



Speaking Up, Fighting Prejudice, Improving Lives

Annual Report 2024 - 2025



MLMC President, Michael Edwards, receives MBE from the Prince of Wales



Sara Ryan, My Life My Choice Patron | Michael Edwards, My Life My Choice President
My Life My Choice, Unit 3, Watlington House, Watlington Road, Oxford, OX4 6NF | Tel: 01865 204214
Charity number: 1187726 | www.mylifemychoice.org.uk

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***MLMC has boundless drive to keep going, going and going...
they never seem to be defeated by the challenges which exist.***

(Stakeholder Consultation Report for My Life My Choice)



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INTRODUCTION



This was the year that the dedication and vision of our President and Founder, Michael Edwards, was royally recognised!



Michael was awarded an MBE in the King's honours list for services to people with disabilities.



Michael went to Windsor Castle to receive his medal.



Trustee Co-Chairs, Lucy Bowerman and Ady Chappell, would like to say a huge thank you to Michael for leading MLMC to great success over many years.



Increased independence



Increased economic wellbeing



Reduced loneliness and isolation



Increased physical or mental wellbeing

Our Trustees

For us, by us.

MLMC is a self-advocacy organisation led by 13 trustees, who all have a learning disability. We are proud to be 100% user-led.



Michael
President



Lucy
Co-Chair



Ady
Co-Chair



Mick
Vice Chair



Joan



Ben



Liam



Keith



Tom



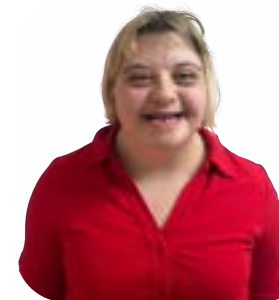
Andy



Anup



Charlene



Katie

2024-2025 HIGHLIGHTS



Former Co-chair of trustees, Ben, secures full time work as Camden Society's Quality Director



MLMC members gave evidence to Parliament's Health & Social Care Select Committee



MLMC Champion, Kumudu, elected to Representative Body of Learning Disability England



MLMC Consultant, Pam, is part of a commission making recommendations to government on how to better support people with learning disabilities in the next pandemic



£90,000

The Forbes Charitable Foundation is supporting our work with young people

**BIG
ISSUE**

MLMC chosen as one of The Big Issue's top 100 Changemakers for 2025

£33,079

Total pay for the year to 51 people with a learning disability



We launched a new Health & Wellbeing project

MBE CELEBRATION!



110 members and supporters came to Oxford Town Hall to celebrate the MBE award for MLMC founder & President, Michael Edwards.





**A REAL TRIBUTE
TO THE WORK OF
MLMC**



**WE LOVED EVERY
MOMENT OF THE
EVENING**



**WHAT AN
AMAZING
VENUE**

**VERY UPLIFTING
OCCASION**



INSPIRING



Gig Buddy

Supports people with a learning disability to do fun and interesting activities in a pair or as a group

What is the project?



Gig Buddy pairs meet up to do something they both enjoy and to develop a friendship.



There are also group activities, such as theatre visits, walking club, arts and craft club. 138 such activities were delivered during the year.



Once again a Gig Buddy team volunteered to help out at the famous Truck Festival!

What did we achieve?



98% of members felt less lonely because of Gig Buddies.



234 members benefitted from the project.

95% of members said they felt more confident because of Gig Buddies.

“**William loves coming to MLMC events and his confidence has grown enormously**”



147 people enjoyed the monthly Stingray nightclub.

Travel Buddy

Travel Buddy trainers with a learning disability support their peers to build their confidence and skills so they can travel independently

What is the project?



Paid Travel Buddy trainers are paired with a MLMC member to teach them a journey until they feel confident to do it solo.



Travel Buddy trainers also support people to go to events and activities via Companion Journeys.



This Friday, the usual MLMC trainer was not available. To our surprise, Oliver decided to catch the bus into Oxford on his own, then went shopping and returned home without any problems. This is incredible progress by Oliver and this is a testament to MLMC's training. Oliver is very proud of himself"



What did we achieve?



34 members received 1-to-1 intensive travel training.



Trainers have supported 122 Companion Journeys and helped 22 people get bus passes for the first time.



17 travel workshops were delivered to 210 people.



100% of people who were involved with the project said they had learnt new skills and felt more confident.

Computer Buddy

Members are given free devices and training to build their digital skills

What is the project?



Members are given a device for free.

There is also one to one training or people can come to a group workshop.



There are Easy Read guides made for members on topics such as email, Zoom and using the internet.



The project won an award in 2025 from the Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers.

What did we achieve?



73% of members said they had more knowledge and felt less lonely because of the project.

82% of members said they had more skills and confidence.



134 devices backed up by hundreds of training sessions have been given to members since the start of the project!



Because I can use emails, I can do more things for myself and I don't need others to help me as much.



