EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED

England & Wales · Charity number 1037868

Details

Other names	EUROPEAN SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED, ESPA LTD
Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	02909953
Registered	1994-05-25
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	North House Ferryboat Lane Sunderland Tyne and Wear SR5 3RL
Phone	01915165080
Email	karl.hardy@espa.org.uk
Website	www.espa.org.uk

Activities

Objects: THE CHARITY'S OBJECTS (THE OBJECTS) ARE FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT TO PROMOTE THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF PEOPLE WITH AUTISM, LEARNING DISABILITIES, COMMUNICATION, SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL CONDITIONS BY ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF SUCH PERSONS, IN PARTICULAR BY: · PROVIDING OR ASSISTING IN THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUCH PEOPLE AND ADVANCING THE EDUCATION OF OTHERS IN AUTISM, LEARNING DISABILITIES AND ASSOCIATED COMMUNICATION, SOCIAL OR BEHAVIOURAL CONDITIONS; · PROVIDING ACCOMMODATION AND SERVICES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THESE INDIVIDUALS; · THE CARRYING OUT OR COMMISSIONING OF RESEARCH INTO IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR AUTISTIC PEOPLE AND PUBLISHING THE USEFUL RESULTS OF SUCH RESEARCH.

Activities: The charity provides high quality specialist residential, educational, training and employment, and day services for individuals with autism spectrum disorders and related conditions.

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Classification

- **How:** Provides Services
- **What:** Education/training, Disability, Accommodation/housing
- **Who:** Children/young People, People With Disabilities

Geography

- Durham
- Middlesbrough
- Newcastle Upon Tyne City
- Sunderland

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£20,926,613	£19,053,316	£22,724,900	582
2024-03-31	£19,020,545	£17,784,639	£20,851,603	578
2023-03-31	£17,619,619	£16,117,816	£19,615,697	562
2022-03-31	£16,118,180	£14,817,535	£17,883,663	570
2021-03-31	£15,332,054	£14,169,147	£16,583,018	585

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
PAUL EDWARD GILBERT SHATTOCK OBE	Chair	1994-02-28
GRAEME CHARLES YOUNG		2013-04-23
PHILIP MICHAEL MOXON		2002-08-20
PROFESSOR RITA JORDAN		2011-04-14
Prof Malcolm Hooper		2005-09-15
STEPHANIE ROBINSON		2012-09-25
Thomas Peter Berney		2013-09-19

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EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED

England & Wales - Charity number 1037868

Accounts

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

REPORT AND GROUP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1037868

COMPANY NO: 2909953

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED

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Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2025

The Trustees submit their annual Board of Directors' report including Strategic Report, together with the audited consolidated financial statements of the Charity and its subsidiaries for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies, set out in notes to the accounts and comply with the Charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 and 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 October 2019).

STRATEGIC REPORT

Objectives and Activities

The objectives of Education and Services for People with Autism Limited (ESPA) and its subsidiary undertakings are for the public benefit to promote the health and wellbeing of people with autism, learning disabilities, communication, social or behavioural conditions, by enhancing the quality of life of such people, in particular by:

- Providing or assisting in the provision of education, training and employment opportunities for such people and advancing the education of others with autism, learning disabilities, communication, social or behavioural conditions.
- Providing accommodation, support and services to meet the needs of these individuals; and
- Carrying out or commissioning of research to improve the quality of life for autistic people and publish the useful results of such research.

ESPA's Mission Statement is:

"Enabling people across the autism spectrum to enjoy rewarding and fulfilling lives"

We currently support 251 (2024: 244) people in a wide range of person-centred services including:

- Independent Specialist Further Education College
- Residential services
- Independent Supported Living services
- Community services
- Day and vocational opportunities

Most of the people we support have additional or associated difficulties and disabilities can include learning disabilities, mental health conditions, ADHD, OCD, sensory and communication difficulties and display behaviours that challenge. We currently employ 582 (2024: 578) highly skilled, trained and highly committed staff.

All our services share a common vision which is to provide everyone with the highest quality autism specific support and education that is tailored to meet their needs, wishes and expectations.

Our primary objectives for the coming year are to:

- Continue to offer the highest quality autism specific, person centred and compassionate care and support
- Work in partnership with all stakeholders to ensure individuals achieve excellent personal outcomes
- Develop new services and support arrangements to meet the needs of wider autistic people
- Achieve best practice through continuous self-assessment and quality improvement
- Ensure resources are allocated to meet strategic objectives
- Recruit and train a high quality and professional workforce
- Evidence public benefit and social value in all charitable activities
- Demonstrate best value.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2025

Our long-term ambition is to continue to be a leading regional autism charity and build on our excellent track record and reputation. We aim to continue to develop new and innovative services in direct response to the changing needs of the people we support, identify gaps in provision and services procured by Local Authorities. With strong financial management, we will continue to ensure that resources are invested in areas of the Charity that meet the longer-term strategic objectives of the organisation. We have a clear accommodation strategy that we are continuing to work towards. This includes replacement and renovation of some of our current buildings to ensure they meet the changing needs of the Charity, expectations of funders and the needs of people being referred. This work will continue over the coming years and will support ESPA's continued growth and diversification.

We measure the success of our work by:

- The positive outcomes people achieve and the quality of life they enjoy
- The growing numbers of people we support
- Feedback from individuals, families and other health and social care professionals
- Self- assessments, internal and external inspections and audits.

Public Benefit

In all the Charity's planning and activities, the Trustees have reviewed and considered the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit. As a registered Charity, public benefit and social value are embedded within our charitable and strategic objective and overall mission. ESPA provides real and measurable benefits to the public through providing high quality care and education for autistic people.

All our support and education inputs aim to enhance people's independence and improve health and well-being outcomes, helping to reduce a reliance on health and social care services, reducing health inequalities and increasing their economic independence.

Through our day-to-day work of supporting autistic people to become valued and accepted members of their communities: we support the sustainability of other organisations and charities; provide volunteers; educate the public about autism and associated disabilities alongside providing practical support to families, community groups and clubs.

As a large and growing regional employer, we are constantly creating new job opportunities for local people and to help reduce unemployment. In line with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy we are keen to attract a diverse workforce especially those who may experience social or economic barriers to employment or may be at risk of discrimination including people with disabilities or due to a person's ethnicity, nationality or religion.

Our commitment to public benefit is further illustrated through our two trading subsidiaries: Autism Works and ESPA Research. Autism Works is a software testing company that employs autistic people as software testers. Thereby recognising and utilising many of the autistic characteristics that are valued and can be a commercial asset in this field of work. The company has been highly commended for the quality of their work through some very high-profile customers. Autism Works business plan aims to continue to grow its workforce offering more real work opportunities to autistic people. ESPA Research's aims are to improve the quality of life for autistic people through high quality publishable research investigations.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2025

Objectives and Activities

The significant charitable activities undertaken by ESPA are:

Adult Social Care

a) Residential Homes

ESPA operates 14 residential homes across Newcastle, Sunderland and Durham. We currently support 80 (2024: 76) people in these services. Residential services currently represents 48% (2024: 51%) of the Charity's income.

Each service is unique and individually tailored to meet the needs, wishes and expectations of the individuals living there. These services range from single person apartments to shared living arrangements. Most of the people we support have challenging and complex needs. Many individuals also have additional or associated difficulties or disabilities. In order to achieve the very best outcomes for an aging cohort, all our services offer intensive and specialist support in highly structured, autism-specific environments. All our homes offer 24-hour person-centred care and support, and staffing levels are based upon the actual assessed needs of the people they support. Each person receives structured and consistent support from highly skilled, experienced and knowledgeable staff. 275 (2024: 268) staff are currently employed in the residential services.

Each individual has a Person-Centred and Positive Behaviour Support Plan which enables us to understand what is important to them and what they want from their lives. The setting of realistic personal goals ensures that individuals achieve positive outcomes in all aspects of their life. The primary measure of the success of our residential services is the positive life outcomes the individuals achieve and their families' satisfaction with the support we offer. Feedback is consistently captured through on-going dialogue, Service User Reviews and Satisfaction Surveys. Internal quality assurance processes including Senior Management Audits all support the continuous quality improvements of services, Care Quality Commission (CQC) compliance and best practice. CQC inspections provide an independent assessment of quality, safety and compliance and 12 homes have been awarded an overall rating of 'Good' and 2 have been awarded an 'Outstanding'.

For some people our residential services provide an excellent stepping stone towards a more independent future that could include employment or further learning.

b) Community Services (Domiciliary Services)

ESPA has 3 CQC registered branches across the Northeast: Sunderland, Newcastle and Middlesbrough. This enables us to support people across the region. We always ensure that through individual service designs and Person-Centred Plans the people we support remain at the heart of everything we do.

We are committed to providing each person with high quality care and support that is autism specific, person-centred, flexible and responsive. We aim to enable each person to live as independently as possible and to become a valued and respected member of their community. Everyone receives an individual package of care and support to meet their specific needs, wishes and aspirations, enabling them to enjoy a lifestyle of their choice.

We offer support in a variety of ways, depending on people's needs and preferences. Support can be provided for a limited amount of specific hours during the week of up to 24-hours a day. We currently offer a wide range of services through the Agency including:

- Independent supported living services
- A core and cluster service
- Outreach services
- Day provision from a community hub

Over the past 12 months the Agency has maintained financial stability and represents almost 22% (2024: 23%) of overall income and it currently employs 120 (2024: 111) staff.

Domiciliary Services is currently supporting 31 people (2024: 31). We have 7 supported living services, 5 Outreach services and 14 people are supported from a community hub in Stockton. Burnfoot Court, is a core and cluster service funded through Individual Service Funds (ISF's). It currently supports 6 tenants in individual bungalows.

c) Day and Vocational Services

The Croft Centre in Sunderland is a creative and innovative, community-based day provision that offers person-centred programmes of meaningful and stimulating activities for autistic people, many of whom have additional or associated difficulties or disabilities. In addition to the extensive range of activities offered within the building, people also take part in a wide range of activities in the local and wider community.

Many of our residential service users take the opportunity to engage and participate in these day opportunities. It also offers specialist full and part-time day placements for people not living in ESPA services. These placements are commissioned by Local Authorities or purchased directly through Personal Budgets, Direct Payments or Individual Service Funds. We currently support 23 (2024: 22) people for day placements from across the region. The Croft Centre is open for 44 weeks a year and it currently employs 27 (2024: 25) staff.

Education

a) Independent Specialist Further Education College

ESPA operates an Independent Specialist Further Education College that is based within the Northeast of England, with day sites in Sunderland, Newcastle upon Tyne and Stockton. Students have access to residential accommodation in Sunderland and Newcastle. The College offers day and residential placements for young autistic people between the ages of 16 and 25 years. Most learners are local however some come from across the country to access this specialist provision.

Each College site is specifically tailored to meet the needs and aspirations of a wide cohort of learners on different Curriculum Pathways. EHCP's and Transition Plans ensure that each person achieves their personal and academic ambitions. We currently support 118 learners (2024: 111) across the sites. We offer a 38-week academic year but can offer residential and respite placements for up to 52 weeks and respite. The College now represents 27% (2024: 25%) of the Charity's overall income and employs 156 (2024: 162) staff.

