

# Our Year in Review



Annual Report (including  
the Directors' Report)  
and Accounts  
for the year ended  
31 March 2024

Charity registration number 1125719  
Company registration number 06654142 (England and Wales)



# Making a difference

"I didn't know which way to turn, the situation was unbearable but my advocate was totally calm and took a weight off me. He really listened and was able to put into words what I wanted to say."

**Advocacy client**

"It was very beneficial to have the assessment and report presented by one of your Quality Checkers who is living with a disability and was able to give us a first-hand perspective and insight into our practice."

**GP Practice Manager**



"The support from Your Voice Counts has helped me be more confident and I am travelling independently now to new places. I think YVC is a really good organisation. Everyone is different but we are all treated the same. There is always a quiet space to go to if you feel overwhelmed. It's given me somewhere new to go to make friends with disabilities and if I need help with anything in my life I know I can ask someone at YVC."

**Jodie, Volunteer and Lived Experience Coach**



"Since last year my life changed with all the help Your Voice Counts has given me. Before I moved house I wanted to end my life. With all the help from YVC I don't feel like that anymore. I am walking around with 'A GEET BIG SMILE AND MY HEAD HELD HIGH'. I wake up everyday and can't believe that this is my home. I don't feel scared to go to sleep or leave the house now. I can get on with my life and even have friends over."

**Barry, supported by the Communities team**

"Thanks to all the RPR's and admin supporting ongoing work. I really do appreciate the prompt emailed updates before visiting placements and I have been able to pick up on some of the issues / comments made about the person, the care being provided or other dynamics. Your team are generally involved when a person does not have anyone to visit and / or independently listen to them and therefore your efforts often go unrecognised."

**Social worker of a person supported by a Relevant Person's Representative advocate**



"You know what, without your help I don't think I would be here anymore, it's wonderful everything that you and YVC have done for me, the groups and everything."

**David, supported by the Communities team**



# Contents

Welcome from Christina Gates and David Taylor	4
Welcome from David Woolley	5
Structure, governance and management	6
Our Board	6
Objective and activities	8
Activities, achievements and performance	
• Communities team highlights	9
• Self-advocacy highlights	15
• Advocacy team highlights	16
• Operations, Finance and Business Development team highlights	20
Our year in numbers	22
Review of financial position	24
Fundraising activity	25
Plans for the future	26
Independent Auditor's Report	28
Financial statements	31

# Welcome from Christina Gates and David Taylor



On behalf of the Board of Your Voice Counts we'd like to say thank you to all of the staff, volunteers, partners, stakeholders and the people we support who have been part of our organisation and supported us over another busy and rewarding year.

Your Voice Counts is built on the principles of co-production and lived experience and our Board continues to lead from the front on this with Experts by Experience and Advocates by Experience working alongside each other and ensuring everyone has an equal say in how we make decisions.

We've seen some changes to our Board this year with a number of members coming to the end of their terms. Our Co-Chair Matthew also stood down this year and we're hugely grateful to him for the contribution he made to Your Voice Counts and wish him well for the future.

This year we were keen to develop more ways for people with lived experience of our services to contribute to our governance. Our new Board Reference Group is a fantastic example of this, allowing people to be involved in our decision-making without the commitment of being a Trustee and we're excited to see the impact of this as we move forward.

Co-production runs throughout the organisation and we're very pleased that this year we were able to create paid employment for 18 colleagues with lived experience. We also launched our dedicated Co-Production team to ensure our opportunities for people with lived experience span all of our services.

Being featured as an example of governance best practice in the NPC 'Centring lived experience in an organisation' guide was also a particular highlight for us, giving us the chance to showcase what we do and encourage others to think about how they can include people with lived experience in their own decision-making.

We're incredibly proud of the progress we've made this year. We've grown our existing services, introduced new ones and, above all, done this with people with lived experience at the front and centre of everything. Thank you to all who have supported us, we look forward to seeing what the next year brings.

**Christina Gates**  
Co-Chair

**David Taylor**  
Acting Co-Chair

# Welcome from David Woolley



It's a pleasure to introduce this annual report and reflect on another year of change, challenge and growth for Your Voice Counts.

The cost of living crisis has continued to have a significant impact on the people we support so it was important this year that we made a concerted effort to reach more people who could benefit from our help. It remains a challenging financial environment for charities and so we've looked for new and creative ways to have impact with the resource available to us. This has meant reaching out to other organisations and looking for opportunities to work together on shared challenges.

Our Communities team launched exciting new initiatives this year, including our first ever coaching project which uses an innovative model of training people with lived experience to be coaches for staff working in health and social care services. Our new Well Connected digital inclusion programme and Know Your Neighbourhood social skills project have also made a significant impact already, demonstrating the wide range of tailored services we offer to people with learning disabilities and autistic people.

Growing our advocacy service was a priority for us as we knew there would be opportunities to secure additional contracts and we've had significant success in this area this year. We were appointed as the statutory provider of advocacy services for Gateshead Council, and also took over the contract to provide Independent Care Act Advocacy services in South Tyneside, making us the main statutory provider in this area too. These are fantastic achievements and testament to the expertise and professionalism of our staff which I hope position us to achieve further growth in the years ahead.

At this point last year, we were getting ready to launch our brand new Co-Production team and I'm pleased to say the team is now in place and has hit the ground running. A key area of work for the team this year has been expanding our established co-production approaches across our advocacy service and I'm looking forward to seeing this progress.

Our role in the delivery of Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training across the health and social care system in our region is a source of great pride for me, not least because the training is co-delivered by people with learning disabilities and autistic people. This year we've worked closely with the North East and North Cumbria NHS Integrated Care Board to build capacity in the region to deliver this training at scale. Expert Trainers are at the heart of this, so we've ensured their experience is prioritised as the training is rolled out.

Internally, our People Plan has continued to drive how we develop as an employer with the launch of our accessible staff handbook a highlight of the year for me. This was co-produced with colleagues and has been well-received. We've also refreshed our approach to supervision and appraisal to allow more flexibility around the different conversations we want to have with our staff team throughout the year.

This has been another fantastic year for Your Voice Counts. We wanted to expand our offer and increase our reach and, as this report shows, we've done just that. As always I'm indebted to the staff members, Trustees, volunteers, partners, stakeholders and funders who make this all possible.

**David Woolley,**  
Chief Executive, Your Voice Counts

# STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

## Advisors

### Auditors:

Azets Audit Services,  
Bulman House,  
Regent Centre,  
Gosforth,  
Newcastle upon Tyne,  
NE3 3LS

## Main

### Bankers:

Lloyds Bank,  
17 Ellison Walk,  
Gateshead,  
NE8 1BF

## Savings:

Hampshire Trust Bank,  
55 Bishopsgate, London,  
EC2N 3AS

Aldermore Savings, 1st Floor,  
Block B, Western House,  
Lynch Wood, Peterborough  
PE2 6FZ

Redwood Bank  
The Nexus Building, Broadway,  
Letchworth Garden City,  
Hertfordshire, SG6 3TA

## Our Board

Your Voice Counts is a registered charity and limited company governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association. Our Governance Handbook sets out how we ensure our governance is effective and inclusive.

### Our Articles

Our Articles set out that at least 50% of our Board need to have lived experience of our services, which includes family carers of people who have used our services. We call the Directors with lived experience of our services Experts by Experience. We call Directors who don't have experience of our services Advocates by Experience.

Our Articles also set out that we should have a Chair and Co-Chair and that one should be someone with a learning disability and the other someone without a learning disability.

## Our Directors

Our Directors serve for a term of four years and are eligible for re-appointment by the Directors. There are no restrictions on the number of terms a Director can serve.

There are arrangements for induction, training and support of Board members, which are reviewed by our Operations Committee. Each new Board member is given an induction pack and attends an induction session with the executive team and meets the Chair. The Operations Committee reviews the training needs of the Board members and arranges training as required.

Our Co-Chairs hold an annual appraisal of the Board and of individual Directors to ensure that the skills and time provided by Directors are used to best effect. Additionally, Board skills are kept under review to inform Board member recruitment, engagement and support.

