

June 2025

CLASP Impact Report

April 2024 – March 2025



Caring, listening and supporting partnership



A charity supporting adults
with learning disabilities to speak up



Message from the CEO

“This year has been full of moments that reminded us why we do what we do. At the heart of CLASP is our members - people with learning disabilities who show strength, kindness and courage every day.

Our goal is simple: to help people be seen, heard, included - and celebrated. Over the past year, we’ve seen members grow in confidence, build friendships and speak out for change, helping to shape a more inclusive and compassionate community.

This Impact Report shares the difference we’re making together. It features a moving story from one of our members, inspiring examples of how powerful our friendship groups have become and reflections from volunteers who find real joy in being part of CLASP.

Thank you to everyone who has been part of this journey. Together, we’re creating a community where everyone belongs, everyone matters - and everyone is celebrated.

Debs Morrison



2024 – 2025 at a glance...

976 people attended a CLASP session



59 guest speakers

100% would recommend CLASP!

6687 total attendances

62,400 visits to our Facebook page



38+ appearances in the media

8 LDPB Roadshows

404 sessions = 715 hours



Campaigns in 2024

Campaign Focus 2024: Anxiety Management, Healthy Lifestyle & a Reflection Bench

Each year, CLASP members choose a campaign focus that reflects what matters most to them.

For 2024, their chosen theme was “**Anxiety Management, Healthy Lifestyle and a Reflection Bench.**”

The focus was on understanding how to look after both mental and physical health, while also creating a dedicated space - a Reflection Bench - where members could sit, reflect and find calm during both the good and the more difficult moments in life.

To support this campaign, we ran **targeted workshops** in partnership with the **Community Team for People with Learning Disabilities (CTPLD)**.

These covered:

- **Healthy Eating**
- **Healthy Bowels**



In addition, members took part in a wider series of sessions focused on holistic wellbeing, including:

- **Manual Handling**
- **Wellbeing Drumming**
- **Communication Skills**
- **Mental Health Awareness**
- **Healthy Living**
- **Dental Health**



All workshops aimed to promote self-awareness, build confidence and encourage lasting healthy habits.

Campaigns in 2024

...continued

Thanks to generous **funding from the National Lottery**, we were also able to organise uplifting day trips to **Marwell Zoo** and **Chessington World of Adventures**, alongside special visits from **Berkshire Reptile Encounters** and **Berkshire Birds of Prey**. These experiences provided opportunities for social connection, joy and interaction with nature - all of which support both physical activity and emotional wellbeing.



"Thank you so much to the National Lottery and everything CLASP do. I am ever so grateful."

- CLASP member



CLASP members also took part in a **consultation with Sports Together** about their **Festival of Inclusivity** and later attended one of their events. This reinforced the powerful link between physical activity and positive mental health.

A highlight of the campaign was meeting **Aliya from the local "HelloBench" initiative**. This community project promotes mental wellbeing by encouraging people to take time to pause and connect. Each bench features a **QR code linking to the Hub of Hope**, a national mental health support directory. Inspired by the simplicity and purpose of the project, CLASP members decided to **sponsor 20 HelloBenches** - a lasting legacy as part of our **20-year anniversary**.

This campaign not only empowered members with tools to manage their health and anxiety, but also gave them a sense of pride and purpose - knowing they are contributing to a kinder, more supportive community for everyone.



A guest speaker's perspective



A Fresh Perspective: *"I didn't know what to expect..."*

Reflections from Aliya Musa, founder of the *HelloBench* project

"When I was invited to present my project, *HelloBench*, to CLASP, I had no idea what to expect. I didn't know much about the learning disability community - and, in all honesty, I pulled together my presentation last minute without giving much thought to who I'd be speaking to. By the time I arrived, I was feeling nervous....

...but those nerves quickly faded.