We have earned an excellent reputation and have a good track record of offering learners a high quality, autism specific and person-centred learning experience, helping them achieving positive educational and personal outcomes in preparation for life after College. Demand for placements continues to grow. We are continuing to significantly invest in our College buildings to offer state of the art educational and residential facilities that will provide us with progressive learning environments and the capacity for further growth, enabling us to meet the needs of increasingly complex and challenging learners.

The College offers each learner a bespoke, innovative and creative Curriculum Pathway – Explore (Sensory), Navigate (Life Kkills) and Aspire (Vocational/Further Ed.). All our learning sessions are designed to be engaging, enjoyable, individualised and challenging. Each person has a programme of study tailored to their specific needs and aspirations. We consistently aim to develop the whole person and blend our autism specific core curriculum (Social Communication, Emotional Literacy and Positive Behaviour Support) with academic and vocational subjects. College learning sessions occur in a variety of settings, many of which are community based. Work experience, employability skills, enterprise and independence feature highly within the College's learning activities.

A growth area for the College over the past 4 years has been the creation of Social Hub placements as a positive transition opportunity for some leavers. These are social care funded. In March of the 118 people supported by the College 33 were on social care programmes.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2025

Subsidiaries

a) Autism Works

Autism Works Limited is a wholly owned trading subsidiary of the Charity, offering independent software testing services. Established in 2010, its primary objective is to employ autistic people, giving them the opportunity for sustainable employment and to reduce their reliance on state benefits. The company currently employs 5 people, 3 who are autistic. Our Business Plan demonstrates our commitment to creating opportunities for many more people to gain meaningful employment as the enterprise grows.

b) ESPA Research

ESPA Research is also a wholly owned subsidiary of the Charity. Incorporated in 2009, its aims are to improve the quality of life for people with autism through high quality publishable research investigations. It currently employs 2 people, and the majority of their work is carried out from a laboratory in Sunderland's Business Innovation Centre.

Achievements and Performance

The Charity continues to be financially strong despite a series of new financial challenges and pressures over the past 12 months. As Covid pressures have reduced this has been replaced with significant recruitment and retention problems. In all social care settings this is as a direct result of the pandemic. Staff have continued to work creatively and tirelessly to minimise the impact on the lives of the people they support and keeping everyone safe, happy and well.

We are pleased to have improved our staff turnover to an overall figure of 18% (2024: 22%) via a commitment to salary enhancements and a range of staff well-being and operational measures. Staff retention now stands at 76%.

Robust financial management has enabled us to accommodate the 9.8% annual National Living Wage (NLW) increases, offer competitive salary inflationary increases to all staff and cover increasing costs. However, from April 2025 the new 6.7% NLW rise and increased NI contributions is going to significantly impact on budgets and increase our costs by over £1 million. Furthermore, NLW increases are set to rise by a further 4% in 2026. Moreover, we are now incurring a significant increase to our costs base as our discounted arrangement with our energy provider comes to an end and cost of living crisis is going to significantly impact on budgets. Unlike many charities who have used reserves to cover core cost, ESPA still has the funds to see the organisation through the expected challenges over the next 12 months.

We continue to invest a lot of time trying to achieve realistic inflationary increases from Local Authorities to enable us to meet growing costs, especially in our residential services. We are also continuing to renegotiate fees for some historic placements and agree back dated inflationary increases. We continue to be in a dialogue with key local authorities to secure significant backdated funds relating to socially funded day service placements. Some outcomes have been successful, but a number are ongoing, which is impacting on cash flow.

Directors and Senior Managers

The NE12 framework responsible for procuring specialist post-16 education ended in July 2022. The College is now entirely free of all legacy fees attributed to the NE12 framework. The College now sets competitive and realistic fees which support the delivery of outstanding educational programmes. The College now seeks to impose competitive annual inflationary increases that are in line with sector standards and expectations helping to maintain stability and quality within our educational settings. However, more work needs to be done with local authorities to clarify the significant increase and context of our General Weekly Payment fee.

Behaviour Training Programme, NAPPI, is a well-recognised accredited body which better meets our current needs and offers extensive support. We now have two qualified Train the Trainers, and the training is now being rolled out across ESPA.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2025

We have struggled to expand and develop the output and team that support the delivery of NAPPI. We now have only 3 qualified Trainers. However, the training is well-established at Levels 1 and 2 across ESPA. We are seeking to secure further trainers to support the delivery of Level 3 and ongoing annual refreshers.

The new Maintenance Manager has been in post for 2 years and is beginning to make a real and positive impact in the department and across the services. A new team member has been recruited, and a broader range of sub-contractors are being sourced.

The maintenance team now has 3 full-time staff and is fully engaged in a scheduled maintenance programme: using sub-contractors where appropriate to aid efficiency. This last year has seen the completion of several new rooms at Ashleigh in readiness for a new intake.

We continue to populate the Data Security Protection Toolkit which is a social care specific framework that enables us to evidence compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). In 2024 we achieved 'Standards Met.' This was last reviewed and achieved in 2025 and will continue to be updated annually.

Following an extensive recruitment programme we finally appointed a Speech and Language Therapist in 2024. We now have a Counsellor, a SALT, an OT and a PBS Specialist who have the skills and experience to meet the needs of an increasingly complex population.

ESPA has remained compliant with all legislative, regulatory and contractual requirements. Policies and procedures continue to be systematically reviewed to reflect changes and best practice.

We continue to update our marketing and promotional materials for use at local marketing events, open days and recruitment fairs. ESPA's use of social media has significantly increased with a presence on Facebook, Instagram and Linked-In. We are also updating the ESPA website to reflect the significant change in services, programmes and staff in recent times.

We are making progress with our accommodation strategy. However, timescales have been significantly impacted due to the pandemic, rising costs and our ability to secure contractors. Plans are still in place to build a new studio in the grounds of South Hill and to sell Abigail House. We have recently acquired extra temporary teaching space in the grounds of South Hill alongside a further 2 rooms in The Croft Centre to meet the demands of a rapidly growing cohort. These College developments will enable us to increase capacity in Sunderland. We are also developing Ideal House – A large 2 storey development in Thornaby to meet the escalating demand for Autism education across the Tees Valley and North Yorkshire: anticipating an official opening in Spring 2026.

Residential Services

All of our residential services continue to provide an excellent Quality of Life to the people we support. There continues to be a noticeable reduction in the use of Agency Staff and a greater focus on local recruitment using various media channels. However, due to a competitive and transient labour market, some services still remain under pressure to retain and recruit.

During the last year demand for placements has been maintained, but due to the staffing situation our focus has been on filling existing staff voids before accepting new referrals and admissions. In 2024-25 2 new people moved into ESPA services and 1 person left. Financial stability has been maintained. At the end of March 2025 we were supporting 80 service users and we had 10 voids – representing an occupancy rate of over 90% which we are confident will increase once the staffing situation improves.

The Finance Department have experienced yet another challenging year trying to achieve inflationary increases from many local authorities. Considerable time has also been spent trying to negotiate fee increases for some historic, loss-

making placements. While we have some successes, this remains a priority for the next financial year. CQC have introduced a new Single Inspection Framework which outlines the way the Care Quality Commission inspect and rate settings. KLOE's have been replaced with Quality Statements and there is a greater focus on continuous assessment – ESPA's current position is that all Residential Services are rated Good overall.

In 2024 our new QA Lead undertook several audits across all services, implementing and monitoring Action Plans which have helped to raise operational standards and improve outcomes for service users. The Lead has a clear plan to review existing documents and standardise across services to provide a more streamlined process that generates evidence linked to CQC requirements and better captures Qualify of Life outcomes.

Demand for respite placements at Ashleigh remains high and now that all the new rooms have been completed, we are keen to resolve historical staffing issues to ensure we can maximise the benefits of this service going forward into 2025/26.

ESPA College

2024-25 has been another positive year for ESPA College. There has been continued stability in student numbers alongside many outstanding learner outcomes and achievements. At the end of March 2025 the College was supporting 118 young people, 85 learners were on educational placements and 33 attended the Social Hubs – 2 people were on hybrid programmes.

As the Interim Contract with the NE12 Commissioning Framework has officially ended; the College now has complete autonomy and control of their fee structures going forward – potentially ensuring a profitable and sustainable future for the College.

The Social Hub continues to thrive. Numbers have risen by over 10% again this year and forecasts suggest this is set to continue with numbers expected to reach 45-50 in the next few years.

Going forward we need to prioritise developing a new space for this anticipated growth. This has started with the purchase of a 2-year temporary Portakabin spaces until The Studio extension is complete in the South Hill garden; gaining 2 additional rooms in The Croft Centre, utilising the top floor of Tasker and the purchase and refurbishment of Ideal House in Thornaby to replace Tithebarn.

The College's Self-Assessment Report (SAR) was finalised in December 2024. It concluded that the College is Good in each key area of the inspection framework and Outstanding in Personal development. Progress and achievements are reported through Termly Quality Reports which are shared with staff and Trustees. Areas for improvement are identified and help inform our Annual QIP (Quality Improvement Plan).

In Spring 2024, work began on defining and clarifying the ESPA curriculum to create 3 new, clear Pathways that would be better understood by learners, families and funders alike. Accompanying the Core Curriculum of Functional Skills, Social Skills and Communication – 3 clear Pathways: Explore (Sensory), Navigate (Life-skills) and Aspire (Further Educational/Vocational) will be launched in Autumn 2025 alongside a new College Mission Statement – *Personalised Pathways unlimited possibilities.*

One of ESPA's Trustees continues to be the primary link for Educational & Safeguarding inputs; meeting regularly with College Principal/Vice Principal and attends the College Advisory Board. He has undertaken 'learner walks' (informal lesson observations) Prevent Duty Training and is a familiar link for the sites, students and staff

Evidence gathered from multiple sources confirms that this year learners had made excellent progress – 38% or graduates progress to Further or Higher Education, 53% moved on to appropriate Social Destinations and 9% went onto paid or voluntary work.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2025

In Summer 2024, the college held another of its regular Parents' Forums. It was well attended and was a much-appreciated opportunity to pass on relevant Safeguarding information, build relationships with parents and for parents to share their concerns and experiences with other families

College leaders share a vision of celebrating authentic autistic identity. A learner voice working group was created and champions themes important to our students – for example Class/Learner Vlogs are planned, and students have attended the national NATSPEC Parliament and been involved in various national initiatives.

The College Mental Health Well-Being group continued to meet regularly – key outcomes have included developing and implementing a College Mental Health & Well Being Policy, increasing access to relevant training and improving knowledge of local well-being services and providers.

Community Services (Domiciliary)

ESPA have 3 CQC registered branches; Sunderland, Newcastle and Middlesbrough – All providing supported living and community enablement service.

The Teesside team provide a day service is Ware Street, Stockton – Currently 14 people use the service with the potential to accommodate a further 6. A recently appointed Program Coordinator working alongside the wider team to further develop the range of activities on offer alongside progressing partnerships in the local area has made a real impact on the scope and quality of this offer.

In April 2024 a comprehensive contract review was conducted by Stockton BC and no issues were identified.
We continue to be approved framework providers in Newcastle, Durham, North Tyneside, Sunderland, South Tyneside, Gateshead and across the Tees Valley. The last year has seen an increase in direct approaches rather than mini competitions and tenders.

As is the case across our sector Recruitment and Retention has proven to be a real barrier and limited our ability to take on new support services – much of our recruitment has been from employees originating from overseas with minimal local uptake or interest. Nonetheless, Community Services continue to be financially stable with inflationary increases being realistic and forthcoming.