## Board meetings

Our Board meets six times a year. Our Experts by Experience also hold a pre-meeting before each Board meeting to give them additional time to prepare for the meeting. Our Experts by Experience and Advocates by Experience meet separately six times a year in order to explore themes and key subject areas in more detail.

The Board holds an annual plan which includes:

- Agreeing the operating budget
- Reviewing monthly management accounts
- Reviewing the organisation's strategic priorities
- Monitoring performance within agreed targets
- Considering risk and ways to mitigate these risks
- Considering strategic issues; and
- Receiving reports and minutes from our sub-committees.

A sub-committee is also appointed to scrutinise finances throughout the year.

## Directors during 2023/2024

Directors who served during the year up to the date of signing the financial statements were:

	APPOINTMENT DATE	RESIGNATION DATE
Matthew Bailey	16/02/2023	21/04/2024
Preddi Bononge	16/02/2023	N/A
Rebekah Coombes	19/08/2021	N/A
Jessica Fielding	16/02/2023	N/A
Christina Gates	15/08/2019	N/A
Matthew Ife	18/01/2018	N/A
Andrew Lane	17/12/2020	20/06/2024
Sophie Swanston-Newbrook	20/10/2022	15/07/2024
Derek Peters	19/08/2014	03/04/2024
Tom Relph	13/03/2018	N/A
David Taylor	17/06/2015	N/A

# OBJECTIVE AND ACTIVITIES

## About Your Voice Counts

Your Voice Counts is a registered charitable company limited by guarantee. The charity's object is to relieve the need or disability of persons, particularly those suffering impairment of their learning abilities.

## What does Your Voice Counts do?

Your Voice Counts is a charity that exists to support people to speak up for their rights and take positive steps to fulfil their potential. We offer independent advocacy services as well as a range of advice, development and community services tailored to the needs of different groups of people. Our services are delivered by our advocacy and communities teams, working with older people, people with learning disabilities, autistic people and people who are at risk of exclusion due to disability or illnesses such as dementia, cognitive impairments and mental health problems.

We achieve our object, or our aims, by focusing on our mission to help people to be connected, to have choice and control in their lives, and to speak up for what they want and need. We believe in listening to and empowering people with different needs and abilities to bring about positive change. To do this, we work with our partners to design and deliver learning, personal development and social opportunities for people with learning disabilities and autistic people, and promote and support self-advocacy and user-led groups that are run by adults with learning disabilities.

We are also a statutory provider of mental health and learning disability advocacy services for people living in Newcastle upon Tyne, Gateshead and South Tyneside.

## How do we decide what services to offer?

We have a five-year organisational strategy that has been approved by our Board of Directors. This strategy guides our work and ensures all of our activities work towards at least one of our six priority areas:

1. Design services that make a difference to people
2. Learn from what we're doing so that we get better at helping people
3. Improve how the Board works
4. Help our staff and volunteers be great at their jobs
5. Ensure the organisation is financially resilient
6. Make sure people know who we are, what we do and the difference we make to the people we support.

Our strategy also sets out our commitment to ensuring the voices of lived experience underpin all of our work, and we're proud to co-produce and co-deliver our services with people with learning disabilities, autistic people and people who have experienced mental ill health.

## Public Benefit

In shaping our objectives for the year and planning our activities, the Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, including the guidance 'Public benefit: running a charity (PB2)'. Our main activities and the people we aim to support are described in this report. All of our charitable activities focus on supporting vulnerable people - particularly those with learning disabilities and are undertaken to further our charitable purposes for the public benefit.



# Communities team highlights

## Tackling health inequalities

People with learning disabilities often have poorer health outcomes and lower life expectancy than the rest of the population so we have continued to develop services that help people to understand and look after their health and wellbeing.

This year we've delivered:

- Campaigns where colleagues shared their own lived experiences to raise awareness of issues such as stammering, menopause and feeding tubes
- Targeted activities to tackle specific areas of need by, for example, organising a Movember challenge and 60K movement challenge to promote men's health
- Activities such as a seaside walk during National Walking Month to help people connect and take part in exercise
- Deaf Awareness Week activities and sign language taster sessions
- Type 2 Diabetes training and support where we've held awareness-raising sessions and enabled people with learning disabilities to run their own peer support groups
- Quality checks on four different GP surgeries to help practices understand how accessible they are for people with learning disabilities.



This year we coordinated Care and Treatment Reviews (CTRs) and held panel meetings for 22 people. CTRs ensure care for people in the community or in mental health hospitals is given in the least restrictive way.

This year we supported:

**7**  
community  
CTRs

**2**  
community C(E)TRs  
(Care (Education) and  
Treatment Reviews)

**13**  
in-patient  
CTRs

"Thank you to Ross, you are inspirational. It's my first CTR and I've learnt a lot."

OT in Hopewood Park hospital

## Health and Wellbeing Facilitator team

Our Health and Wellbeing Facilitator team provides a specialist service for people in South Tyneside to help them engage with health services and take positive steps to manage their health. This includes 1 to 1 support as well as delivering accessible health education that supports South Tyneside's vital health pathways that include vaccinations, diabetes, smoking cessation, cancer screening, weight management and mental health support.



Our health education sessions are designed to meet the specific needs of people with learning disabilities to create a friendly and supportive environment.

"Connor was amazing, the delivery was simple and was at a good pace for us to take in the information. I enjoyed learning about the different ways stress can be managed." **Stress bucket session participant**

# ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

## Helping people stay well

<b>22</b> people supported to get annual health check	<b>17</b> people received help to complete their hospital passport	<b>72</b> health appointments made with our help	<b>3</b> people booked their own appointments following our support
<b>50</b> people accompanied to appointments	<b>9</b> people received weight management support	<b>4</b> people supported with smoking cessation	<b>15</b> participants in Dry January mocktail class
<b>20</b> pieces of Easy Read health info created	<b>19</b> health awareness sessions delivered	<b>2</b> people supported with cancer screening appointments	<b>233</b> interventions in total

## Helping people access vaccinations



**1** pop up Covid and flu jab clinic at our weekly drop-in group



**11** people contacted to offer support to get flu jabs



**12** people supported to Covid booster appointment

## Helping people manage their money

Our Financial Health team continued to provide casework and training to help people with learning disabilities become more financially resilient and address specific financial issues they face. Our service is delivered with a specialist case worker and peer support worker and includes helping with benefits applications and appeals, budgeting tools, managing debt and understanding bills and housing costs.



1 to 1 support delivered this year:



**31** people in Gateshead



**41** people in South Tyneside



**72** people in total

SUPPORT PROVIDED	NUMBER OF INTERVENTIONS
Benefit appeals, reviews, queries and support	63
Budgeting exercises	17
Debt issues	9
General bills support	11
Housing issues including Housing Benefit and rent arrears	5
JobCentre Plus appointments	3
PIP and Capability for Work claims, assessment meetings, appeals, tribunals and support	32
Universal Credit claims	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>144</b>

We've delivered eleven educational sessions over the year as well as a Community Voice benefits session in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions. 22 people have attended our sessions which were tailored to issues relevant to the people we support, including energy costs, savings and mate crime and financial abuse.

"I found it helpful – especially talking about lending money to friends and who to trust. I had a friend about four years ago who took my bank card from me and started using it and ran up debts."



## Developing skills, confidence and connections

### Drop-in sessions

Our popular weekly drop-in sessions in Boldon, Gateshead and Jarrow are a vital part of our South Tyneside Enabler project funded by South Tyneside Council and our Gateshead Enabler work that is funded by the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board.

The sessions provide opportunities for people with learning disabilities and autistic people to connect, develop friendships and take part in activities while also providing a space where our community connectors and peer support workers can engage with people around the How Am I Doing framework, identify issues and plan how further support can be accessed.

The sessions are informal so people can chat, ask questions and enjoy snacks in a relaxed environment, but we also include structured activities such as arts and crafts and talks from other organisations so people can learn new skills and access information and services relevant to them.

This year we also arranged specific activities to respond to needs within the groups, such as a special grief awareness session due to a number of people disclosing they were struggling following a bereavement.