Thanks to some great advice from Debs beforehand, I was able to find my rhythm and really enjoy the session. I invited questions, sparked discussion - and instead of the quiet group I'd anticipated, I found myself surrounded by people who were **warm, curious, and full of ideas.**

What struck me most was the way Debs and Anna held the space. From the start, there was a strong sense of care and clarity. It felt safe for everyone in the room to be themselves and share their voices. There was professionalism, yes - but it came with so much warmth and ease.

The members? **Absolutely brilliant. Engaged, thoughtful, funny.** They showed up not just physically, but emotionally. They understood the heart of *HelloBench* - the need for spaces of reflection, inclusion, and connection - and they were genuinely excited about it.

What I felt in that room was **dignity, inclusion and shared ownership.** It was energising. Inspiring, even. A meeting I thought might be slightly formal or slow became **one of the highlights of my month.**

I'm honoured to play a small part in CLASP's 20th anniversary, and I'm hopeful that *HelloBench* will become part of their journey - offering a place where people can pause, connect, and feel seen."

"CLASP is doing something truly special. And now that I've seen it for myself, I can't unsee it."



Volunteer Spotlight

Growing Together: The Power of Volunteering at CLASP

At CLASP, volunteers are more than just helpers - they are part of our community.

Across choir, crafts, gardening, and wellbeing sessions, their time, energy and kindness help create safe, joyful spaces where our members can grow in confidence and feel connected.

Helen, Choir Volunteer, shares how uplifting it is to watch members shine:

"It's hands down my favourite hour.

You can feel the happiness in the room grow."



David, also supporting the Friday choir, sees the impact too:

"It's a fun, feel-good way to end the week.

Members now run the music and help set up - amazing progress."



Jean loves being a part of CLASP:

"I find being a volunteer very rewarding.

It's nice to be a help.

I enjoy getting to know the members and being a friendly, supportive ear."



Pete, who volunteers at our Active Session and Gardening Club, says:

"The support provided by the CLASP team and the willingness of the members to actively take part means I've seen members grow so much - using tools, taking initiative, trying new things.

It's deeply rewarding."

At CLASP, volunteering is a shared journey - one that empowers, connects and enriches everyone involved.

Volunteer Spotlight

Growing Together: The Power of Volunteering at CLASP



Leonie, Volunteer at Coffee Shop, Take Notice & Happy & Healthy, reflects:

"I love chatting at Coffee Shop and joining Take Notice sessions. At Happy & Healthy, Michelle calls it her 'happy place' - and moments like Sam giving high fives show just how far members come."

Karen highlights the growing confidence of members:

"I've noticed the growing confidence of people to speak up and be part of the group - and I can continue to use some of my work-learned skills, particularly when members have an issue that needs a one-to-one approach. It's a happy, social place to spend time and makes a massive positive contribution to members' lives."



Sue, a Craft Club volunteer, adds:

"There's so much creativity and pride. Even those unsure at first now fully join in. It's a joy to see confidence bloom week after week."

Heather is involved across several sessions and shares the impact of newer initiatives:

"It's been extremely rewarding to support such a wide range of activities. The Easy Reads sessions with Wokingham Libraries have really helped some members grow in confidence through reading. Friday Take Notice sessions open up new interests in exciting ways. The choir and concerts offer a sense of community and shared joy. I've loved seeing members thrive - and I've learned so much myself."



Volunteering with CLASP doesn't just make a difference for our members - it also brings deep fulfilment, joy and connection to those who give their time. Together, we create spaces where everyone can feel proud, included and valued.

“Finding My Way Back” – A Member’s Story

“There was a time when my **mental health** became so difficult that I had to **step away** from CLASP. I stopped doing almost everything I enjoyed - including seeing my friends. I felt **overwhelmed**, isolated and **lost in a world** that no longer felt familiar. During that time, the **staff at CLASP never stopped reaching out**. Their messages were gentle - checking in to make sure I was safe, reminding me that I was valued, not just as a member, but as a person. They also **respected my need for space**.