We remain as the provider for the contract to maintain management and control of Ware Street for at least the next 3 years. A detailed Action Plan is being followed and monitored to ensure the best possible service delivered.

Burnfoot Court continues to provide support to 6 people who live in individual bungalows on a core and cluster site in Newcastle. Following a period of low staff levels and difficulties around recruitment retention, staffing levels are now beginning to stabilise and despite some ongoing family challenges the service continued to thrive.

Queen Alexandra Road has seen some recent changes in its community; they have successfully supported a young man to transition positively from a challenging time in hospital while another resident has been supported to transition from QA Road to live in a family home with our ongoing support and inputs.

Day and Vocational Services.

The Croft Centre in Sunderland and College Social Hubs make up our day service offer and provide opportunities for 58 people. The Croft Centre currently supports 23 service users, and The Social Hubs provide opportunities for 35 young adults. With the creation and growth of the College Social Hubs, fewer people now transition directly from the College into other ESPA day services. We have established that the Social Hubs will only support people up to the age of 30 – beyond this they can be offered a transition to The Croft Centre. With the College portfolio at capacity, it is hoped that the acquisition of a new property in Teesside will create more opportunities for growth and separate The Hubs from the College model.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2025

Croft Centre Social Events are very well supported as ever. Highlights have included Summer Barbeques, Easter Tea and Egg hunts, Halloween and Pizza Parties, Christmas Party, 80's themed night and a Valentines Party.

The Croft has also established links with a local Horticultural Organisation – Sunderland Home Grown – learning about everything from plants to beekeeping and have been involved in the maintenance and upkeep of the beehives. Regular sessions from Intertwined have introduced very popular yoga, dance and movement and mindfulness sessions.

The Summer House, The Pamper Room and The Sensory Room have all been upgraded and have proved very popular Moreover, a brand-new Cinema Room is proving a very popular addition.

We are also devising a coherent strategy to streamline a pathway that accommodates the long-term needs and aspirations of Croft users and Hubbers alike while maximizing the potential for sharing key resources like space, staff and facilities.

Autism Works

In 2024/25 the enterprise gradually recovered with the project now commencing from pre covid. The impact is that we are now seeing growth and generated a marginal surplus in the year.

Although Autism Works has a good portfolio of clients that has included Johnson & Johnson; post-covid the Testing sector has become increasingly competitive and challenging. This is further compounded by significant advancements in AI technology which is having a clear and direct impact on Autism Works ability to secure new work and contracts. It is hoped that the introduction of a successful entrepreneurial specialist on a consultancy basis will continue to improve the commercial outlook for Autism Works going forward.

ESPA Research

We continue to conduct research that aims to improve the lives of people diagnosed with Autism. Our primary goals are to discover potential bio-markers; identifying and tackling biological issues to guide intervention options and to disseminate scientific findings.

In 2024/25 ESPA Research received another generous donation from the Robert Luft Foundation, they have now generously supported the enterprise for over 15 years. We have applied for funding again for 2025/2026 but this application was declined but we are confident of another successful application for 2026/2027.

A working collaboration continues with Arizona State University and the work aims to develop a bio-marker suite for Autism.

ESPA Research continues to contribute to work looking into developing and designing a screening questionnaire to accompany their studies. This focuses on behaviour, developmental and somatic symptoms. Our work looking at a potential overlap between autoimmune encephalitis and autism has continued; specifically focusing on the themes of regression.

Members of ESPA research continue to attend various conferences both on-line and in person; actively participating and contributing where possible.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2025

Plans for future periods

Our Strategic Targets for April 2025 to March 2027 clearly defines ESPA's plans and processes, targets, expected outcomes and timescales, that will enable the Charity to build on its many achievements and retain its financial strength.

The key strategic objectives are summarised below:-

Governance and Central Management

- To ensure ESPA's continued financial strength with resources allocated in line with strategic priorities
- Increase income through growth in existing and new activities
- To implement the Charity's Accommodation Strategy
- To recruit, train and develop a high quality workforce
- To ensure compliance with legislative and contractual requirements and best practice
- To evidence best practice and the achievement of positive outcomes

Residential Services

- To ensure the on-going financial strength and growth of residential services
- Devise and implement our digital care records and quality systems utilizing the Nourish software platform
- Ensure a PBS and Quality Assurance Process that ensures high quality person centered, autism specific support.
- To achieve and sustain 94% occupancy
- Ensure resources are allocated to meet strategic priorities
- Ensure CQC compliance and maintain or exceed a 'Good' rating in all services.

Domiciliary Agency

- To ensure the Agency's financial strength to support its on-going development
- To ensure the Agency continues to meet legislative and contractual requirements and evidence best practice
- To ensure each person receives the highest quality person centered and autism specific support
- Everyone supported achieves positive personal outcomes and enjoys a good quality of life
- To remain on Local Authority frameworks and retain current contracts
- To increase income through new support contracts
- To ensure staffing and management structures meet actual needs within income

ESPA College

- To ensure College financial strength in order to provide the resources to support excellence in teaching and learning
- To increase income through increased learner numbers and diversifying College activities
- Learners achieve excellent educational and personal outcomes
- To further develop College systems and activities to improve the quality of teaching and learning
- To improve employability outcomes
- To expand the social care (Hub) programme for College leavers
- To meet demand for referrals by improving capacity in Teesside, Sunderland and Newcastle
- Maintain outstanding outcomes in teaching and learning
- Develop and implement clear curriculum Pathways: Explore, Navigate and Aspire to meet the needs of a broad range of learners

Day and Vocational Services

- To ensure the ongoing financial stability of day and vocational services

- To devise and implement a clear strategy to accommodate the future needs of Hub and Croft users
- To offer an extensive menu of high-quality autism specific activities within the building and community
- To extend the range of activities in direct response to people's needs, wishes and interests
- To develop more vocational and volunteering opportunities
- To develop improved links with Social Hub to support transition of College Hub leavers at 30

Autism Works

- To maintain financial strength to support the continued growth and development of the enterprise
- To build on current contracts and secure new clients
- To recruit and train a skilled workforce

ESPA Research

- To ensure the financial viability and growth of ESPA Research
- To produce high quality research for the public good
- To continue current research projects and engage in new partnerships
- To enhance marketing to raise the profile of the enterprise

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2025

Financial Review

The consolidated statement of financial activities for the year 2024-2025 reports an operating surplus of £1.873m in comparison with £1.236m last year. This is largely a result of increased charitable activities within the residential and education sector where we have seen growth within our day services. The results have exceeded our expectations in the current financial year, especially when the cost of living crisis and social care worker crisis remains within the social care sector. Occupancy has now started to recover slowly within our residential care homes as the social care worker crisis remains to have an impact on our organisation. We have seen another year of marginal decrease in the agency worker utilisation to resource our current student and resident requirement but this still remains within the organisation. The cost of living crisis has started to hit key costs and half way through the year we are now facing the full impact of our energy costs in Oct 2024. The Charity maintained safe levels of staffing for all services but the increased competition for staff will continue to be a factor within the care sector over the next 12 months. Any surpluses that we generate are used to build up funding for investment in future projects, and will enable the organisation to maintain its future strategic objectives.

In 2024-25, we generated total income for the year of £20.927m (2024: £19.021m) an increase of 10.02% on the previous year. The increase in the year was due to the increase in demand for our Social Care Day Service, along with annual inflationary rises. We have seen a marginal increase in demand for our care home placements, new admissions has been a challenge with the staffing crisis within the care sector, this has resulted in delays for new admissions into our services, occupancy levels continues to be one of our long term strategic objectives. During the year we have continued to see an increase in demand for College education placements but the challenge remains on inflationary increases and pressure on student fees. Student numbers and placement fees have increased in the year and the forecasted student numbers for 2025-26 is encouraging.

Fee income from statutory bodies represents 97.33% (2024: 98.24%) of the total income and as part of the strategic planning process, the Board of Directors and management are continuing to look at diversifying into other income streams. Adult social services increased by 5.91% to £14.72m (2024: £13.90m), which is reflective of greater demand and higher occupancy levels within the day and domiciliary care services. Education fees increased by 17.98% to £5.65m (2024: £4.78m), an increase in student numbers have impacted on this year's results. Grant income decreased by 84.70%, with grants received in the year totalling £5,139 (2024: £33,583).

During 2024-25, our total charitable expenditure increased to £19.053m (2024: £17.785m), up 7.13% on the previous year. Analysis of our expenditure shows, adult social services at 69.88% (2024: 70.60%) and education fees at 28.93% (2024: 28.27%) of our total expenditure. Support costs in the year were £1.61m or 7.69% of total revenues (2024 - £1.59m, 8.34%). The current economic conditions and financial uncertainty within social care remain a challenge for ESPA, but despite marginal growth in the Education placements and nominal inflationary increases in Local Authority income, we have continued to remain focused on driving efficiencies and optimising costs to maintain a healthy surplus for the year.

The balance sheet remains in good shape at the current financial year end. The organisation has invested funds of £0.18m (2024: £0.1m) in fixed assets during the year. The main investment in the year was to address the back log of equipment and machinery within our sites and the continued investment in the organisations Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

At the end of the financial year the group has total net assets of £22.725m (2024: £20.852m) based on reporting a total net surplus of £1.873m.

The organisation continues to invest in short-term cash deposits, as these funds arise from fees received in advance. In 2025 the return on investments totalled £304.9k (2024: £121.4k), this being an increase of 151.2% (2024: 180.91% increase). During the financial year the Charity has retained a strong cash flow due to new placements now settled in to the income stream within the local authorities, cash flow monitoring ensures that all funds will be maintained long term.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2025

The Bank of England interest rate will continue to see an increase on our return on these short term investments. The Trustees are mindful of the investment policy and the rate of return has been continually monitored during the year to ensure that we are maximising any return on such funds.

ESPA Research Limited, our trading subsidiary, recorded financial results in the year as shown in note 23. In the current financial year we have seen a decrease in the ability to generate funds through grants and donors for the pure research activities but we are optimistic for new funding streams form the USA. The company has made a marginal surplus in the year and the Board have recommended that all funds are retained within the company to fund current cash flow requirements. The outstanding intercompany loan is repayable on demand and the ESPA Board of Directors is reassured of the ability to meet this obligation. They continue their support for the trading subsidiary by defining its strategic objectives and will ensure the financial support required for the continued research activities it performs.

Autism Works Limited, our trading subsidiary, which was incorporated for the trading activity of IT software testing, recorded the financial results in the year as shown in note 23. During the year the enterprise team of Autism Works has continued to maintain a working relationship with Johnson & Johnson to develop new contracts, while retaining the involvement in existing contracts. The current financial year saw an increase in turnover of 96.13%, during the year the projects pre covid have now commenced and the future strategic goals are now being achieved. The results in the year show a marginal surplus, which along with mitigating the risks on the existing contracts and commencing new projects revues are now showing growth. The company continues to work on new and existing contracts with Johnson & Johnson and the ESPA Board of Directors continue their support based on the positive forecasts and the financial stability offered on future contracts.

Reserves Policy

The reserves policy is designed to reflect the underlying risks facing the Charity and to ensure that ESPA has an appropriate level of reserves to safeguard its operation and the services to people with autism spectrum conditions.

ESPA holds restricted funds in accordance with the donors' requirements. In addition, ESPA has established a designated reserve for the management of the fixed assets of the Charity, with the future requirements of the portfolio determined in accordance with the strategic planning process.