We also work with our Community Voice team to help people organise activities and events so they can develop their confidence around visiting new places, with Beamish Museum, The Hoppings and South Shields just some of the trips we've organised this year.

### People supported by Enabler projects



Gateshead:  
**56**



South Tyneside:  
**104**



### Cooking with Confidence

With funding from Persimmons Homes, Heart Research UK and the Oliver Ford Foundation, our Cooking with Confidence programme has continued to be popular this year. We run fortnightly sessions which are supported by a community connector and designed to help people develop skills and confidence to cook healthy meals independently. This year we had 50 regular attendees at our sessions where we focussed on healthy eating and cooking on a budget.

We bought several air fryers to introduce people to different cooking methods and implemented a new assessment tool to help us develop our offer and recognise progression.

**"It helped me change my lifestyle and get more active. It helped me lose weight and feel better about myself. I also enjoyed trying new foods that I eat all the time now."**

# ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

## The YVC Young People's Club

Young autistic people and people with learning disabilities can be at an increased risk of loneliness and social isolation so we were pleased to launch our young people's club, supported by the Morrisons Foundation, to provide opportunities for young people to get together and build their skills and confidence.

In addition to organised trips to take part in activities such as bowling and watersports, the group also meets every Monday evening supported by our community connectors and Health and Wellbeing team with regular guest presentations from organisations such as Northumbria Police and Foundation of Light. These sessions include access to a sports hall where the young people play sports and this year we were pleased to see a significant increase in teamwork, problem solving, socialisation, mental health and physical fitness among the group members.



### Evaluating the impact of the group

- **100%** said their feelings of isolation were reduced
- **89%** felt their physical health and wellbeing improved
- **78%** noted improved confidence and motivation
- **78%** said coming to the group helped them learn new skills



**19 people aged 18 to 25  
in our young people's group**

## Know Your Neighbourhood

In September we launched our Know Your Neighbourhood project to tackle social isolation among people with learning disabilities and autistic people.

Funded by the South Tyneside Know Your Neighbourhood Fund at Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland, we designed the project to help people develop their skills and confidence around how to plan and take part in social activities with peers. Volunteers are at the heart of this project, with people with learning disabilities and

autistic people supported to take a proactive role in organising activities and running special interest groups such as our photography club, cinema group and women's wellbeing group.

We also delivered a range of sessions to help people prepare for taking part in social activities, covering topics such as using public transport and mate crime as well as arranging a 'Friendkit' session from Friends Action North East.



**18 beneficiaries**



**11 volunteers**



## Community Voice

We have continued to deliver our Community Voice project funded by the National Lottery Community Fund that we've worked on in partnership with Sense-Ability Matters and Bliss-Ability.

The project is aimed at people who have learning disabilities, autistic people and people who are at risk of exclusion due to disability, sight loss or who are Deaf or hard of hearing and throughout the year we organised regular sessions to give people the chance to get together and develop their skills and experience.

49 people have participated in the project this year supported by 13 volunteers, who have taken part in a varied programme of information, advice and guidance sessions and social activities such as cinema visits, all designed to support the project's aims to combat social isolation and improve mental health and wellbeing.

**"I enjoyed doing something different as would have spent the day in the house. Nice safe atmosphere, found it relaxing, would do it again."**



**49**  
participants



**13**  
volunteers



**64**  
sessions delivered

## Well Connected

We were pleased to launch our Well Connected project this year to help people develop their digital skills and confidence. Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, this is a partnership between YVC, Age UK Gateshead and Sense-Ability Matters and led by ACTS that is designed to help the people we work with in Gateshead and South Tyneside use technology to reduce social isolation and manage their day to day lives more effectively.

To deliver the project, we developed a digital skills assessment tool and completed this with 63 people so we could understand their specific needs and provide tailored support and training. Online banking, DBS applications, passport renewals, using WhatsApp and staying safe online were some of the most common issues, so we arranged group and 1 to 1 support sessions to provide advice and support to help people develop their skills in these areas.



### Helping Mel use IT to manage day to day life

Mel had a tablet and a mobile phone but was struggling to use her mobile efficiently as she didn't know how to update it, remove notifications or synchronise her emails. With our support, she's learned how to update and secure her devices and now uses online banking and her phone calendar to help her manage her day to day life.

**"I think Your Voice counts is good, the people there are nice, and the staff are really friendly".**

# ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

## The power of lived experience

### Coaching health and social care colleagues in South Tyneside

This year we launched our new coaching project to train people with lived experience of learning disabilities and autistic people to be coaches for people working in the health and social care sector in South Tyneside.

Funded by the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board in South Tyneside, this project directly supports South Tyneside's Learning Disability Alliance strategy that ensures the voices and views of people with learning disabilities are at the centre of how services are planned and delivered in the area. To support this, we've co-produced an accessible training programme with help from Yes We Can Coaching. This programme trains people with learning disabilities and/or autism to provide coaching to professionals then matches coaches to staff so they can take part in three coaching sessions together. We've recruited six coaches to be part of the project and are excited to develop this innovative model of coaching and service improvement.

### Working in the Communities team with lived experience

We're delighted that this year the number of colleagues with lived experience of learning disabilities, autism or mental ill health working in the Your Voice Counts Communities team is 18 people working across 22 different roles.

People with lived experience bring amazing skills and insight to our organisation and work in a range of jobs from peer support roles to commissioning to research and we're incredibly proud of the commitment our team has made to employing and supporting lived experience colleagues to achieve their potential and make such a positive contribution to our organisation.



Chloe, Equal People Peer Support Worker

### Equal People

"Equal People is a group that aims to collect the views and opinions of people who have a learning disability and/or are autistic and allows people to give their input on how services should be run. The group also gives people information on services in their local area that they can access.

"My role as a Peer Support Worker is to facilitate the conversation and to organise inviting individuals and organisations to come into our space and talk to and get the input of people who use our services.

"We've had some big achievements this year. Our South Tyneside group were involved in developing an Easy Read safeguarding leaflet for South Tyneside Council, helping to develop the wording, select photos and decide what types of abuse people with learning disabilities need to be aware of. In Gateshead, we had input into the Our Gateshead website where, over a number of months, Mark from Our Gateshead joined our meetings to get feedback on the layout and content of the website.

"Our groups meet every month and new members are always welcome. Visit [www.yvc.org.uk](http://www.yvc.org.uk) for more details."

**Chloe Douds, Peer Support Worker**

## 23 Equal People members



**Gateshead:**  
10 people



**South Tyneside:**  
13 people

### Shaun Armour, Commissioning Officer with Lived Experience

"I work at Your Voice Counts as Commissioning Officer for the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board in South Tyneside - it's a very long job title and it took a lot of practicing to remember it all! I am the lead for the Voice of the Person group and I am involved in developing a pathway for people with learning disabilities and autistic people that is easier to access. I am there because I can bring a different view to the strategic discussions and bring it back to the fact there is a person at the centre of these services. I use my lived experience to help improve services and the experience of people using them.

"I also play a lead role in the delivery of Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training in the region. I deliver training to health and social care professionals and offer my ideas about accessible ways to engage with people with learning disabilities. This might involve making sure information is accessible and engaging people in a fun way.



Shaun Armour

"I like that my lived experience is valued and that I have been able to have work experience like this. The things I do feel quite important and will make people's lives better."

## Roles for colleagues with lived experience

<b>1</b> Commissioning Officer	<b>9</b> Peer Support Workers	<b>4</b> Project Workers	<b>5</b> Quality Checkers	<b>2</b> Care and Treatment Review Experts by Experience	<b>1</b> Financial Health Support Worker

# Self-advocacy highlights



**Your Voice Counts believes in supporting and connecting people to be advocates for themselves so they can share their views and speak up for what they want and need.**

**We are proud to support the Speaking Up Together self-advocacy group and work closely with the members of the group to help make sure their voices are heard within our organisation and beyond.**



Newcastle Cathedral History Project in Action.

## Here are some of their highlights from this year.

"It has been another busy year for Speaking Up Together, a small group of committed self-advocates and supporters.