Coming back to CLASP reminded me that I am valued - not just as a member, but as a person.

Looking back now, those small **moments of contact meant everything**. They helped keep a connection alive until I could begin to see the world more clearly again. Slowly, I started to feel healthier and I returned to CLASP. Coming back to the group - and to the people who make it such a special place - was **incredibly emotional**. I felt welcomed, appreciated and recognised for who I am and what I can contribute. That **feeling of being seen and valued helped me start to heal**. Seeing my friends again played a big part in my recovery. I had missed each of them deeply, even though my sense of reality had become confused. Alongside medical support, it was their kindness, laughter and encouragement that helped me find joy again and reminded me of the positives in life.

Their kindness, laughter and encouragement helped me find joy again.

Now, I have things to **look forward to**. I’m excited about what we’ll experience together as a group and as part of the Wokingham community. I’m also preparing to share more of my artwork in our next exhibition and I hope to find new ways to combine my passion for creativity with my involvement in CLASP. Though I still feel scared at times, I’m no longer facing that fear alone. I’m looking ahead to the future with hope - because I know there are people who care, who stand beside me, and who believe that **each of us deserves a happy and fulfilling life.**”

Feedback from professionals

We surveyed professionals who work with and refer people to CLASP. Their responses show strong support for our mission and impact.

At a Glance:

- **100%** were satisfied with CLASP (**87%** very satisfied)
- **100%** would recommend CLASP
- **100%** were aware of all CLASP activities
- **100%** said CLASP **empowers people with Learning Disabilities**
- **67%** had referred someone to CLASP - all said the process was **easy**



"It's great to have such a wonderful organisation within our community. All the members are so positive and look so happy partaking of the activities. It's great to see that so many activities are so well attended."

What Professionals Say:

"CLASP empowers people by giving them the tools to have their voices heard in the community."

"A vital support network for people at risk of isolation."

"They explain rights and health info clearly and compassionately."

"The team nurtures, supports and advocates - giving people purpose and confidence."

"CLASP creates safe, inclusive spaces where members feel they belong."

"They do so much with so little. CLASP should be a model for other areas."

"CLASP does fantastic work - the team's dedication is admirable and they make a huge difference in people's lives."

Reflections and Praise:

- CLASP is described as **vital, inclusive and life-changing**
- Professionals noted the **strong community spirit** and **positive energy** among members
- There was appreciation for CLASP's role in **advocacy, empowerment** and **social connection**.

"Oh wow, CLASP you are utterly amazing giving opportunities like this. Thank you."

"I continue to be so impressed with everything CLASP does each year and love seeing how kind, helpful and supportive the members are of each other. Any group that can attain this level of mutual respect is doing something truly amazing and should be highly praised."

Feedback from CLASP members

Summary

CLASP participants have reported overwhelmingly positive experiences across a wide range of sessions. Feedback highlights strong themes of inclusion, social connection and personal development. Participants value the opportunity to build friendships, learn new skills and feel supported. This brief report presents key findings from recent feedback to help inform and celebrate CLASP's ongoing impact.

Key Highlights

- **100%** of respondents enjoy attending CLASP sessions.
- **93%** rated CLASP a **5 out of 5**.
- Most popular sessions include **Take Notice, Choir, Crafts** and **Active Sessions**.
- Participants report benefits such as:
 - Making friends and feeling part of a community
 - Building confidence and communication skills
 - Enjoying creative and physical activities
 - Learning new skills and information



What Members Say

*"CLASP has really helped me with my confidence."
 "I have made new friends through singing and meeting others."
 "CLASP is brilliant, helps me get out of the house and give Mum a break."
 "Staff and volunteers are helpful and kind."*

*"Everyone is really kind and friendly."
 "Friendly staff!"
 "I'm proud to be part of this group."
 "I love being part of CLASP."*

Themes from Feedback

- **Friendship & Social Connection:** For many, seeing friends and making new ones is the best part of CLASP
- **Supportive Environment:** Participants feel included, valued and supported by staff and peers.
- **Diverse Activities:** People enjoy the variety and flexibility of sessions.
- **Learning & Growth:** From social skills to DJing, participants are learning new things regularly.