The Trustees have considered the minimum level of free reserves i.e. excluding restricted and designated reserves, required to support the Charity's operations. The free reserves required is between three and nine months average budgeted expenditure, with six months being the optimum. Relevant factors include projected financial performance including cash flow requirements, risk management and assessment of the risks to the Charity's income streams.

Following this review, the Trustees have determined that the minimum required level of free reserves is £9.40m (2024: £8.64m), which is in line with the actual free reserves at 31 March 2025 of £13.22m (2024: £11.33m). This high level of reserves represents the trustees factoring in the effect of the heightened economic uncertainty for the next 12 months, which has increased some of the risk factors on some areas of the organisation. While the actual reserves are higher than required, our expectation is that, over the period of the strategic plan they will be in line with the required level.

The requirement and underlying factors are considered annually and the minimum reserves requirement is, therefore, expected to change over time.

Investment Policy

Whilst the Charity has wide powers to invest monies the Trustees are mindful of:

- The need to maximise income by pursuing an investment policy that produces the best investment return reasonably obtainable.

- The necessity to safeguard the assets of the Charity by not making investments of a speculative or volatile nature.

- The need to maintain a level of reserves in cash in order to meet both the foreseen and unforeseen obligations of the Charity.

It has been the policy of the Trustees for some time and continues to be current policy, that liquid reserves will be maintained in cash deposits and the Trustees will continue to look at ways of maximising the income from such deposits. This policy is reviewed and scrutinised regularly by the Trustees.

Going Concern

Financial sustainability continues to be a critical issue for the care sector. The long shadow cast by the Covid 19 pandemic, particularly on occupancy recovery, the current social care staffing crisis, the energy and cost of living crisis have increased the risks. Our strong financial position mitigates the financial risk but as part of our assessment, the long term strategic objectives identifies that the Charity will continue to focus on the financial sustainability of the organisation. The focus being on occupancy rates, recruitment and retention and efficiency savings.

As we move into 2025/2026 the Charity has undertaken a review of financial scenarios and sensitivity analysis to take into account the financial impact of the cost of living crisis and the energy crisis within the budget forecasts. The Trustees have reviewed our financial position and financial forecasts, taking into account the assumptions underlying those forecasts and the impact for the potential risks affecting them. As a result of this review, the Trustees therefore consider that there is a reasonable expectation that the Group will be able to continue in operation and meet its liabilities as they fall due. As a consequence, they continue to support the going concern basis in accounting in preparing the annual accounts.

Structure, Governance and Management

Structure

Education and Services for People with Autism Limited, known as ESPA, is a registered Charity (No.1037868) and a company limited by guarantee (No.2909953) and is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association incorporated on the 18th March 1994 and as amended on December 2012, December 2020 and August 2022.

The Charity has two wholly owned subsidiary undertakings, ESPA Research Limited and Autism Works Limited, both trading companies. The principal activities of the trading companies are Research and ICT software testing.

Organisational Structure

The Board of Trustees is currently made up of 7 Trustees, comprising a mix of suitable qualified members. The Trustees are appointed and then become Directors of the Company for the purpose of the Companies Act 2006. The Trustees, all of whom are also Directors of the Charity, are listed on page 18, along with the key management of the organisation. Since April 2022 there have been no changes in Board membership. Their skills, qualifications and experience continue to provide strong governance towards the Charity:

- Setting and maintaining the visions, mission and values
- Developing and reviewing strategic priorities and objectives
- Setting operational plans and reviewing performance
- Ensuring compliance with the governing document and the law
- Ensuring accountability including the Charity Commission and Companies House
- Effectively managing resources and funds so it can meet its charitable objectives.

Pre-pandemic the Board ordinarily met at least three times a year and held an Annual General Meeting. However during the pandemic meetings were a combination of virtual and face to face which worked well. Meetings were also shorter but held more frequently. In August 2022 the Governing documents were amended to enable hybrid Board Meetings to

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2025

continue. All Board members give their time freely and none of them receive remuneration from the Charity. The Trustees have established a management structure to guarantee the effective governance and strategic management of ESPA and to ensure that the Charity meets its objectives. The Board delegated authority for the day-to-day management to the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive.

ESPA's two trading subsidiaries each have a Board of Directors, one of which is also a Trustee of the Charity. Meetings have also been attended by ESPA's Chief Executive and Finance Director. The Trustees of ESPA receive formal reports of the Companies activities through regular Board Meetings and papers.

The Board set, monitor and review the salaries of the management team and all salaries are benchmarked against appropriate comparable organisations.

Recruitment, Appointment and Induction of New Trustees

The aim of the Charity is to ensure that the Board of Trustees have a broad mix of skills, knowledge and experience. The process for recruiting new Trustees is based on an evaluation of the diverse skills and experience needed to govern the Charity. The skills mix of the Board is formally reviewed on an annual basis. On this review, the Board will identify any gaps in skills, knowledge and experience and try to identify individuals who can extend and compliment current membership. It is normal practice that before election, Trustees will receive an Induction Pack that contains everything they need to know about the Charity, their general responsibilities and key Policies and Procedures.

New Trustees are invited to spend time with the Executive Management Team as part of their induction. Prospective Trustees are also invited to visit services to further develop their understanding of the work of the Charity. They also receive additional training and updates relevant to their roles and responsibilities.

Trustees' Indemnity

As permitted by the Articles of Association, each of the Trustees has the benefit of an indemnity which is a qualifying third party indemnity as defined by section 234 of the Companies Act 2006. The indemnity was in force throughout the last financial year, and is currently in force.

Related parties

None of the Trustees receive remuneration or benefit from their work with the Charity. Any connection or conflicts with individuals, contractors or similar organisations are disclosed to the Board of Trustees.

Staff Members

None of our work at ESPA would be possible without the dedication, hard work and commitment of our staff especially during this very challenging year. ESPA is fortunate in employing so many staff members who share our values and provide an exceptional service to the people they support. We operate a robust recruitment process, with a commitment to retaining and rewarding staff, while also ensuring that all staff are offered excellent training and personal development.

Consultation with staff members exists at all levels, with the aim that all views are taken into account when decisions are made. During the year, regular communications are provided to staff through individual meetings, team meetings and bulletins. ESPA understands and values the differences in people and has a commitment to creating an environment that treats each individual fairly.

The Charity commits to employment policies which follow best practice, based on equal opportunities in employment and aims to ensure that all employees and job applicants are treated fairly and consistently regardless of their age, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and trade union membership/non membership.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2025

Fundraising

ESPA does not actively raise funds externally or use professional fundraisers/commercial participators to actively raise funds to further charitable activities. The Charity does sometimes receive donations from our supporters which are used to help further the lives of the individuals we support. In the course of their work some staff teams host events that showcase the talents of the people they support. Any funds raised are reinvested into resources.

We are aware of the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 in relation to statements on fundraising and are reviewing our processes to ensure compliance.

Risk Management

The Charitable Group operates a formal Risk Management Procedure that provides oversight and accountability for the management of risk across all levels of the group.

Risk is managed by the Trustees, Executive Management Team and relevant members of the Senior Management Team. Our Risk Management Procedure and process are in place to identify the strategic and operational risks to the Charity, current controls, monitoring processes and further action to be taken that will minimise the potential impact and likelihood upon the group.

All information is incorporated into the group wide Risk Register, which is reviewed and approved annually by the Board of Trustees. This was last reviewed in June 2025.

The main risk categories as defined by the group are divided into four categories:

- Strategic
- Operational
- Financial
- People

Overall the areas of residual risk that would have the highest (most significant) impact on ESPA have been assessed as:

- Increased competition from other providers
- Failure to attract or retain staff
- Changing legislation, government policy and impact on commissioning strategies and funding.
- Major incident/investigations
- Significant safeguarding issue/severe injury or death of a service user, student or staff member
- Economic climate (including Ukraine War) and inflation
- Expenditure exceeds income

The risk management process demonstrates that through management review and current controls, it significantly reduces the potential impact and likelihood of risk in all areas. The Risk Register clearly defines further action to be taken within the group, which has been reflected in the strategic objectives for April 2025 to March 2027.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2025

Statement of Trustees Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also Directors of Education and Services for People with Autism Limited for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees Annual Report (including the Strategic 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 charitable company and the group and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company and the group for that period. 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 2019 (FRS 102);
- 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 charitable company and the group will continue to operate.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and the group 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 charitable company and the group, and hence for taking reasonable steps for prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.
In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

AUDITORS

The auditors, Azets Audit Services, will be proposed for re-appointment in accordance with Section 485 of the Companies Act 2006.

The Report of the Trustees including the Strategic Report was approved by the Board of Trustees on 23 December 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

Paul Shattock

Paul Shattock

Chairman

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

For The Year Ended 31 March 2025

Charity Registration Number:	1037868
Company Registration Number:	2909953
Trustees and Directors:	P E G Shattock (Chairman) P M Moxon Prof M Hooper R Jordan S Robinson G Young Dr M Maskey
Chief Executive:	K T Hardy
Key Management:	K T Hardy - Chief Executive P G Cahill - Deputy Chief Executive/College Principal M Elstob - Head of Social Care
Company Secretary:	K T Hardy
Registered Office:	North House Ferryboat Lane Sunderland Tyne and Wear SR5 3RL
Auditors:	Azets Audit Services Bulman House Regent Centre Henry St Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 3LS
Bankers:	Barclays Bank PLC 7th Floor Bank House East Pilgrim Street Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6QE

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED

Opinion on financial statements

We have audited the financial statements of Education and Services for People with Autism Limited (the 'parent charitable company') and its subsidiaries (the 'group') for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise the group Statement of Financial Activities, the group and parent charitable company Balance Sheet, the group Cash Flow Statement 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 group's and parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2025, and of the group's 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 responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group and parent charitable company 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 group and parent charitable company'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 trustees' 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 the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' annual report (including the strategic report and the directors' report) for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the directors' report, which are included in the trustees' report, have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of our knowledge and understanding of the group and parent charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report and the trustees' annual 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 by the parent charitable company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the parent charitable company's 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 required for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 17, the trustees (who are also the directors of the parent charitable company for the purposes 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 group and parent charitable company'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 group or parent 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.

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.

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 company 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 field in which the client operates, we identified the following areas as those most likely to have a material impact on the financial statements; compliance with the UK Charities Act, Companies Act, Care Quality Commission and Ofsted.

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.

Azets Audit Services

Graham Fitzgerald BA FCA DChA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Azets Audit Services
Accountants
Statutory Auditor
Bulman House
Regent Centre
Henry St
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE3 3LS

23 December 2025

Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities (Incorporating an income and expenditure account)
For The Year Ended 31 March 2025

Income and Expenditure Account

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2024 £
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	2	60,697	-	60,697	84,181
Charitable activities	3	20,372,308	5,139	20,377,447	18,723,758
Other trading activities	4	183,551	-	183,551	91,223
Investments	5	304,918	-	304,918	121,383
Total income		20,921,474	5,139	20,926,613	19,020,545
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	6	19,048,177	5,139	19,053,316	17,784,639
Total expenditure		19,048,177	5,139	19,053,316	17,784,639
Net income / (expenditure)		1,873,297	-	1,873,297	1,235,906
Transfers between funds	20	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	20	1,873,297	-	1,873,297	1,235,906
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward	20	20,851,603	-	20,851,603	19,615,697
Total funds carried forward	20	22,724,900	-	22,724,900	20,851,603

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities. The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised during the year.