We pride ourselves on our peer led projects, campaigning and partnership working. We have continued to work with our partners on new, interesting initiatives and are actively involved and committed to We Are Human Too, campaigning for the rights of patients in secure hospitals.

Our Equality Matters Project came to an end and made way for our current, exciting local history project: Access: Newcastle Cathedral. As with other projects, it is peer lead. Members develop accessible workshops which include creative activities, to teach about fascinating aspects of the cathedral and its links to our local history. It has been wonderful to welcome new members and a pleasure to work in partnership with the Cathedral's Lantern Initiative.

We like to regularly get together at local art and culture venues such as the Baltic Art Gallery, museums and parks and support theatre companies including Twisting Ducks, Lawn Mowers and Alphabetti Theatre.

This year we have been working towards our application to the Charities Commission and have developed accessible safeguarding training which we have been able to share with others outside our organisation.

We continue to provide our Easy Read review service for Inspired Services and we are grateful for the management support we continue to receive from Your Voice Counts."

**Gary and Terri, Co-Chairs of Speaking Up Together**

## Find out more

If you're interested in finding out more or joining Speaking Up Together please email [joanne.speakinguptogether@gmail.com](mailto:joanne.speakinguptogether@gmail.com) or visit [www.facebook.com/speakinguptogether](https://www.facebook.com/speakinguptogether).

## ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

# Our advocacy services



### Expanding our services

We have set ambitious aims for the growth and development of our advocacy services and are pleased to have secured two significant contracts this year that further establish our role as a key provider of statutory advocacy services across our region.

In June 2023, we were appointed as the statutory provider for the Gateshead local authority area. This appointment entrusts us with the responsibility of delivering advocacy services under the Mental Health Act, the Mental Capacity Act, the Care Act and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards legislation, in addition to the NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy service that we have been providing since 2022.

We were also delighted to be awarded the contract to provide Independent Care Act Advocacy services in South Tyneside from March 2024. This new contract complements the existing statutory services we deliver in this area and makes us the primary provider for this local authority.

### Raising the profile of advocacy

The theme of this year's Advocacy Awareness Week was 'What is advocacy?' which we embraced by creating a photo series to illustrate that advocacy matters and happens everywhere, not just behind a desk or phone. Throughout the week we shared snapshots of our advocates' caseloads, demonstrating the variety of issues we're involved in, the practicalities of how we deliver our service and, most importantly, the impact we have on the people we support. The series was featured on our website and social media channels as well being published by the National Development Team for Inclusion.

The National Advocacy Conference also took place in Birmingham during Advocacy Awareness Week with five members of our team travelling to share best practice and hear from other advocates working across the country.

To mark Safeguarding Adults Week in November, we were pleased to share some examples from our advocates that show the role advocacy plays in safeguarding processes and attended events organised by our local safeguarding boards to deliver presentations and share and learn with others.



### Advocacy Awareness Week photo series Tuesday – Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle City Centre

"I'm on a visit this morning to the RVI hospital to meet with Irene and her consultant. Irene was admitted for tests that suggest cancer and a decision regarding surgery needs to be made. However, Irene has been assessed as unable to make this decision for herself and doesn't have any family or close friends available to assist in making the decision so this is where I step in.

"I'm here as an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) to make sure that the principles of the Mental Capacity Act are followed and that Irene's wishes, feelings and beliefs are taken into account when making a decision about her treatment."





## Care Act Advocacy

This year we've had the privilege of providing Care Act Advocacy across Newcastle and Gateshead, making a real difference in the lives of those who need support with Care Act processes. We played a crucial role in almost 170 Care Act processes, ensuring that each individual was fully involved in key decisions such as:

- Local authority assessments
- Care reviews
- Care and support planning
- Safeguarding processes
- Carer's assessments.



**195 people**  
supported

## Care Act Advocacy



**1,994**  
hours  
of advocacy



**170 Care Act**  
processes  
supported

## South Tyneside Community Case Advocacy for people with a learning disability

This service helps people facing a wide range of challenges, including accessing essential services, securing housing and preventing eviction, navigating complex benefits systems, and managing debt.

A key aspect of our work is building strong, trusting relationships with the people we support, allowing us to empower individuals towards self-help whenever possible and helping people move forward with confidence and positivity.

**"It was a pleasure to work with Denise. She has been excellent at connecting with the young woman we worked with. Denise really helped build her confidence and make decisions. Because of Denise, this young woman is taking steps forward with her life in a positive way."**

## Community case advocacy



**55 people**  
supported



**553**  
hours  
of advocacy

## An advocate's view from South Tyneside

"A significant milestone for us this year was being appointed as the statutory provider of Care Act advocacy for South Tyneside.

"I'm also particularly pleased with the bespoke case advocacy services we've provided, especially our tailored support for individuals with learning disabilities and autistic people, as well as the general advocacy we've offered to those with physical disabilities, mental health issues, and parents with learning disabilities navigating the child protection system.

"We've faced some challenges, particularly in raising awareness of our services and increasing referral rates for IMCA and Care Act referrals, which have been lower than expected. To address this, we're planning to enhance our referral processes, strengthen our relationships, and expand our Voice for Families service in South Tyneside."



Helen, Senior  
Advocate in South  
Tyneside

## Activities, achievements and performance

### Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA)

This year our IMCA services in Newcastle, Gateshead and South Tyneside worked with over 440 people who lacked the capacity to make important decisions about their lives, supporting:

- 33 care reviews
- 148 changes of accommodation
- 69 safeguarding cases
- 77 serious medical treatment decisions.

IMCAs play a crucial role in protecting the rights of people who cannot make certain decisions for themselves. They ensure that the individual's best interests are prioritised, helping them understand their options, participate in decisions, and ensuring that these decisions are made with fairness and transparency. Whether it's guiding care reviews, assisting with accommodation changes, or advocating during serious medical treatments, our IMCAs make sure that the voices of those who might otherwise go unheard are represented.

### Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy



**443 people**  
supported



**3,701**  
hours  
of advocacy

### Relevant Person's Representative Service (RPR)

RPRs are essential in safeguarding the rights of people who are subject to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). This year, our RPR advocates in Newcastle, Gateshead and South Tyneside played a critical role in supporting 1,351 individuals who were deprived of their liberty.

Our primary role is to ensure that the individual's liberty is only restricted when absolutely necessary and in their best interests, and advocates regularly visit the people they support to monitor the conditions of their care and advocate on their behalf. They also assist in challenging decisions and, if necessary, support appeals to the Court of Protection.

### Relevant Person's Representative Service



**815 new**  
referrals to  
our service



**1,351 people**  
supported  
in total



**10,697**  
hours  
of advocacy

### NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy (NHS ICA)

Our NHS ICA service in Gateshead plays a vital role in helping people navigate the often complex and challenging NHS complaints system. Advocates help people understand their rights, gather relevant information and articulate their concerns clearly when making a complaint about an NHS service they have received.

In addition to direct support, we also provide self-help resources and tools on our website and self-help information packs for people who prefer to manage their complaint independently.

Of the cases closed during this period, over 90% of people achieved two or more of their stated desired outcomes, demonstrating the effectiveness of our advocacy.

**"The advocate explained everything. He was the voice of reason. He pushed for information, and I got the report."**

### NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy



**58 people**  
supported



**507**  
hours  
of advocacy



Terri, Senior Advocate  
in Gateshead

### An advocate's view from Gateshead

"This year we were thrilled to secure the contract to provide statutory advocacy services in Gateshead—a fantastic achievement for both our team and the community we serve.

"We're fortunate to have established strong working relationships, not only within our team but also with the diverse stakeholders and partners we collaborate with. Looking ahead, we're excited to further deepen our relationship with Gateshead Council and raise the profile of our services in the area.

"We're also committed to involving volunteers and our co-production team more closely in our work. Volunteers bring valuable perspectives and energy, enhancing the support we provide, while our co-production team plays a crucial role in shaping our services to better meet the needs of the community. Together, we look forward to continuing to grow and make a positive impact across our advocacy services."

## Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)

Our IMHA services have had a significant impact this year, supporting 455 people across Newcastle, Gateshead and South Tyneside. This service plays a crucial role in supporting the rights of people detained under the Mental Health Act.

This work is central to empowering individuals, helping them navigate complex mental health systems, and ensuring that their voices are heard and respected throughout their journey. Our IMHAs are committed to providing compassionate, knowledgeable support, making a real difference in the lives of those they work with.

**"I just wanted to say thank you so much for your help. It made such a difference having you involved with discharge planning."**

## Independent Mental Health Advocacy



**455 people**  
supported



**4,394**  
hours  
of advocacy

## Voice for Families

This year our Voice for Families project made a profound impact by supporting parents with learning disabilities who are navigating the complexities of child protection. Our dedicated advocates have been at the forefront, ensuring that these parents' voices are heard and their needs are prioritised during some of the most challenging times in their lives.

We've been right there with parents, making over 120 contacts with social services to ensure their concerns are addressed and understood. Our advocates have actively participated in more than 50 critical meetings, 100 legal meetings and connected directly with families nearly 300 times.

We've helped parents through important assessments—like parenting and independent living evaluations—to make sure they're linked to the right services and resources.

The Voice for Families project has been a vital lifeline for parents with learning disabilities going through child protection, reflecting our deep commitment to helping families not just survive, but thrive. We're incredibly proud of the impact we've made and look forward to continuing this crucial work in the coming year.

## Voice for Families



**24 parents**  
supported



**699**  
hours  
of advocacy

## An advocate's view from Newcastle

"This year we were delighted to have our statutory advocacy contract for Newcastle renewed—a testament to the hard work of our team and a positive development for our community.

"Our Newcastle advocacy team is highly dedicated, with each member bringing unique specialisms to the table. We pride ourselves on the strong relationships we've built with professionals across various sectors, all with the shared goal of achieving the best outcomes for those we support.

"One of my key commitments is to continually expand the skills and qualifications of our advocates. We're excited about the opportunities ahead to strengthen partnerships with other organisations in Newcastle and to raise awareness of our services within the community.

"The main challenge we face in Newcastle is meeting the high demand for advocacy support. Our focus is on ensuring that advocacy is provided where and when it's needed most. To achieve this, we're working closely with our co-production team to find ways to be both effective and efficient, and planning to recruit more advocates to help us meet these growing needs."



Gillian, Senior  
Advocate in  
Newcastle

## ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

# Operations, Finance and Business Development team highlights

Our team of operations, finance and business development colleagues works behind the scenes to keep everything running smoothly and ensure we have the right processes and people in place to work towards our business objectives.

### Our People

This year our People Plan has continued to guide how we develop and improve as an employer so we can make Your Voice Counts an even better place to work.

Many of our staff have taken advantage of the increased range of benefits we have introduced, such as pension salary sacrifice and travel pass schemes, and we continue to be a Real Living Wage employer. We were also pleased to be able to implement the increase in the Real Living Wage early again this year to help our lowest paid staff cope with the challenges they face.

**Lived experience is at the heart of Your Voice Counts and we're proud that this year we have 18 staff members with lived experience in paid employment with us.**



We launched our accessible staff handbook in September which was co-produced with our lived experience colleagues. The handbook is designed in an Easy Read format so it's easy for people with learning disabilities to understand, and also includes links to short videos that provide the information in an alternative format for people who would rather watch a video. Staff told us:

- "I think it's brilliant"
- "The videos are really well done explaining everything"
- "It's to the point and easy to follow"
- "I liked the lack of jargon"



### Board and Governance

We were sad to say goodbye to some great Trustees this year. Derek Peters, Andrew Lane, Matthew Bailey and Sophie Swanson-Newbrook all moved on to new opportunities and we miss their contributions. However, we are excited about the possibilities to bring new skills to the Board that this opens up and we continue to recruit new Trustees, both with lived experience and those who bring other skills to our team. We are also excited that we have recruited an Executive Assistant this year to help our Board members be even more effective in their roles.

## Volunteering

Our Volunteer Coordinator Ann has continued to recruit and support volunteers who have worked in a range of different roles this year.

25 new volunteers recruited during April 2023 – March 2024



**12 volunteers**  
with lived  
experience

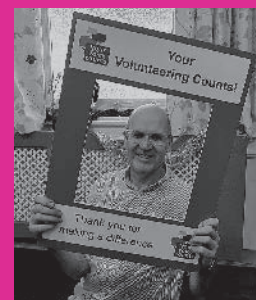


**13 volunteers**  
without lived  
experience.

## Thanking our volunteers

We took the opportunity to celebrate and thank our volunteers as part of International Volunteer Day in December and Volunteers Week in June. We presented certificates of recognition to all of our volunteers in June, and also held a special drop in event for volunteers to meet up with people interested in volunteering.

Our team of volunteers helps us to reach more people who need our support. In return, they benefit from valuable and rewarding work experience, training and development opportunities and mentoring and support from our staff team and we're grateful to everyone involved in making volunteering at Your Voice Counts such a positive experience.



Edwina and Kathy.

### Volunteering in our advocacy service

Our advocacy volunteer programme tackles loneliness and isolation among the people we support who live in residential care settings.

Edwina had over 30 years' experience of health and social care when she brought her expertise and passion to our team as a volunteer advocate and

has since become a familiar face at Cestria Care Home in Newcastle, where she regularly spends time with residents making sure they feel connected and heard.

Edwina goes the extra mile—literally—by taking residents out for walks, helping them stay active, enjoy the community, and get some much-needed fresh air.

Edwina said: "It's incredibly rewarding to be that outside person who checks in, makes sure residents are happy, and addresses any issues they might have. Building relationships with the staff has been fantastic too—they've become so comfortable discussing any concerns with me."

Kathy Burns, the Care Home Manager, agrees: "The residents absolutely love it. Seeing new faces and having different interactions really lifts their spirits. Plus, it's a great support for our staff as well"

Edwina's involvement is a shining example of the positive impact our volunteers can have—bringing warmth, support and a fresh perspective to the lives of some of the people we support.

### Case study: "Volunteering here has been a rewarding experience filled with learning, growth, and meaningful connections"

Aishat worked with us as an admin volunteer this year, providing us with much needed support while she completed her studies at the University of Sunderland. Aishat was invaluable in supporting the volunteer administration process, helping us to recruit and onboard volunteers as well as carrying out general admin duties.

"As my time at Your Voice Counts comes to an end, I find myself reflecting on the incredible journey I've had over the past year as part of their dedicated admin team.

"Volunteering here has been more than just a commitment; it has been a rewarding experience filled with learning, growth, and meaningful connections. Working alongside such a passionate and dedicated group of individuals has been a privilege. Thank you for the learning opportunities. The memories and experiences will stay with me, and I leave with a heart full of gratitude."



# Our year in numbers

## Communities:

**201**

people supported  
in total

↑ up 2% from  
2022/23



**144**

financial wellbeing  
interventions

↑ up 5% from  
2022/23



**257**

health  
interventions

## Advocacy:

**1,581**

people  
supported  
in total

↑ up 89% from  
2022/23



**22,545**

hours spent  
providing  
advocacy

↑ up 56% from  
2022/23



**2**

significant new contracts  
secured in addition to  
existing provision

## Community fundraising:

**£1910.81**

**8**

Great North Run entrants





Our team:



18

members of staff with lived experience

23

new volunteers recruited

5

volunteers moved onto paid employment

Our finances:



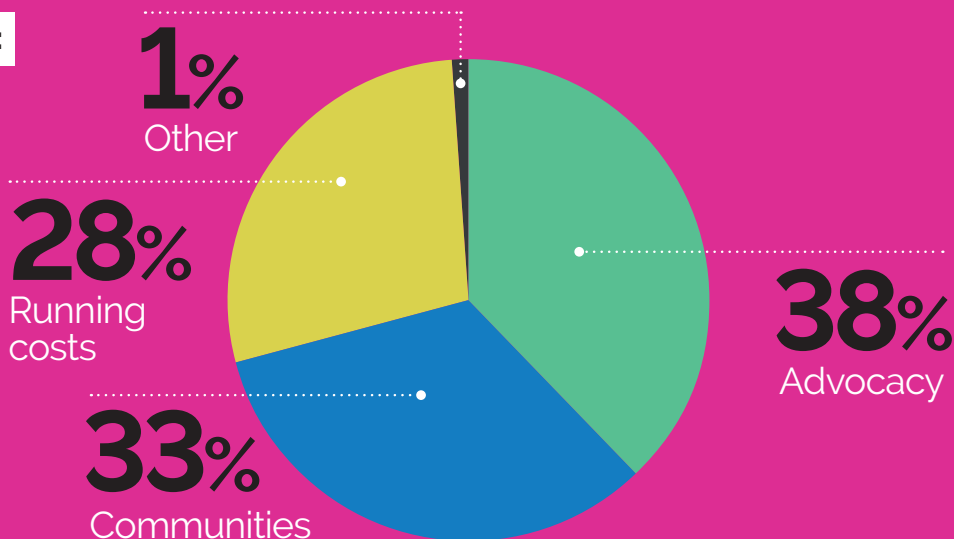
£1,489,712

Income

£1,628,781

Expenditure

How we spent it:



# REVIEW OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Your Voice Counts aims to maintain a robust financial position in the face of continuing economic uncertainty in order to continue delivering much needed services to the people we support.

The charity receives most of its funding from statutory sources and grants from foundations and charitable trusts. Our internal structure comprises Advocacy, Communities and Operations and is aligned to our funding sources. We seek to recover our full costs from all projects.

This year, we have been pleased to continue to benefit from contract and services income and from the generosity of grant funders, allowing us to continue to grow our income despite the challenging economic environment: £1,489,712 (2023: £1,417,746).

This year we are reporting an in-year planned deficit of £139,069 (2023 surplus: £130,104) as we spend down our restricted reserves for the benefit of our clients. This leaves us with overall reserves of £575,235 (2023: £714,304). Trustees take a forward-looking and proactive approach to financial management and so have again taken the decision to designate funds this year. These funds are for projects we are undertaking over the next two years to improve the infrastructure and capacity of the organisation for the benefit of our clients. The areas we are investing in are:

We are extremely grateful to our existing funders, including Henry Smith Foundation and the Charity of Sir Richard Whittington, and our new funders who have supported us this year: The Lottery and Access to Justice Foundation, Charities Aid Foundation, Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland, Sir James Knott, Barbour, and Bernicia Community Fund. We have continued to control our costs and are reporting expenditure of £1,628,781 (2023: £1,287,642).

Trustees continue to monitor financial controls, performance and stewardship via a bi-monthly Finance Committee. Review of treasury and investment management and review of business development remain standing agenda items and we have continued to invest in our Business Development function in order to meet the challenges that lie ahead.



We hold between three and six months necessary operating expenses as a minimum reserve. Based on the accounts for the year to 31 March 2024, three months would equate to £248,225 and six months to £496,450. Our free reserves (unrestricted funds not invested in tangible fixed assets) stand at £277,747 (2023: £275,951). Our reserves policy is reviewed annually by the Finance Committee.



# FUNDRAISING ACTIVITY



Your Voice Counts takes a proactive and structured approach to fundraising and complies with 'Charity fundraising: a guide to trustee duties (CC20)'. A fundraising strategy is in place and is updated each year and reviewed by Trustees. A donations policy is also in place. These were developed using Charity Commission, Fundraising Regulator and Institute of Fundraising guidance.

Your Voice Counts undertakes minimal public fundraising as most of our funding comes from statutory sources and grant funders. The charity does not use a professional fundraiser. The charity has a Business Development function which is managed by the Head of Finance. Fundraising is a standing agenda item on the Finance Committee and this sub-committee of the Board scrutinises all fundraising activity.

The charity regularly seeks input and advice from Experts by Experience and Advocates by Experience, including those on the Board, on the impacts of all its activities, including fundraising, on vulnerable people and no issues with its fundraising activity have been raised.

This year, a two year grant from Charities Aid Foundation's Keystone Fund has enabled us to create a co-production team. With lived experience of health inequalities, this team is focused on strengthening our user voice activity, engaging with the communities we serve to better understand the issues they are facing and to co-design solutions together with commissioners and other key decision makers.

We were also delighted to be one of the few organisations nationally to receive a five year Improving Lives Through Advice (ILTA) grant. Delivered by The Access to Justice Foundation and The National Lottery Community Fund, ILTA has been established to support the delivery of free legal advice to marginalised people and communities across England. The grant will enable us to develop our specialist social welfare legal advice services and to strengthen our influencing, partnership and fundraising work.

## Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The trustees have reviewed and considered relevant information, including the annual budget and future cash flows in making their assessment. Based on these assessments, the trustees have concluded that they can continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the annual report and accounts.



# PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

We're currently coming to the end of our current five year business strategy, so in the year ahead we'll be reflecting on our achievements and speaking to the people we support, our staff and other stakeholders about what we want to achieve over the next five years. We'll dedicate significant time and effort to this, with a focus on our strengths and opportunities as well as areas of challenge.

## Innovation and collaboration

The economic environment continues to pose significant challenges in our sector so our focus, as always, will be on using the resources available to us to ensure the best possible impact for the people we support. We will look at how we can use technology to reach more people, as well as exploring how we can use our knowledge and expertise to work with local health and social care partners to improve outcomes. The ongoing roll out of Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training will continue to be a priority for us as we support Lived Experience Trainers to use their stories to directly influence health and social care practitioners in our region.

## Addressing unmet need

Delivering our established services gives us unique insight into areas where the needs of the people we support are not being met. We want to do more to meet these needs wherever we can, so we will look at how we can make our offer flexible enough to do this. Much of our work in recent years has been focused around addressing crisis and then supporting people to set goals and achieve outcomes. We want to find ways to work with people before they enter crisis, and will explore how to do this by considering the needs of parents and carers as well as routes to working with people earlier in their lives. As always, partnership working will be key and we will consider how we can work with others to support those with the most complex needs who statutory and universal services struggle to accommodate.

## Co-production

We will continue to look at how the people who use our services have the opportunity to co-design and co-deliver services that meet their needs. We will look for ways to create even more paid and voluntary opportunities for people with lived experience and, where we can, create leadership roles that enable people to directly influence decision-makers in the wider health and social care system.

Our Co-Production team will be at the heart of finding ways to engage with people who have used our advocacy services, as well as playing a key role in gaining insight into how we can improve as an employer of people with lived experience. We want to be an employer of choice and for Your Voice Counts to be a truly inclusive place to work; the work of our Co-Production team, along with our newly created role of Head of HR and continued enhancements to our People policies, will help us drive forward the improvements we want to make.

## Raising our profile

Raising our profile locally, regionally and nationally will help us to reach more people and give us greater influence on behalf of the communities we support. We will continue to promote our key messages, develop our relationships and share our learning and experiences so that we can develop as an organisation and position Your Voice Counts as experts in our sector with a clear and achievable vision as we develop our new business strategy.

# Your Voice Counts

# TRUSTEES' REPORT

## STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

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The trustees, who are also the directors of Your Voice Counts for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company Law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the entity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the entity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the entity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the entity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

### Disclosure of information to auditor

Each trustee has taken steps that they ought to have taken as a trustee in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditor is aware of that information. The trustees confirm that there is no relevant information that they know of and of which they know the auditor is unaware.

