosted the 30-Year Circles Celebration at Friends House, London - a landmark event attended by 100 guests in person and many more online.

Highlights included:

- Keynotes from **Revd Harry Nigh**, founder of the first Circle in Canada, and **Sir Terry Waite**, reflecting on restorative practice.
- Presentations from Circles UK, Circles Providers and CirclesEurope showcasing the diversity and impact of Circles across communities.
- A feature in **The Guardian** by Libby Brooks, later named "Read of the Week" by Clinks (Read the article).
- Publication of our article in *Probation Quarterly*, titled "For 30 years, we've been doing something incredible... that no one wants to talk about" (PQ35 p 68).

## Delivering Specialist Training

We have delivered high-quality, tailored training to external organisations, helping them engage safely and effectively with individuals who pose a risk of sexual harm. Just some of the sectors we have supported through training include faith-based organisations, education providers, charitable and community groups and housing providers.

### Training Highlights:

- Safeguarding refresher for trustees and frontline staff.
- Bespoke sessions for teams working with veterans with complex needs.
- Workshops for charities supporting victims, addressing dual dynamics of risk and support.



Revd Harry Nigh delivering the keynote address



Sir Terry Waite at the 30 Year Circles Anniversary



Ann Castrel, Marijke Bijlsma and Mechtilid Hoing from Circles Belgium and Circles Netherlands presenting at the 30 Year Anniversary Event



*We now feel better equipped to support individuals compassionately while maintaining robust safety measures.*

*Training participant*



# Expanding Circles Programmes to Reach New Communities

We remain steadfast in our mission to broaden our reach and impact. In 2024/25, we launched and expanded programmes that respond to emerging challenges, engage diverse communities, and strengthen our commitment to keeping communities safe from sexual abuse. This year, our work focused on three transformative areas:

## CIRCLES REBOOT TO RESPOND TO ONLINE SEXUAL HARM

The increasing prevalence of people accessing online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Material (CSAEM) is a growing concern across the UK and beyond. In response, we developed Circles ReBoot - a specialised programme for individuals who access CSAEM and are assessed as lower risk of reoffending but still requiring structured support. It offers a community-based early intervention and desistance-based model that promotes accountability, reduces isolation, and supports behavioural change.

Following a successful, academically evaluated pilot, the programme is now fully implemented across four regions of England.

## FAITH CIRCLES

### Partnering with the Catholic Church

Faith communities play a vital role in safeguarding and rehabilitation. In 2024/25, we deepened our collaboration with the Catholic Church to explore new models of support rooted in shared spiritual values. This spiritual connection offers an additional layer of support and may serve as a protective factor in rehabilitation. A process evaluation is currently underway to assess the impact of this innovative model.

#### Highlights include:

- Targeted training for clergy and safeguarding representatives in the Diocese of Northampton.
- Bespoke sessions with Religious Life Communities, introducing the Support and Accountability framework to help them deal with individuals who present a risk of causing sexual harm.
- Presentations at national safeguarding conferences, sparking dialogue on faith-based safeguarding.
- Launch of two pilot Faith Circles in partnership with Circles South East, where Volunteers and service users (Core Members) share a common faith.

## CIRCLES ACROSS EUROPE

### Strengthening International Partnerships

We continue to lead within the CirclesEurope Association, supporting the growth of Circles programmes across the continent. Our international work fosters collaboration, shared learning, and a unified commitment to safer communities.

## Key Milestones:

- Hosted a European Coordinators and Volunteers event, promoting knowledge exchange.
- Co-hosted the 30-Year Celebration of Circles with European partners.
- Facilitated a UK Study Visit with Circles South East, welcoming international colleagues and showcasing best practices.
- Delivered a session with the NSPCC, highlighting their clinical assessment and treatment services for young people exhibiting harmful sexual behaviour.
- Circles programmes are now active in nine countries, including the UK (England and Wales), Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Norway, Latvia, Spain, and Catalonia.

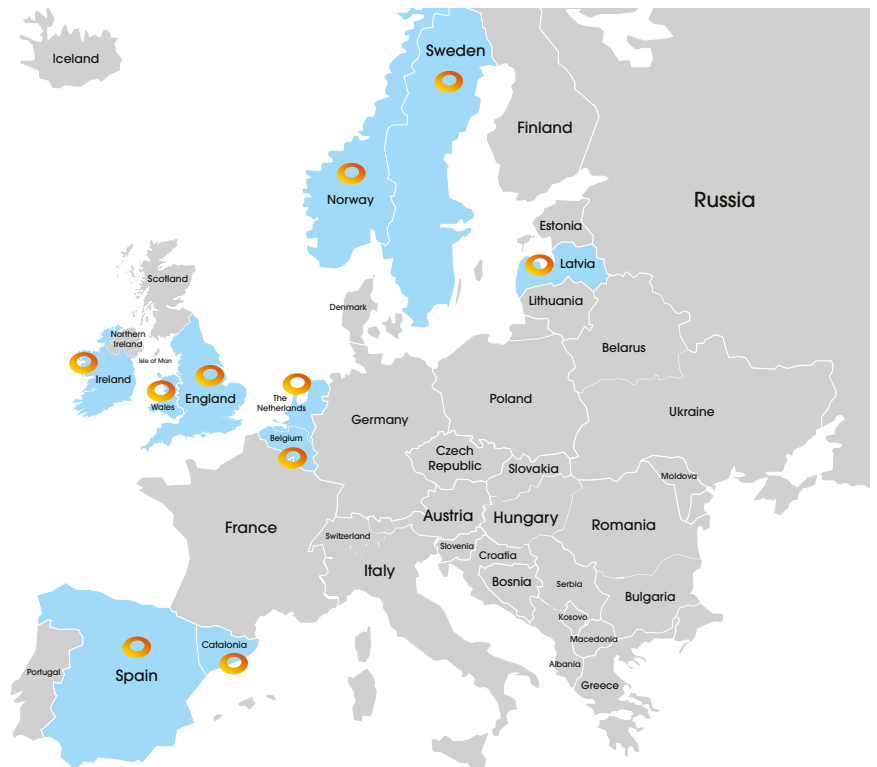


Circles UK Trustee, Simon Bailey facilitating the Expert Panel at the 30 Year Celebration event (Helen Drewery, Gerry Marshall, Prof Derek Perkins, Laura Negredo Lopez and Revd Harry Nigh)