Balance Sheet
at 31 March 2025

	Note	Group 2025	Group 2024	Charity 2025	Charity 2024
		£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	13	8,045,700	8,161,660	8,037,969	8,146,497
Investments	14	-	-	20	20
Total fixed assets		8,045,700	8,161,660	8,037,989	8,146,517
Current assets					
Debtors	15	6,905,762	6,260,208	6,945,246	6,324,450
Cash at bank and in hand		9,642,859	8,430,430	9,615,981	8,398,870
Total current assets		16,548,621	14,690,638	16,561,227	14,723,320
Current liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	(1,625,051)	(1,675,601)	(1,597,192)	(1,647,170)
Net current assets		14,923,570	13,015,037	14,964,035	13,076,150
Total assets less current liabilities		22,969,270	21,176,697	23,002,024	21,222,667
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	17	(244,365)	(325,061)	(244,365)	(325,061)
Provisions for liabilities	19	(5)	(33)	-	-
Net assets		22,724,900	20,851,603	22,757,659	20,897,606
Charity Funds					
Restricted funds	20	-	-	-	-
Unrestricted funds	20	22,724,900	20,851,603	22,757,659	20,897,606
Total charity funds	20	22,724,900	20,851,603	22,757,659	20,897,606

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board on 23 December 2025.

Signed on behalf of the board of trustees:

Paul Shattock

Paul Shattock - (Chairman)

Company registered number: 2909953

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Statement of Cash Flows and Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows
For The Year Ended 31 March 2025

	Note	Group 2025	Group 2024	Charity 2025	Charity 2024
		£	£	£	£
Cash flow from operating activities	22	1,200,204	2,517,387	1,204,886	2,532,685
Net cash flow from operating activities		1,200,204	2,517,387	1,204,886	2,532,685
Cash flow from investing activities					
Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets		(177,830)	(89,239)	(177,830)	(83,239)
Interest received		304,918	121,383	304,918	121,383
Net cash flow from investing activities		127,088	32,144	127,088	38,144
Cash flow from financing activities					
Repayment of long term loans		(93,948)	(69,468)	(93,948)	(69,468)
Repayment of finance lease liabilities		-	(4,203)	-	(4,203)
Interest paid		(20,915)	(16,694)	(20,915)	(16,694)
Net cash flow from financing activities		(114,863)	(90,365)	(114,863)	(90,365)
Net increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		1,212,429	2,459,166	1,217,111	2,480,464
Cash and cash equivalents at 01.04.2024		8,430,430	5,971,264	8,398,870	5,918,406
Cash and cash equivalents at 31.03.2025		9,642,859	8,430,430	9,615,981	8,398,870
Cash and cash equivalents consists of:					
Cash at bank and in hand		9,642,859	8,430,430	9,615,981	8,398,870
Cash and cash equivalents at 31.03.2025		9,642,859	8,430,430	9,615,981	8,398,870

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2025

1 Accounting policies

1.1 Company information

The Charity is a private company limited by guarantee and is incorporated in England and Wales. The address of its registered office is North House, Ferryboat Lane, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear. SR5 3RL.

The members of the company are the Trustees named on page 18. In the event of the Charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the Charity.

1.2 Basis of preparation

The Group and Charity financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: "Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) " (SORP) issued in October 2019 and the "Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland" (FRS 102). They also comply with the reporting requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

The Group and Charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

The Group and Charity financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis, under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value.

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of the Group and Charity financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

Monetary amounts in these financial statements are stated in pounds sterling and are rounded to the nearest whole £1.

1.3 Going Concern

In order to assess the appropriateness of the going concern assumption basis, the Trustees have considered the Group's financial position, reserves and forecasts for the foreseeable future. At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have considered the assumptions underlying those forecasts and the impact of the financail and potential risks affecting them. After a review, the Trustees therefore consider that there is a reasonable expectation that the Group will be able to continue in operation and meet its liabilities as they fall due. There are no material uncertainties about the Group's ability to continue as a going concern.

1.4 Basis of consolidation

The financial statements of the Charity and its two subsidiary Companies are consolidated, on a line by line basis to produce the Group financial statements. The consolidated entity is referred to as 'the Group'.

The Charity has taken advantage of the exemption in section 408 of the Companies Act 2006 from disclosing its individual Statement of Financial Activities.

1.5 Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when the Charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

a. Donations
For donations to be recognised the Charity will have been notified of the amounts and the settlement date in writing. If there are conditions attached to the donation and this requires a level of performance before entitlement can be obtained then income is deferred until those conditions are fully met or the fulfilment of those conditions is within the control of the Charity and it is probable that they will be fulfilled.

b. Investment income
Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the Charity.

c. Government grants
Income from government grants is recognised when the Charity has entitlement to the funds and any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met.

d. Legacies
Legacies are recognised at the earlier of the Charity being notified of an impending distribution or the legacy being received.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2025

1.6 Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. It is categorised under the following headings:

a. Costs of raising funds includes the costs associated with any fund raising and publicity.

b. Expenditure on charitable activities includes costs of grant awards and other direct costs incurred towards achieving the Charity's charitable objectives.

c. Expenditure on governance relate to the corporate management of the organisation. They include the audit fee and insurance costs for the corporate management.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as an expense against the activity for which expenditure arose.

1.7 Allocation of support cost

All expenses including support costs and governance costs are allocated or apportioned to the applicable expenditure headings. Where support costs cannot be directly attributed to one or more categories they are apportioned on the basis of time spent. The analysis of these costs is included in note 8.

1.8 Leases

Operating lease rentals are charged to the SOFA on a straight line basis over the term of the lease.

Assets acquired under finance leases are capitalised and depreciated over the shorter of the lease term and the expected useful life of the asset. Minimum lease payments are apportioned between the finance charge and the reduction of the outstanding lease liability using the effective interest method. The related obligations, net of future finance charges, are included in creditors.

1.9 Pension costs

The Charity operates a defined contribution scheme for the benefit of its employees. Pension contributions payable for the year are recognised as an expense and as a liability, after deducting amount already paid.

1.10 Foreign currency

Transactions in foreign currencies are translated to sterling at the exchange rate ruling at the date of transaction. Exchange differences arising are taken to the SOFA.

1.11 Taxation

The Charity is an exempt Charity within the meaning of schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes.

Taxation that may arise within the Group through its subsidiary undertakings is accounted in accordance with FRS 102 section 29 'Income tax'.

1.12 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets costing more than £500 are capitalised and included at cost including any incidental expenses of acquisition.

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets at rates calculated to write off the cost on a straight line basis over their expected useful economic lives as follows:

Asset Category	*Rate*
Freehold land	nil
Freehold buildings	2% Straight line
Short leasehold buildings	2% Straight line and over the life of the lease
Plant & Machinery	over 5 years
Fixtures, Fittings & Equipment	over 5 years
Computer equipment	over 3 years
Motor vehicles	over 4 years

1.13 Investments

Investments are stated at cost at the balance sheet date. The SOFA includes the net gains and losses arising on revaluations and disposals throughout the year.

Investments in subsidiaries which consist of ordinary share capital are carried at cost less impairment.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2025

1.14 Debtors

Debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid.

1.15 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, cash held in current accounts and deposit accounts with UK Banks. All deposits are ready realisable.

1.16 Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where there is a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in a transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any discounts due.

1.17 Financial instruments

The Group has chosen to adopt section 11 and 12 of FRS 102, identifying and classifying financial instruments as 'basic' and 'other'. The Group has identified assets that qualify for 'basic' financial instruments only.

a. **Financial assets**
Basic financial assets, including trade and other debtors, cash and bank balances, are initially recognised at transaction value 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. Such assets are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest method.

b. **Financial liabilities**
Basic financial liabilities, including trade creditors, bank loans, and other creditors, are initially recognised at transaction value unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest method.

1.18 Fund accounting

Restricted funds
Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the Charity for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund.

Unrestricted funds

a. **Designated**
Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

b. **General**
General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Transfers from general funds to restricted funds are made when the income for a specific activity does not cover the full costs. Transfers between designated funds and general funds are determined by the Trustees where deemed appropriate.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2025

2 Income from donations and legacies

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2025	Total Funds 2024
		£	£	£	£
Donations		697	-	697	4,181
Donations - Robert Luff Foundation	23	60,000	-	60,000	80,000
		60,697	-	60,697	84,181

Income from donations and legacies was £60,697 (2024 - £84,181) of which £Nil (2024 - Nil) was attributable to restricted funds and £60,697 (2024 - £84,181) was attributable to unrestricted funds.

3 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2025	Total Funds 2024
	£	£	£	£
Adult services fees	14,721,353	-	14,721,353	13,900,300
College fees	5,645,781	-	5,645,781	4,785,336
Grants	-	5,139	5,139	33,583
Other	5,174	-	5,174	4,539
	20,372,308	5,139	20,377,447	18,723,758

Income from charitable activities was £20,377,447 (2024 - £18,723,758) of which £5,139 (2024 - £33,583) was attributable to restricted funds and £20,372,308 (2024 - £18,690,175) was attributable to unrestricted funds.

During the year the Group and Charity received no capital grants (2024 - £NIL), which has no unfulfilled conditions or other conditions attached. Other forms of grant assistance from which the Group and Charity has benefitted amounts to £5,139 (2024: £33,583).

4 Income from other trading activities

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2025	Total Funds 2024
		£	£	£	£
Garden furniture income		1,721	-	1,721	726
Subsidiary undertakings income	23	181,830	-	181,830	90,497
		183,551	-	183,551	91,223

Income from other trading activities was £183,551 (2024 - £91,223) of which £Nil (2024 - £Nil) was attributable to restricted funds and £183,551 (2024 - £91,223) was attributable to unrestricted funds.

5 Income from investments

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2025	Total Funds 2024
	£	£	£	£
Interest received	304,918	-	304,918	121,383
	304,918	-	304,918	121,383

The group's investment income arises from money held within interest bearing deposit accounts and is attributable to unrestricted funds.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2025

6 Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

	Note	Activities undertaken directly	Support costs	2025	2024
		£	£	£	£
Adult services fees		12,503,276	810,242	13,313,518	12,556,144
College fees		4,717,755	793,457	5,511,212	5,028,313
Subsidiary undertakings expenditure	23	222,342	6,244	228,586	200,182
		17,443,373	1,609,943	19,053,316	17,784,639

£5,139 (2024 - £33.583) of the above costs were attributable to restricted funds. £19,048,177 (2024 - £17,751,056) of the above costs were attributable to unrestricted funds.