Self-Advocacy Groups

Monthly groups are held across Oxfordshire where members meet to develop skills, knowledge and friendships

What is the project?



17 groups, attended by 303 people, including groups for women, LGBT+, and young people, every month.



Each group employs a paid co-facilitator with a learning disability.



Group members practice and learn self-advocacy skills and campaign locally.

“The group has helped me be more secure. I didn't share with anybody before and now I am confident to speak up for myself.”

What did we achieve?



98% said they found it easier to speak up for themselves. This means they can tell people what they want.



- 96% increased their confidence
- 96% increased their knowledge and skills



- 92% said their mental health had improved.
- 90% of members felt less lonely.

Professional Services

Training, consultancy, research, inspections and easy read, delivered by paid members



Training

Paid trainers with a learning disability deliver workshops to MLMC members and to professionals from organisations, like the NHS or council.



Consultancy & Research

Consultants with a learning disability work with professionals to improve services.



Inspections

Inspectors with a learning disability check health and social care services and suggest things to improve.



***I feel very confident in delivering training.
I have become more able to share my
views and experiences independently and
need less help to do so.***

What did we achieve?



100% of MLMC trainers said their knowledge, confidence and employability has increased.



16 of our paid trainers became accredited Health & Social Care Trainers and are now helping to train 2 million staff across the country.



Members were paid to:

- Complete 10 research projects
- Deliver 20 consultancy projects
- Conduct 43 Quality Check inspections for the local authority



12 of our paid members benefitted from an intense training programme to help them become even more professional.



A highlight was working with Oxford University to study the local history of how people with learning disabilities lived before the advent of modern day social care.

“**Research is a great project to work on as I'm learning new skills and more knowledge and learning about different things like people and how they was treated in the past in secure hospitals.**”

Campaigns

Campaigners with a learning disability speak up and campaign on issues important to them and their community

1. We Can't Wait Campaign



We Can't Wait calls for people with a learning disability to be higher up on health care waiting lists.

What did we achieve?



Local MP, Layla Moran, after talking with MLMC campaigner Keith, raised this issue in the House of Commons.



We partnered with 5 other self-advocacy groups across the country to drive the campaign forward.

2. Don't Lock Us Away Campaign



Don't Lock Us Away demands that the Government close long-stay mental health hospitals and provides accessible housing for people with a learning disability in their communities.

What did we achieve?



Two campaigners gave evidence to the Joint Mental Health Select Committee at Westminster.

We protested in London about changes we want made to the new Mental Health Bill.



Money Report



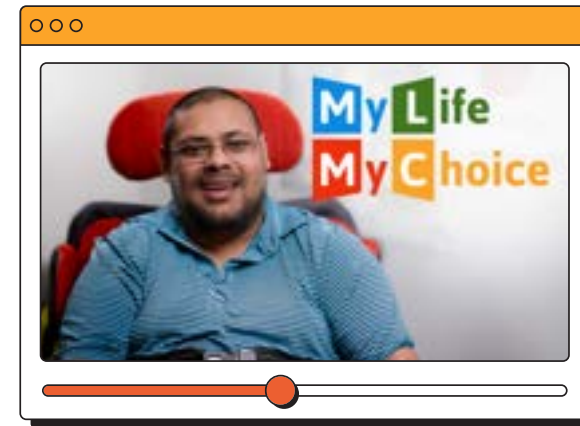
Lead Trustees, Mick and Lucy

Draft Accounts for 2024/25



Income: £603,397
Expenditure: £547,744
Surplus: £55,653
Reserves: £452,761

Watch the MLMC film!



SCAN HERE

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www.mylifemychoice.org.uk



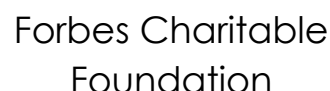
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THANK YOU!



A big thank you to all of our supporters and funders who helped to make 2024-25 such a great success!

A very big thank you also to:

A H Lynall Foundation, AMMCO Charitable Trust (CT), Astor Foundation, Austin & Hope CT, Baily Thomas Foundation, Bartlett Taylor CT, Belvedere Trust, Bouttell Bequest, Brett's Trust, Christopher Laing Foundation, Clifford Charity Oxford, Cotswold Primrose Trust, Cumber Family Trust, D R Fine CT, Douglas Arter Foundation, Faringdon United Charity, Fitton Trust, Grace Trust, Greensands CT, Grocer's Charity, Invesco Cares, Iron Bridge Trust, James Wise CT, Jim Cousins CT, Louis Nicholas Residuary CT, Magdalen College Trust, Michael Bishop Foundation, Mulberry Trust, Robert & Margaret Moss CT, RS Brownless CT, Sackler Trust, Simon's Charity, Steven Bloch Disability Charitable Trust, Tendril Trust, The 29th May 1961 CT, The Helianthus CT, Wallace Bell CT and Wilmcote Charitrust.

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