Study visit Study attendees: Claire Ashley (Circles UK lead), Mireia Oliva Framis (Circles Catalonia), Miguel Brito Giménez (Circles Spain), Nerea Quintero González (Circles Catalonia), Diāna Ziediā and Jānis Nicmanis (Circles Latvia), Lienke Kooistra (Circles Netherlands), Hanna Fagerberg (Circles Sweden) and Katrine Fjørtoft and Maren Riis (Norway).

With new representation from Spain joining the CirclesEurope Board in 2024/25, our network continues to grow in diversity, leadership, and impact.



## Upholding Excellence Across the Circles Provider Network

To maintain high standards, we supported newly accredited Providers through their Consolidation Reviews - a critical quality assurance process conducted within one year of starting Circles provision. These Reviews assess whether Circles are being delivered in line with national standards.

In October 2024, we hosted our annual Coordinators Forum, bringing together 14 Coordinators for two days of learning, reflection, and collaboration at Aston University, Birmingham.

We also delivered specialist training for new Coordinators in September 2024, blending in-person and online sessions to build confidence and competence in their roles.



# Case Studies

1

A previous Core Member was re-referred into the Circles service upon release from prison. Circles Provider Humbercare obtained funding for him to sit his Maths examination online as an entry requirement for an engineering degree. The Volunteers ensured that his confidence and social isolation were identified as the key areas for support. After successful completion of his Circle, he is now at university. He recently passed his driving theory test, is looking forward to going on his first holiday and has his first passport. The noticeable difference in his confidence was observed by all professionals and Volunteers involved with the Core Member.

2

A Core Member was referred via MAPPA as a high-risk case. He finished his first degree in the community and successfully managed to secure a Post Graduate course at university. He was offered additional community support from a housing team which secured him a property. He continues to remain in the property, engaged in his studies and has a different outlook on life. He often says that he now sees hope and a positive future.

“

## Feedback from a Probation Officer after a Circle delivered by Nepacs

Circles has provided a powerful and significant support service to a Core Member. Before Circles, he had multiple breaches of his sexual harm prevention order, and it is my professional opinion that Circles had provided almost a break/reset in his life which has prevented further offending. Circles has not only added an extra layer of accountability, but allowed his thoughts, feelings and behaviours to be explored in a setting that isn't a Probation office. Circles have also supported him to start looking at future goals and mapping these out. If it wasn't for Circles, I believe there would have been a high likelihood of him reoffending. Through the fantastic work of the Volunteers, it has also allowed him to be open to engaging with further support by way of personal wellbeing, and The Activity Hub, which will allow him to have further barriers/distractions to prevent reoffending. He has always spoken highly of the Volunteers and Circles as a whole and is genuinely sad it is ending. From an additional Probation perspective, it has also allowed me to gain and obtain information that may not have been shared by *him* if it wasn't for Circles.

”

# Finances

## Accounts summary

Year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

Summary	2025						2024					
	Unrestricted £,000's		Restricted £,000's		Total £,000's		Unrestricted £,000's		Restricted £,000's		Total £,000's	
<b>Income</b>												
Grant Funding	253.8	82.5%	80	100.0%	333.8	86.1%	294.2	87.3%	100	100.0%	394.2	90.2%
Voluntary Income	11.4	3.7%			11.4	2.9%	8.7	2.6%			8.7	2.0%
Income from services	28.3	9.2%			28.3	7.3%	23.8	7.1%			23.8	5.4%
Investment & other	14.3	4.6%			14.3	3.7%	10.3	3.1%			10.3	2.4%
<b>Total income</b>	<b>307.8</b>		<b>80</b>		<b>387.8</b>		<b>377</b>		<b>100</b>		<b>437</b>	
<b>Expenditure</b>												
Projects development	63.4	21.7%	122.1	100.0%	185.5	44.8%	92.4	26.4%	50.3	100.0%	142.7	35.6%
Projects training & support	81.3	27.9%			81.3	19.6%	89.7	25.6%			89.7	22.4%
Evaluation & research	62.5	21.4%			62.5	15.1%	77.8	22.2%			77.8	19.4%
Information & support line	35.7	12.2%			35.7	8.6%	32.5	9.3%			32.5	8.1%
Fundraising	23.9	8.2%			23.9	5.8%	32.5	9.3%			32.5	8.1%
Governance	25	8.6%			25.0	6.0%	25.3	7.2%			25.3	6.3%
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>291.8</b>		<b>122.1</b>		<b>413.9</b>		<b>350.2</b>		<b>50.3</b>		<b>400.5</b>	
<b>Balance sheet</b>												
Fixed assets	3.3				3.3		6.2				6.2	
Current assets	624.4		7.6		632.0		539.1		49.7*		588.8	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	-89.2				-89.2		-22.8				-22.8	
Long term creditors falling due after one year												
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>538.5</b>		<b>7.6</b>		<b>546.1</b>		<b>522.5</b>		<b>49.7</b>		<b>572.2</b>	

\*Restricted funds carried forward amended to 2023/24 final annual accounts





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