7 Allocation of support costs

Support costs are allocated to activities on a relevant basis to the nature of the underlying cost, including headcount, time spent or in proportion to resources used

Support cost (Current Year)	Note	Adult services fees	College fees	Trading Activities	2025
		£	£	£	£
Governance	8	16,728	16,728	6,244	39,700
Management		92,550	92,550	-	185,100
Finance		122,697	122,696	-	245,393
Human resources		43,819	43,819	-	87,638
Maintenance		53,109	53,110	-	106,219
Training		27,742	10,957	-	38,699
Multi disciplinary team		80,604	80,603	-	161,207
Facilities (incl. rental)		26,522	26,522	-	53,044
Admin and Office costs		346,471	346,472	-	692,943
Total support and governance costs		810,242	793,457	6,244	1,609,943
Support costs are made up of:					
Staff Costs		420,521	403,735	-	824,256
Other Costs		389,721	389,722	6,244	785,687
Total support and governance costs		810,242	793,457	6,244	1,609,943

Support cost (Prior Year)	Note	Adult services fees	College fees	Trading Activities	2024
		£	£	£	£
Governance	8	19,714	19,714	5,600	45,028
Management		115,363	115,362	-	230,725
Finance		129,643	129,643	-	259,286
Human resources		43,828	43,828	-	87,656
Maintenance		54,765	54,765	-	109,530
Training		60,499	25,859	-	86,358
Multi disciplinary team		54,643	54,643	-	109,286
Facilities (incl. rental)		16,477	16,478	-	32,955
Admin and Office costs		312,330	312,330	-	624,660
Total support and governance costs		807,262	772,622	5,600	1,585,484
Support costs are made up of:					
Staff Costs		458,741	424,100	-	882,841
Other Costs		348,521	348,522	5,600	702,643
Total support and governance costs		807,262	772,622	5,600	1,585,484

8 Governance costs

	2025	2024
	£	£
Auditor's remuneration:		
- Audit of the charity's annual accounts	31,020	36,992
- Audit of the charity's subsidiary undertakings	6,244	5,600
Trustees' indemnity insurance	2,436	2,436
	39,700	45,028

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2025

9 Net income for the year

Net income is stated after charging:	2025	2024
	£	£
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	291,974	304,099
Loss on sale of tangible fixed assets	1,815	36
Operating lease rentals - land and buildings	126,988	119,205
Operating lease rentals - equipment	158,892	155,692

10 Staff costs and remuneration of trustees and key management personnel

The total group staff costs and employees benefit's was as follows:	2025	2024
	£	£
Wages and salaries	13,859,662	12,774,745
Social security costs	1,026,826	881,393
Pension costs	322,863	294,036
	15,209,351	13,950,174

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2025	2024
	Number	Number
Charitable activities	542	540
Management and administration of the charity	33	31
Subsidiary undertakings	7	7
	582	578

The number of employees who received total employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) of more than £60,000 is as follows:

	2025	2024
	Number	Number
£60,001 - £70,000	1	1
£70,001 - £80,000	1	1
£80,001 - £90,000	-	-
£90,001 - £100,000	1	1
£100,001 - £110,000	-	-
£110,001 - £120,000	-	-
	3	3

The key management personnel of the Group are the Trustees and Management listed on page 18. Total salary and employee benefits received by key management personnel during the year amounted to £257,695 (2024: £246,651) plus pension contributions of £17,670 (2024: £16,950).

The trustees neither received nor waived any emoluments during the year (2024: £Nil).

During the year no trustees (2024: Nil) were reimbursed expenses totalling £Nil (2024: £Nil). A total of £Nil (2024: £Nil) was paid directly to third parties. As permitted in the Articles of Association, Trustee indemnity insurance was purchased at a total cost of £2,436 (2024: £2,436).

11 Interest payable and similar charges

	2025	2024
	£	£
Bank loans and overdrafts	20,915	16,647
Finance charges payable under finance leases	-	47
	20,915	16,694

12 Taxation

Education and Services for People with Autism Limited is a registered charity and as such its income and gains falling within s.505 ICTA 88 or s.256 TCGA 92 are exempt from corporation tax to the extent that they are applied to its charitable activities. No material corporation or deferred tax charge has arisen in its subsidiary undertakings.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2025

13 Tangible fixed assets

Group	Freehold land and buildings £	Plant and machinery £	Fixtures and fittings £	Motor vehicles £	Computer equipment £	Total £
Cost or valuation:						
At 01.04.2024	10,962,564	256,607	701,048	42,635	310,690	12,273,544
Additions	9,009	-	21,928	42,345	104,548	177,830
Disposals	(2,700)	(2,221)	(13,373)	-	(45,775)	(64,069)
At 31.03.2025	10,968,873	254,386	709,603	84,980	369,463	12,387,305
Depreciation:						
At 01.04.2024	2,994,888	232,044	570,675	27,786	286,491	4,111,884
Charge for the year	198,319	10,540	48,327	17,186	17,602	291,974
Eliminated on disposals	(910)	(2,219)	(13,358)	-	(45,766)	(62,253)
At 31.03.2025	3,192,297	240,365	605,644	44,972	258,327	4,341,605
Net book value:						
At 31.03.2025	7,776,576	14,021	103,959	40,008	111,136	8,045,700
At 01.04.2024	7,967,676	24,563	130,373	14,849	24,199	8,161,660

Charity	Freehold land and buildings £	Plant and machinery £	Fixtures and fittings £	Motor vehicles £	Computer equipment £	Total £
Cost or valuation:						
At 01.04.2024	10,962,564	188,039	701,048	42,635	307,419	12,201,705
Additions	9,009	-	21,928	42,345	104,548	177,830
Disposals	(2,700)	(433)	(13,373)	-	(45,775)	(62,281)
At 31.03.2025	10,968,873	187,606	709,603	84,980	366,192	12,317,254
Depreciation:						
At 01.04.2024	2,994,888	178,462	570,675	27,786	283,397	4,055,208
Charge for the year	198,319	3,257	48,327	17,186	17,455	284,544
Eliminated on disposals	(910)	(432)	(13,359)	-	(45,766)	(60,467)
At 31.03.2025	3,192,297	181,287	605,643	44,972	255,086	4,279,285
Net book value:						
At 31.03.2025	7,776,576	6,319	103,960	40,008	111,106	8,037,969
At 01.04.2024	7,967,676	9,577	130,373	14,849	24,022	8,146,497

Tangible fixed assets with a net book value of £5,642,109 (2024 - £5,777,567) have been pledged as security for liabilities of the group and charity. These assets have restricted title.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2025

14 Fixed asset investments

	Group 2025 £	Group 2024 £	Charity 2025 £	Charity 2024 £
Market Value as at 1 April 2024	-	-	20	20
Additions	-	-	-	-
Disposal	-	-	-	-
Impairment	-	-	-	-
Market Value as at 31 March 2025	-	-	20	20

The Charity holds 100 per cent shareholdings in the two subsidiary undertakings within the Group, these are valued at cost of £20 (Espa Research Limited £10 and Autism Works Limited £10) (see note 24).

15 Debtors

	Group 2025 £	Group 2024 £	Charity 2025 £	Charity 2024 £
Trade debtors	2,639,725	2,977,654	2,555,178	2,965,225
Amounts owed by group undertakings	-	-	133,011	185,688
Other debtors	487,841	111,458	486,451	96,049
Prepayments and accrued income	3,778,196	3,171,096	3,770,606	3,077,488
	6,905,762	6,260,208	6,945,246	6,324,450

16 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Group 2025 £	Group 2024 £	Charity 2025 £	Charity 2024 £
Bank loans and overdrafts	78,950	92,202	78,950	92,202
Trade creditors	222,686	223,633	216,116	223,633
Fees in advance	455,587	344,473	455,587	344,473
Payments received on account	233,865	423,171	235,030	423,530
Other tax and social security	245,474	223,697	241,518	219,565
Accruals and deferred income	388,489	368,425	369,991	343,767
	1,625,051	1,675,601	1,597,192	1,647,170

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2025

17 Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	Group 2025	Group 2024	Charity 2025	Charity 2024
	£	£	£	£
Bank loans	244,365	325,061	244,365	325,061
	244,365	325,061	244,365	325,061

Bank loans include aggregate amounts of £Nil (2024 - £Nil) which fall due after five years and which are repaid by instalments. The payment terms and interest rate of each creditor for which an amount falls due after one year are given below:

The bank loans are secured by legal charges and a debenture dated 21/04/1995 over various freehold land and buildings of the Group and Charity.

	Group 2025	Group 2024	Charity 2025	Charity 2024
	£	£	£	£
2.45% above Bank of England rates secured loan repayable on 7 February 2029	244,365	325,061	244,365	325,061
	244,365	325,061	244,365	325,061

18 Leases

a) Operating lease
At 31 March 2025 the Charity and the Group had total commitments under non-cancellable operating leases for Land and Buildings and Equipment as follows:

Total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases are as follows:

	Group 2025	Group 2024	Charity 2025	Charity 2024
Operating lease payments falling due:	£	£	£	£
Within one year	77,847	99,743	66,815	87,691
Between one and five years	11,032	13,583	11,032	13,583
After more than five years	-	-	-	-
	88,879	113,326	77,847	101,274

19 Provisions for liabilities

	Group 2025	Group 2024	Charity 2025	Charity 2024
	£	£	£	£
At 01.04.2024	33	84	-	-
Deferred tax provision	(28)	(51)	-	-
At 31.03.2025	5	33	-	-

The tax provision relates to the deferred taxation within the subsidiary undertaking and is resultant of a timing issue.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2025

20 Fund reconciliation

Group (Current Year)	Balance At 01.04.2024 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains / (losses) £	Transfers £	Balance At 31.03.2025 £
Unrestricted funds:						
General reserve	11,326,709	20,921,474	(19,048,177)	-	22,011	13,222,017
Designated funds						
Fixed asset fund	7,744,396	-	-	-	(22,011)	7,722,385
Property development fund	1,780,498	-	-		-	1,780,498
Total unrestricted funds	20,851,603	20,921,474	(19,048,177)	-	-	22,724,900
Restricted funds:						
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	5,139	(5,139)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	-	5,139	(5,139)	-	-	-
Total funds	20,851,603	20,926,613	(19,053,316)	-	-	22,724,900

Group (Prior Year)	Balance At 01.04.2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains / (losses) £	Transfers £	Balance At 31.03.2024 £
Unrestricted funds:						
General reserve	9,949,576	18,986,962	(17,751,056)	-	141,227	11,326,709
Designated funds						
Fixed asset fund	7,885,623	-	-	-	(141,227)	7,744,396
Property development fund	1,780,498	-	-		-	1,780,498
Total unrestricted funds	19,615,697	18,986,962	(17,751,056)	-	-	20,851,603
Restricted funds:						
Tyne and Wear Care Alliance	-	2,900	(2,900)	-	-	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	8,416	(8,416)	-	-	-
ESFA - Career	-	1,000	(1,000)	-	-	-
ESFA - Training	-	21,267	(21,267)	-	-	-
Covid 19 Support funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	-	33,583	(33,583)	-	-	-
Total funds	19,615,697	19,020,545	(17,784,639)	-	-	20,851,603

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2025

20 Fund reconciliation (continued)

Charity (Current Year)	At 01.04.2024	Income	Expenditure	Gains / (losses)	Transfers	At 31.03.2025
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds:						
General reserve	11,387,876	20,679,644	(18,819,591)	-	14,578	13,262,507
Designated funds						
Fixed asset fund	7,729,232	-	-	-	(14,578)	7,714,654
Property development fund	1,780,498	-	-	-	-	1,780,498
Total unrestricted funds	20,897,606	20,679,644	(18,819,591)	-	-	22,757,659
Restricted funds:						
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	5,139	(5,139)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	-	5,139	(5,139)	-	-	-
Total funds	20,897,606	20,684,783	(18,824,730)	-	-	22,757,659

Charity (Prior Year)	At 01.04.2023	Income	Expenditure	Gains / (losses)	Transfers	At 31.03.2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds:						
General reserve	9,984,212	18,816,465	(17,550,872)	-	138,071	11,387,876
Designated funds						
Fixed asset fund	7,867,303	-	-	-	(138,071)	7,729,232
Property development fund	1,780,498	-	-	-	-	1,780,498
Total unrestricted funds	19,632,013	18,816,465	(17,550,872)	-	-	20,897,606
Restricted funds:						
Tyne and Wear Care Alliance	-	2,900	(2,900)	-	-	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	-	-	-	-	-
ESFA - Career	-	1,000	(1,000)	-	-	-
ESFA - Training	-	21,267	(21,267)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	-	33,583	(33,583)	-	-	-
Total funds	19,632,013	18,850,048	(17,584,455)	-	-	20,897,606

Fund descriptions

a) Unrestricted funds

The General reserve represents the free funds of the charity which are not designated for particular purposes.

b) Designated funds

The Fixed asset fund has been set up to assist in identifying those funds that are not free funds and it represents the net book value of tangible fixed assets less bank loans and hire purchase.