### Reappointment of auditor

In accordance with section 485 of the Companies Act 2006, a resolution for the re-appointment of Azets Audit Services as auditors of the charity is to be proposed at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

The annual report was approved by the trustees of the charity on 18 October 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Christina Gates 17 Oct 2024 15:47:36 BST (UTC +1)

.....  
C D Gates  
Trustee

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF YOUR VOICE COUNTS

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### Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Your Voice Counts (the 'entity') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the statement of financial position, the statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

### Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements* section of our report. We are independent of the entity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

### Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

### Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of our audit:

- the information given in the trustees' report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared, which includes the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law, is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the directors' report included within the trustees' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal

## **INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED)**

### **TO THE MEMBERS OF YOUR VOICE COUNTS**

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#### **Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the entity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors' report included within the trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the trustees' report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

#### **Responsibilities of trustees**

As explained more fully in the statement of trustees' responsibilities, the trustees, who are also the directors of the entity for the purpose of company law, are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

#### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

### TO THE MEMBERS OF YOUR VOICE COUNTS

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#### Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above and on the Financial Reporting Council's website, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

We obtain and update our understanding of the entity, its activities, its control environment, and likely future developments, including in relation to the legal and regulatory framework applicable and how the entity is complying with that framework. Based on this understanding, we identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. This includes consideration of the risk of acts by the entity that were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.

We identified the following applicable laws and regulations as those most likely to have a material impact on the financial statements: Health and Safety; employment law (including the Working Time Directive); and compliance with the UK Companies Act.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, we designed procedures which included:

- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims as well as actual, suspected and alleged fraud;
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- Assessing the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the entity through enquiry and inspection;
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- Performing audit work over the risk of management bias and override of controls, including testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business and reviewing accounting estimates for indicators of potential bias.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

#### Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

**Simon Brown BA ACA DChA (Senior Statutory Auditor)**  
for and on behalf of Azets Audit Services

  
Simon Brown 18 Oct 2024 13:04:58 BST (UTC +1)

**Chartered Accountants**  
**Statutory Auditor**

Bulman House  
Regent Centre  
Gosforth  
Newcastle upon Tyne

Date: 18 October 2024

Azets Audit Services is a trading name of Azets Audit Services Limited

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

### Current financial year

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
<b><u>Income and endowments from:</u></b>					
Donations and legacies	2	33,438	-	33,438	12,898
Charitable activities	3	1,126,243	320,104	1,446,347	1,398,599
Investments	4	7,493	-	7,493	3,588
Other income	5	2,434	-	2,434	2,661
<b>Total income</b>		<b>1,169,608</b>	<b>320,104</b>	<b>1,489,712</b>	<b>1,417,746</b>
<b><u>Expenditure on:</u></b>					
Charitable activities	6	1,345,786	282,995	1,628,781	1,287,642
<b>Net (outgoing)/incoming resources before transfers</b>		<b>(176,178)</b>	<b>37,109</b>	<b>(139,069)</b>	<b>130,104</b>
Gross transfers between funds		177,561	(177,561)	-	-
<b>Net income/(expenditure) for the year/ Net movement in funds</b>		<b>1,383</b>	<b>(140,452)</b>	<b>(139,069)</b>	<b>130,104</b>
Fund balances at 1 April 2023		277,602	436,702	714,304	584,200
<b>Fund balances at 31 March 2024</b>		<b>278,985</b>	<b>296,250</b>	<b>575,235</b>	<b>714,304</b>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)  
INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

Prior financial year

		Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
	Notes			
<b><u>Income and endowments from:</u></b>				
Donations and legacies	2	12,898	-	12,898
Charitable activities	3	974,600	423,999	1,398,599
Investments	4	3,588	-	3,588
Other income	5	2,661	-	2,661
<b>Total income</b>		993,747	423,999	1,417,746
<b><u>Expenditure on:</u></b>				
Charitable activities	6	1,033,253	254,389	1,287,642
<b>Net (outgoing)/incoming resources before transfers</b>		(39,506)	169,610	130,104
<b>Net income/(expenditure) for the year/ Net movement in funds</b>		(39,506)	169,610	130,104
Fund balances at 1 April 2022		317,108	267,092	584,200
<b>Fund balances at 31 March 2023</b>		277,602	436,702	714,304



## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

### AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	2024		2023	
		£	£	£	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Tangible assets	11		1,238		1,651
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	12	96,109		194,250	
Investments	13	80,699		80,226	
Cash at bank and in hand		461,119		497,881	
		637,927		772,357	
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	14	(63,930)		(59,704)	
Net current assets			573,997		712,653
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			575,235		714,304
<b>Income funds</b>					
Restricted funds	16		296,250		436,702
<u>Unrestricted funds</u>					
Designated funds	17	98,123		125,522	
General unrestricted funds		180,862		152,080	
			278,985		277,602
			575,235		714,304

The financial statements on pages 31 to 45 were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on 18 October 2024 signed on their behalf by:

  
 Matt Iffe 17 Oct 2024 15:42:57 BST (UTC +1)

M Iffe  
 Trustee

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

	Notes	2024 £	£	2023 £	£
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>					
Cash (absorbed by)/generated from operations	21		(43,782)		176,401
<b>Investing activities</b>					
Current asset investment income		(473)		(939)	
Investment income received		7,493		3,588	
<b>Net cash generated from investing activities</b>			7,020		2,649
<b>Net cash used in financing activities</b>			-		-
<b>Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents</b>			(36,762)		179,050
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year			497,881		318,831
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at end of year</b>			461,119		497,881

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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#### 1 Accounting policies

##### Charity information

The charity is limited by guarantee, incorporated in England and Wales, and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the trustees is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the charity in the event of liquidation.

The address of its registered office is: 14-16 Greenesfield Business Centre Mulgrave Terrace, Gateshead, England, NE8 1PQ

#### 1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the entity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Charities SORP "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019). The entity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the entity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

#### 1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the entity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

#### 1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Designated funds comprise funds which have been set aside at the discretion of the trustees for specific purposes. The purposes and uses of the designated funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

#### 1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the entity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the entity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the entity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

Grants are recognised when the charity has an entitlement to the funds and any conditions linked to the grants have been met. Where performance conditions are attached to the grant and are yet to be met, the income is recognised as a liability and included on the balance sheet as deferred income to be released.

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

#### 1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

##### 1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges are allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Support costs include central functions and have been allocated to activity cost categories on a basis consistent with the use of resources, for example, allocating property costs by floor areas, or per capita, staff costs by the time spent and other costs by their usage.

##### 1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets costing £2,000 or more are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Fixtures and fittings	25% reducing balance
Computers	33% straight line

##### 1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the entity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

##### 1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

##### 1.9 Financial instruments

The entity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the entity's balance sheet when the entity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

#### 1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

##### **Basic financial assets**

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

##### **Basic financial liabilities**

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

##### **Derecognition of financial liabilities**

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the entity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

#### 1.10 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the entity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

#### 1.11 Retirement benefits

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

#### 2 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds general 2024 £	Unrestricted funds general 2023 £
Donations and gifts	33,438	12,898

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

#### 3 Charitable activities

	Advocacy	Grants	Total	Advocacy	Grants	Total
	2024	2024	2024	2023	2023	2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Advocacy and Grants	1,127,726	318,621	1,446,347	900,473	498,126	1,398,599
<b>Analysis by fund</b>						
Unrestricted funds - general	1,090,110	36,133	1,126,243	861,289	113,311	974,600
Restricted funds	37,616	282,488	320,104	39,184	384,815	423,999
	1,127,726	318,621	1,446,347	900,473	498,126	1,398,599

#### 4 Investments

	Unrestricted funds general 2024	Unrestricted funds general 2023
	£	£
Interest receivable on bank deposits	7,493	3,588

#### 5 Other income

	Unrestricted funds general 2024	Unrestricted funds general 2023
	£	£
Other income	2,434	2,661

Other income relates to reimbursed expenses.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

**6 Charitable activities**

	Activity undertaken directly 2024 £	Activity support costs 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Activity undertaken directly 2023 £
Staff costs	1,082,283	-	1,082,283	847,133
Depreciation and impairment	413	-	413	3,447
Telephone and internet	12,783	-	12,783	9,853
Training costs	9,862	-	9,862	11,100
Room hire	8,657	-	8,657	4,058
Travelling expenses	16,847	-	16,847	13,434
Other costs	45,573	-	45,573	42,585
	<u>1,176,418</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,176,418</u>	<u>931,610</u>
Share of support costs (see note 7)	-	440,963	440,963	347,272
Share of governance costs (see note 7)	-	11,400	11,400	8,760
	<u>1,176,418</u>	<u>452,363</u>	<u>1,628,781</u>	<u>1,287,642</u>
<b>Analysis by fund</b>				
Unrestricted funds - general	893,423	452,363	1,345,786	1,033,253
Restricted funds	282,995	-	282,995	254,389
	<u>1,176,418</u>	<u>452,363</u>	<u>1,628,781</u>	<u>1,287,642</u>