Recommendations

- Continue to offer well-loved sessions like **Take Notice, Choir** and **Crafts**.
- Explore **outdoor activity options**, such as cricket, to add variety.
- Keep promoting a welcoming, inclusive environment with peer support at its core.

“A friendship grown through CLASP”

Ian and Michael – A story of friendship between members

Ian and Michael have built a strong and supportive friendship, rooted in shared interests and mutual encouragement. They regularly spend time together and have developed a close bond that now extends beyond CLASP activities.

Their friendship began at Puzzle Club and grew stronger through the Gardening group, where they discovered a shared love of nature, being outdoors, and solving puzzles. Before joining CLASP, they didn't know each other - but through this charity they found common ground and began building a connection.

Outside of CLASP, they now meet up socially - most recently visiting the Forest of Imagination at Dinton with Sarah. Ian often takes the lead in planning outings and will contact Michael to see if he's up for it. Sarah has since become part of their friendship group, and sometimes Dean and Nikk join them too. Together, they form a small community of support and shared experiences.

They each value having close friends and know they can rely on one another. When one of them is going through a challenge, they talk it through, and if needed, check in with CLASP for extra support. This kind of trust and care has become a key part of their friendship.

CLASP has played a big part in helping them get to this point. The activities, encouragement and safe environment have helped them build confidence and independence. With CLASP's support, they've learned to take the initiative in their own lives and relationships.

To Ian and Michael, CLASP feels like family - somewhere they know there is always someone there for them. That's especially important when you don't have family of your own.



A great big thank you...

SQUIRES

GARDEN CENTRES

..to all our supporters, including Squire's Garden Centre, who chose us as their Charity of the Year, for 2 years running.



the Local WORD



..and to Carolyn at The Wokingham Word, who chose and supported us as her Charity of the Year in 2024.

CLASP

Our regular sessions continue in February including Movie Mates, Coffee Shop, Dancing to Music, Book Corner, Happy & Healthy Club Sports & Fitness sessions, Craft Club, Evening Drop-In at Sedero Lounge, Active Session, Take Notice, Puzzle Club and Choir.

Rehearsals for the Victory Theatre Project Variety Show (held at the Whitty Theatre on Friday 11 April) also continue, we can't wait till the big night!

On the 13th February our popular Active Session are meeting up at Hollywood Bowl, Bracknell - this session runs from 10am-12noon - please arrive on time or the group may go in without you (and don't forget money to pay for your bowling and any refreshments).

On the 14th February we show some love to our local area with a sponsored walk and litter pick - being such an enthusiastic group, we really do make a difference, so please do sponsor us (www.justgiving.com/claspwokingham) or say hello if you see us out and about on the 14th.

The month ends with a bang, a barn dance at and in conjunction with Spaces for All - a repeat of last year's event, it promises to be a lot of fun again (please do get in touch if you'd like to buy a ticket).

CLASP is a self-advocacy group for people with learning disabilities in the Wokingham Borough. We support and employ members, as well as providing our engaging programme of activities.

CLASP
Creating, listening and supporting partnerships
A charity supporting adults with learning disabilities to speak up



A great big thank you...

..to our many other supporters throughout the year. We have raised £13,000 from donations and grants, and £10,000 with our fundraising efforts - and are extremely grateful for your support.





CLASP (Caring, Listening and Supporting Partnership)



**Charity and Community Hub,
Waterford House, Erftstadt Court,
Denmark Street, Wokingham, RG40 2YF**



0118 228 1801 or 0778 074 9453



www.claspwokingham.org



admin@claspwokingham.org