The Property Development Fund has been set up to assist in identifying funds that are not free funds and it represent funds that are required for the future development of properties.

c) Restricted funds

The restricted fund represents funds that have been received and are to be used for a specific purpose.

Tyne and Wear Care Alliance : These funds are specific funds received towards training staff.

ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers: Funding towards the property improvements within the SEND Colleges

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2025

21 Analysis of net assets between funds

Group fund balances at 31 March 2025 are represented by:	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2025 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	8,045,700	-	8,045,700
Investments	-	-	-	-
Current assets	14,768,123	1,780,498	-	16,548,621
Current liabilities	(1,546,101)	(78,950)	-	(1,625,051)
Long term liabilities	(5)	(244,365)	-	(244,370)
Total	13,222,017	9,502,883	-	22,724,900

Group fund balances at 31 March 2024 are represented by:	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	8,161,660	-	8,161,660
Investments	-	-	-	-
Current assets	12,910,140	1,780,498	-	14,690,638
Current liabilities	(1,583,398)	(92,203)	-	(1,675,601)
Long term liabilities	(33)	(325,061)	-	(325,094)
Total	11,326,709	9,524,894	-	20,851,603

Charity fund balances at 31 March 2025 are represented by:	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2025 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	8,037,969	-	8,037,969
Investments	20	-	-	20
Current assets	14,780,729	1,780,498	-	16,561,227
Current liabilities	(1,518,242)	(78,950)	-	(1,597,192)
Long term liabilities	-	(244,365)	-	(244,365)
Total	13,262,507	9,495,152	-	22,757,659

Charity fund balances at 31 March 2024 are represented by:	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	8,146,497	-	8,146,497
Investments	20	-	-	20
Current assets	12,942,822	1,780,498	-	14,723,320
Current liabilities	(1,554,966)	(92,204)	-	(1,647,170)
Long term liabilities	-	(325,061)	-	(325,061)
Total	11,387,876	9,509,730	-	20,897,606

22 Notes to the Cash Flow Statement

a) Reconciliation of net income / (expenditure) to net cash flow from operating activities	Group 2025 £	Group 2024 £	Charity 2025 £	Charity 2024 £
Net income / (expenditure) for the year	1,873,297	1,235,906	1,860,053	1,265,593
Interest receivable	(304,918)	(121,383)	(304,918)	(121,383)
Interest payable	20,915	16,694	20,915	16,694
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	291,974	304,099	284,544	294,945
(Profit) / loss on disposal of tangible fixed assets	1,816	36	1,814	36
Provisions less payments	(28)	(49)	-	-
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	(645,554)	1,190,068	(620,796)	1,183,210
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	(37,298)	(107,984)	(36,726)	(106,410)
Net cash flow from operating activities	1,200,204	2,517,387	1,204,886	2,532,685

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2025

22 Notes to the Cash Flow Statement (continued)

a) Analysis of changes in net funds (current year)

	At 01.04.2024	Cash flows	New finance leases	Non-cash changes	At 31.03.2025
	£	£	£	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	8,430,430	1,212,429	-	-	9,642,859
Loans due within one year	(92,202)	93,948	-	(80,696)	(78,950)
Loans due after more than one year	(325,061)	-	-	80,696	(244,365)
Finance lease obligations	-	-	-	-	-
	8,013,167	1,306,377	-	-	9,319,544

b) Analysis of changes in net funds (prior year)

	At 01.04.2023	Cash flows	New finance leases	Non-cash changes	At 31.03.2024
	£	£	£	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	5,971,264	2,459,166	-	-	8,430,430
Loans due within one year	(452,354)	69,468	-	290,684	(92,202)
Loans due after more than one year	(34,377)	-	-	(290,684)	(325,061)
Finance lease obligations	(4,203)	4,203	-	-	-
	5,480,330	2,532,837	-	-	8,013,167

23 Subsidiary undertakings

The charity has two wholly owned non-charitable subsidiary undertakings ESPA Research Ltd (company number 6862992) and Autism Works Ltd (company number 7402411) which are registered in England and Wales. The registered address for both subsidiary undertakings is North House, Ferryboat Lane, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear. SR5 3RL

Autism Works Ltd is used for the trading activities of software testing and ESPA Research Ltd is used for academic research and non-primary purpose trading activities. All activities have been consolidated on a line by line basis in the SOFA. Any available profits are gifted to the charity, during the current financial year the subsidiaries have generated a small profit/loss on its trading activities but these have been retained in the year to fund current working capital.

A summary of the results of the subsidiaries is shown below:

	Autism Works Limited		ESPA Research Limited	
	Total 2025	Total 2024	Total 2025	Total 2024
	£	£	£	£
Turnover	112,530	57,373	-	-
Cost of sales	(106,635)	(71,507)	-	(1,981)
Gross profit	5,895	(14,134)	-	(1,981)
Administrative expenses	-	-	(121,979)	(126,745)
Other operating income	-	96	129,300	113,028
Profit/(Loss) on ordinary activities	5,895	(14,038)	7,321	(15,698)
Corporation tax repayable/(payable)	28	51	-	-
Retained (Loss)/Profit in subsidiary	5,923	(13,987)	7,321	(15,698)
The aggregate of the assets, liabilities and funds was:				
Assets	45,537	112,666	83,768	55,864
Liabilities	(43,104)	(116,156)	(118,937)	(98,354)
Reserves	2,433	(3,490)	(35,169)	(42,490)

Included within the operating income figure of Espa Research Limited, donations received during the year were £60,000 (2024: £80,000), with the largest donor being the Robert Luff Foundation of £60,000 (2024: £80,000). These funds are unrestricted and have been shown within the Group total of donations and legacies (note 2), with the balance of operating income and turnover of £69,300 (2024: £33,028) shown under trading activities (note 4).

ESPA Limited (The Charity) is prepared to provide continuing support to the trading subsidiaries.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2025

24 Pensions

The charity operates a defined contribution scheme for eligible employees and contributions are charged in the statement of financial activities as they accrue. The charge for the year was £322,863 (2024: £294,036). From February 2014, all employees have been automatically enrolled into the defined contribution scheme and the charity contributes between 3% and 10% of pensionable salaries.

The defined contribution liability is wholly allocated to unrestricted funds and is charged to the charitable activities in proportion to the staffing costs incurred.

Total pension commitments which are included in the balance sheet amount to £57,372 (2024: £55,517).

25 Events after the end of the period

On 23 April 2025 Education and Services for People with Autism Limited completed on the purchase of a residential building at Allensway, Thornaby, Stockton on Tees, which will be developed as a education day service for people with autism spectrum disorders. The building was purchased at market value for £375,000.

26 Related party transactions

The charity has taken advantage of the exemption conferred by paragraph 33.1A of FRS 102, 'related party transactions', that transactions with wholly owned subsidiaries do not need to be disclosed.

27 Financial instruments

The carrying amounts of the charity's financial instruments are as follows:

	Note	Group 2025 £	Group 2024 £	Charity 2025 £	Charity 2024 £
Financial assets					
Debt instruments measured at amortised cost:					
- Trade debtors	15	2,639,725	2,977,654	2,555,178	2,965,225
- Amounts owed by group undertakings	15	-	-	133,011	185,688
- Other debtors and accrued income		4,103,263	3,020,087	4,094,283	2,926,552
- Cash at bank and in hand		9,642,859	8,430,430	9,615,981	8,398,870
		16,385,847	14,428,171	16,398,453	14,476,335
Financial liabilities					
Measured at amortised cost					
- Bank loans and overdraft	16/17	323,315	417,263	323,315	417,263
- Trade creditors	16	222,686	223,633	216,116	223,633
- Accruals		145,459	143,623	126,961	119,145
		691,460	784,519	666,392	760,041

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED

England & Wales - Charity number 1037868

Accounts

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

REPORT AND GROUP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1037868

COMPANY NO: 2909953

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED

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For The Year Ended 31 March 2024

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Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2024

The Trustees submit their annual Board of Directors' report including Strategic Report, together with the audited consolidated financial statements of the Charity and its subsidiaries for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies, set out in notes to the accounts and comply with the Charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 and 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 October 2019).

STRATEGIC REPORT

Objectives and Activities

The objectives of Education and Services for People with Autism Limited (ESPA) and its subsidiary undertakings are for the public benefit to promote the health and wellbeing of people with autism, learning disabilities, communication, social or behavioural conditions, by enhancing the quality of life of such persons, in particular by:

- Providing or assisting in the provision of education, training and employment opportunities for such people and advancing the education of others with autism, learning disabilities, communication, social or behavioural conditions;
- Providing accommodation, support and services to meet the needs of these individuals; and
- Carrying out or commissioning of research to improve the quality of life for autistic people and publish the useful results of such research.

ESPA's Mission Statement is:

"Enabling people across the autism spectrum to enjoy rewarding and fulfilling lives"

We currently support 244 (2023: 245) people in a wide range of person-centred services including:

- Independent Specialist Further Education College
- Residential services
- Independent Supported Living services
- Community services
- Day and vocational opportunities

The majority of the people we support have additional or associated difficulties and disabilities that can include learning disabilities, mental health conditions, ADHD, OCD, sensory and communication difficulties and display behaviours that challenge. We currently employ 578 (2023: 562) highly skilled, trained and highly committed staff.

All of our services share a common vision which- is to provide everyone with the highest quality autism specific support and education that is tailored to meet their needs, wishes and expectations.

Our primary objectives for the coming year are to:

- Continue to offer the highest quality autism specific, person centred and compassionate care and support
- Work in partnership with all stakeholders to ensure individuals achieve excellent personal outcomes
- Develop new services and support arrangements to meet the needs of other autistic people
- Achieve best practice through continuous quality improvement
- Ensure resources are allocated to meet strategic objectives
- Recruit and train a high quality and professional workforce
- Evidence public benefit and social value in all charitable activities
- Demonstrate best value.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2024

Our long-term ambition is to continue to be a leading regional autism specific charity and build on our excellent track record and reputation. We aim to continue to develop new and innovative services in direct response to the changing needs of the people we support, identify gaps in provision and services procured by Local Authorities. With strong financial management, we will continue to ensure that resources are invested in areas of the Charity that meet the longer-term strategic objectives of the organisation. We have a clear accommodation strategy that we are continuing to work towards. This includes a review and renovation of some of our current buildings to ensure they meet the changing needs of the Charity, expectations of funders and the needs of people being referred. This work will continue over the coming years and will support ESPA's continued growth and diversification.

We measure the success of our work by:

- The positive outcomes people achieve and the quality of life they enjoy
- The growing numbers of people we support
- Feedback from individuals, families and other health and social care professionals
- Self-assessment, internal and external inspections, and audits.