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

#### 7 Support costs

	Support costs	Governance costs	2024	Support costs	Governance costs	2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Staff costs	295,480	-	295,480	241,929	-	241,929
Depreciation	-	-	-	1,909	-	1,909
Premises costs	26,098	-	26,098	18,562	-	18,562
Insurances	6,174	-	6,174	3,848	-	3,848
Death in service insurance	7,351	-	7,351	-	-	-
Light and heat	11,649	-	11,649	13,016	-	13,016
Telephone and internet	10,594	-	10,594	7,073	-	7,073
Legal and professional fees	13,098	-	13,098	13,422	-	13,422
Room hire	7,708	-	7,708	-	-	-
Travelling expenses	6,854	-	6,854	3,232	-	3,232
Accountancy/audit fees	-	11,400	11,400	-	8,760	8,760
Other costs	55,957	-	55,957	44,281	-	44,281
	<u>440,963</u>	<u>11,400</u>	<u>452,363</u>	<u>347,272</u>	<u>8,760</u>	<u>356,032</u>
Analysed between Charitable activities	<u>440,963</u>	<u>11,400</u>	<u>452,363</u>	<u>347,272</u>	<u>8,760</u>	<u>356,032</u>

Governance costs includes payments to the auditors of £9,500 (2023- £7,300) for audit fees.

#### 8 Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the entity during the year.

#### 9 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2024 Number	2023 Number
Management	3	3
Finance	1	1
Advocacy, Communities and Operations	61	50
Total	<u>65</u>	<u>54</u>



## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

#### 9 Employees (Continued)

Employment costs	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and salaries	1,192,268	962,071
Social security costs	92,285	75,997
Other pension costs	93,210	50,994
	<u>1,377,763</u>	<u>1,089,062</u>

There were no employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000.

#### 10 Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

#### 11 Tangible fixed assets

	Fixtures and fittings £	Computers £	Total £
<b>Cost</b>			
At 1 April 2023	7,879	21,930	29,809
At 31 March 2024	<u>7,879</u>	<u>21,930</u>	<u>29,809</u>
<b>Depreciation and impairment</b>			
At 1 April 2023	6,228	21,930	28,158
Depreciation charged in the year	413	-	413
At 31 March 2024	<u>6,641</u>	<u>21,930</u>	<u>28,571</u>
<b>Carrying amount</b>			
At 31 March 2024	<u>1,238</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,238</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>1,651</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,651</u>

#### 12 Debtors

Amounts falling due within one year:	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	88,415	192,420
Other debtors	951	445
Prepayments and accrued income	6,743	1,385
	<u>96,109</u>	<u>194,250</u>

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

**13 Current asset investments**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	£	£
Short term deposits	80,699	80,226
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

**14 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	£	£
Other taxation and social security	25,254	19,871
Trade creditors	17,823	20,982
Accruals and deferred income	20,853	18,851
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	<u>63,930</u>	<u>59,704</u>

**15 Retirement benefit schemes**

**Defined contribution schemes**

The entity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for all qualifying employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the entity in an independently administered fund.

The charge to profit or loss in respect of defined contribution schemes was £93,210 (2023 - £50,994).

Contributions totalling £5,673 (2023: £4,422) were payable to the scheme at the end of the year and are included in creditors.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

**16 Restricted funds**

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

	Movement in funds			Movement in funds			Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2024
	Balance at 1 April 2022	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Balance at 1 April 2023	Incoming resources	Resources expended		
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Operations	534	-	-	534	80,000	-	(534)	80,000
Community	216,053	384,815	(232,857)	368,011	202,488	(273,392)	(149,768)	147,339
Advocacy	50,505	39,184	(21,532)	68,157	37,616	(9,603)	(27,259)	68,911
	<u>267,092</u>	<u>423,999</u>	<u>(254,389)</u>	<u>436,702</u>	<u>320,104</u>	<u>(282,995)</u>	<u>(177,561)</u>	<u>296,250</u>

**Restricted Funds:**

Restricted funds represent funds received from statutory sources and grant funders where use of the funds has been specified by the funder. YVC classifies these by business area.

- Advocacy reserves are mainly from statutory sources and are predominantly to be used for advocacy in Newcastle and South Tyneside.
- Communities reserves are mainly from grant funders and are to be used in a variety of individual projects in areas such as Gateshead and South Tyneside.
- Operations reserves are predominantly for core costs.

Transfers in the year relate to transfers from restricted funds to unrestricted reserves representing unspent amounts to be used for general purposes.

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

#### 17 Designated funds

The income funds of the charity include the following designated funds which have been set aside out of unrestricted funds by the trustees for specific purposes:

	Balance at 1 April 2022	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 1 April 2023	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Business development	45,866	(22,312)	-	23,554	(23,554)	23,554	23,554
Finance development	12,463	(12,463)	-	-	-	-	-
Communities team	23,268	(11,634)	(11,634)	-	-	-	-
Marketing and communications	10,080	(9,256)	8,276	9,100	(9,100)	10,000	10,000
IT infrastructure	8,158	(8,158)	-	-	-	-	-
Co-production	28,894	-	-	28,894	(5,518)	-	23,376
Admin development	22,781	-	-	22,781	(22,781)	-	-
Volunteer Coordinator	-	-	14,824	14,824	(14,824)	14,824	14,824
Company secretary	-	-	14,400	14,400	(1,856)	1,856	14,400
HR Manager	-	-	11,969	11,969	-	-	11,969
	<u>151,510</u>	<u>(63,823)</u>	<u>37,835</u>	<u>125,522</u>	<u>(77,633)</u>	<u>50,234</u>	<u>98,123</u>

#### 18 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2024	Restricted funds 2024	Total Unrestricted funds 2024	Unrestricted funds 2023	Restricted funds 2023	Total 2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Fund balances at 31 March 2024 are represented by:						
Tangible assets	1,238	-	1,238	1,651	-	1,651
Current assets/(liabilities)	277,747	296,250	573,997	275,951	436,702	712,653
	<u>278,985</u>	<u>296,250</u>	<u>575,235</u>	<u>277,602</u>	<u>436,702</u>	<u>714,304</u>

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

#### 19 Operating lease commitments

At the reporting end date the entity had outstanding commitments for future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases, which fall due as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Within one year	5,520	5,520
Between two and five years	6,942	12,477
	<u>12,462</u>	<u>17,997</u>

#### 20 Related party transactions

There were no disclosable related party transactions during the year (2023 - none).

#### Remuneration of key management personnel

The remuneration of key management personnel is as follows.

	2024 £	2023 £
Aggregate compensation	<u>63,314</u>	<u>60,421</u>

#### 21 Cash generated from operations

	2024 £	2023 £
(Deficit)/surplus for the year	(139,069)	130,104
Adjustments for:		
Investment income recognised in statement of financial activities	(7,493)	(3,588)
Depreciation and impairment of tangible fixed assets	413	5,355
Movements in working capital:		
Decrease in debtors	98,141	173,078
Increase in creditors	4,226	6,452
(Decrease) in deferred income	-	(135,000)
<b>Cash (absorbed by)/generated from operations</b>	<u>(43,782)</u>	<u>176,401</u>

#### 22 Analysis of changes in net funds

The entity had no debt during the year.

# Thank you to all of our partners and funders who supported us during 2023/2024.

**We are grateful for your support and look forward to more joint-working so we can continue to support the people who need us.**

Access to Justice Foundation

Barbour Foundation

Bernicia Community Fund

Charities Aid Foundation

Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland

Henry Smith Foundation

Leeds Community Foundation

LGA Foundation

Newcastle Building Society

National Lottery

Persimmon Community Champions Fund

Sir James Knott Trust

The Charity of Sir Richard Whittington

The 1989 Willan Charitable Trust



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