Public Benefit

In all the Charity's planning and activities, the Trustees have reviewed and considered the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit. As a registered Charity, public benefit and social value are embedded within our charitable objective and mission. ESPA provides tangible benefits to the public through providing high quality care and education for autistic people.

All of our support and education aim to enhance people's independence and improve health and well-being outcomes, helping to reduce their reliance on health and social care services, reducing health inequalities and increasing their economic independence.

Through our day-to-day work of supporting autistic people to become valued and accepted members of their communities: we support the sustainability of other organisations and charities; provide volunteers; educate the public about autism and associated disabilities and provide practical support to community groups and clubs.

As a large and growing regional employer, we are constantly creating new job opportunities for local people and to help reduce unemployment. In line with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy we are keen to attract a diverse workforce especially those who may experience social or economic barriers to employment or may be at risk of discrimination including people with disabilities or due to a person's ethnicity, nationality or religion.

Our commitment to public benefit is exemplified through our two trading subsidiaries: Autism Works and ESPA Research. Autism Works is a software testing company that employs autistic people as software testers. Thereby recognising and utilising many of the autistic characteristics that are valued and can be a commercial asset in this field of work. The company has been highly commended for the quality of their work through some very high-profile customers. Autism Works business plan aims to continue to grow its workforce offering more real work opportunities to autistic people. ESPA Research's aims are to improve the quality of life for autistic people through high quality publishable research investigations.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2024

Objectives and Activities

The significant charitable activities undertaken by ESPA are:

Adult Social Care

a) Residential Homes

ESPA operates 14 residential homes across Newcastle, Sunderland and Durham. We currently support 76 (2023: 79) people in these services. Residential services currently represent 51% (2023: 50%) of the Charity's income.

Each service is unique and individually tailored to meet the needs, wishes and expectations of the individuals living there. These services range from single person apartments to shared living arrangements. Most of the people we support have challenging and complex needs. Many individuals also have additional or associated difficulties or disabilities, therefore all our services offer intensive and specialist support in highly structured, autism-specific environments. All our homes offer 24 hour person centred care and support and staffing levels are based upon the actual assessed needs of the people they support. Each person receives structured and consistent support from highly skilled, experienced and knowledgeable staff. 268 (2023: 258) staff are currently employed in the residential services.

Each individual has a Person Centred Plan which enables us to understand what is important to them and what they want from their lives. The setting of realistic personal goals ensures that individuals achieve positive outcomes in all aspects of their life. The primary measure of the success of our residential services is the positive life outcomes the individuals achieve and their families' satisfaction with the support we offer. Feedback is consistently captured through on-going dialogue, Service User Reviews and Satisfaction Surveys. Internal quality assurance processes including Senior Management Audits all support the continuous quality improvements of services, Care Quality Commission (CQC) compliance and best practice. CQC inspections provide an independent assessment of quality, safety and compliance and 12 homes have been awarded an overall rating of 'Good' and two have been awarded an 'Outstanding'.

For some people our residential services provide an excellent stepping stone towards a more independent future.

b) Community Services (Domiciliary Services)

ESPA has three CQC registered branches across the Northeast: Sunderland, Newcastle and Middlesbrough. This enables us to support people across the region. We always ensure that through individual service designs and Person-Centred Plans the people we support remain at the heart of everything we do.

We are committed to providing each person with high quality care and support that is autism specific, person-centred, flexible and responsive. We aim to enable each person to live as independently as possible and to become a valued and respected member of their community. Everyone receives an individual package of care and support to meet their specific needs, wishes and aspirations to enable them to enjoy a lifestyle of their choice.

We offer support in a variety of ways, depending on people's needs and preferences. Support can be provided for specific hours during the week up to 24-hours a day. We currently offer a wide range of services through the Agency including:

- Supported living services
- A core and cluster service
- Day provision from a community hub

Over the past 12 months the Agency has maintained financial stability and represents approximately 23% (2023: 20%) of overall income and it currently employs 111 (2023: 116) staff.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2024

The Domiciliary Agency is currently supporting 31 people (2023: 34). We have 8 supported living services and 14 people are supported from a community hub in Stockton. Burnfoot Court, is a core and cluster service funded through Individual Service Funds (ISF's). It currently supports 6 tenants in individual bungalows.

c) Day and Vocational Services

The Croft Centre in Sunderland is a creative and innovative, community-based day provision that offers person-centred programmes of meaningful and stimulating activities for autistic people, many of whom have additional or associated difficulties or disabilities. In addition to the extensive range of activities offered within the building, people also take part in a wide range of activities in the local and wider community.

Everyone in our residential services has the opportunity to take full advantage of these day opportunities. It also offers specialist full and part-time day placements for people not living in ESPA services. These placements are commissioned by Local Authorities or purchased directly through Personal Budgets, Direct Payments or Individual Service Funds. We currently support 22 (2023: 20) people for day placements from across the region. The Croft Centre is open for 44 weeks a year and it currently employs 25 (2023: 25) staff.

Education

a) Independent Specialist Further Education College

ESPA operates an Independent Specialist Further Education College that is based within the Northeast of England, with day sites in Sunderland, Newcastle upon Tyne and Stockton. Students have access to residential accommodation in Sunderland and Newcastle. The College offers day and residential placements for young autistic people between the ages of 16 and 25 years. Most learners are local however some come from across the country to access this specialist provision.

Each College site is specifically tailored to meet the needs of learners with similar abilities, needs and aspirations. EHCPs and Transition plans ensure that each person achieves their personal and academic ambitions. In March 2024 we were supporting 111 learners (2023: 112) across the sites. We offer a 38-week academic year but can offer residential placements for up to 52 weeks. The College now represents 25% (2023: 25%) of the Charity's overall income and employs 162 (2023: 159) staff.

We have earned an excellent reputation and have a good track record of offering learners a high quality, autism specific and person centred learning experience, helping them achieve positive educational and personal outcomes in preparation for life after College. Demand for placements continue to grow. We are continuing to significantly invest in our College buildings to offer state of the art educational and residential facilities that will provide us with the capacity for further growth, enabling us to meet the needs of increasingly complex and challenging learners.

The College offers each learner a bespoke, innovative and creative curriculum. All our learning sessions are designed to be engaging, enjoyable, individualised and challenging. Each person has a programme of study tailored to their specific needs and aspirations. We consistently aim to develop the whole person and blend our autism specific core curriculum (Social Communication, Emotional Literacy and Positive Behaviour Support) with academic and vocational subjects. College learning sessions occur in a variety of settings, many of which are community based. Work experience, employability skills, enterprise and independence feature highly within the College's learning activities.

A growth area for the College over the past 3 years has been the creation of social hub placements as a positive transition opportunity for some leavers. These are social care funded. In March of the 111 people supported by the College 30 were on social hub programmes.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2024

Subsidiaries

a) Autism Works

Autism Works Limited is a wholly owned trading subsidiary of the Charity, offering independent software testing services. Established in 2010, its primary objective is to employ autistic people, giving them the opportunity for sustainable employment and to reduce their reliance on state benefits. The company currently employs 5 people, 3 who are autistic. Our Business Plan demonstrates our commitment to creating opportunities for many more people to gain meaningful employment as the enterprise grows.

b) ESPA Research

ESPA Research is also a wholly owned subsidiary of the Charity. Incorporated in 2009, its aims are to improve the quality of life for people with autism through high quality publishable research investigations. It currently employs 2 people and the majority of their work is carried out from a laboratory in Sunderland's Business Innovation Centre.

Achievements and Performance

The Charity has remained financially strong over the past 12 months, despite being another challenging year. As Covid ended the pressures have remained within the sector for recruitment and retention of staff. Currently we are seeking to improve our retention rate (22%) via a commitment to salary enhancement and a range of staff well-being measures.

Robust financial management has enabled us to accommodate the National Living Wage (NLW) increases, offer competitive salary inflationary increases to all staff and cover increasing costs. However, from April 2024 the new NLW and increased NI contributions is going to significantly impact on budgets and increase our costs by over £1 million. Moreover, we will soon be incurring a significant increase to our costs base as our discounted arrangement with our energy provider comes to an end and cost of living crisis is going to significantly impact on budgets. Unlike many charities who have used reserves to cover core cost, ESPA still has the funds to see the organisation through the expected challenges over the next 12 months.

We continue to invest a lot of time trying to achieve realistic inflationary increases from Local Authorities to enable us to meet growing cost, especially in our residential services. We are also continuing to renegotiate fees for some historic placements and agree back dated inflationary increases. Some outcomes have been successful, but a number are ongoing which is impacting on time, capacity and cash flow.

Directors and Senior Managers

The NE12 framework responsible for procuring specialist post-16 education was extended to July 2022. The College is now free of all legacy fees attributed to the NE12 framework. The College now sets competitive and realistic fees which support the delivery of outstanding educational programmes. Due to low year on year inflationary increases this contract was putting the College's financial stability at risk. From the 1st August they introduced a new Interim Contract which has enabled us to set realistic fees that will enable us to regain the College's financial strength. This will be replaced with a permanent contract from March 2024. The full impact of this new funding model is still to be realised.

We have continued to expand and develop the output and team that support the delivery of our Behaviour Training Programme, NAPPI. We now have 5 qualified trainers, and the training is well established at Levels 1 and 2 across ESPA. We are seeking to secure further trainers to support the delivery of Level 3 and ongoing annual refreshers.

Following a strategic review of our challenging behaviour training, document and systems we withdrew from our Studio III contract and have entered into a new agreement with NAPPI. This is a well-recognised accredited body which better meets our current needs and offers extensive support. We now have 2 qualified Train the Trainers, and the training is now being rolled out across ESPA.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2024

When the Maintenance Manager left ESPA, he was replaced by his deputy which triggered a review of the department. A new team member has been recruited, and a broader range of sub-contractors are being sourced.

We continue to populate the Data Security Protection Toolkit which is a social care specific framework that enables us to evidence compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). In June 2022 we achieved 'Standards Met'. This was last reviewed in March 2024 and will continue to be updated annually.

Following an extensive recruitment programme we finally appointed a Speech and Language Therapist in 2024. We now have 2 Counsellors, a SALT, an OT and a PBS Specialist who have the skills and experience to meet the needs of an increasingly complex population.

ESPA has remained compliant with all legislative, regulatory and contractual requirements. Policies and procedures continue to be systematically reviewed to reflect changes and best practice.

We continue to update some of our marketing and promotional materials for use at local marketing and recruitment events. ESPA's use of social media has significantly increased with a presence on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. We are also updating the ESPA website to reflect the significant change in services, programmes and staff in recent times.

We are progressing with our accommodation strategy however, timescales have been significantly impacted due to the pandemic, rising costs and our ability to secure contractors. Plans are still in place to build a new studio in the grounds of South Hill and to sell Abigail House. We have recently acquired extra temporary teaching space in the grounds of South Hill to meet the demands of a rapidly growing cohort. These College developments will enable us to increase capacity in Sunderland. We have also acquired Ideal House – A large 2 storey development in Thornaby to meet the escalating demand for Autism education across the Tees Valley and North Yorkshire

Residential Services

All of our residential services continue to provide an excellent Quality of Life to the people we support. There has been a noticeable reduction in the use of Agency staff and a greater focus on local recruitment using various media channels. However, due to a competitive and transient labour market, some services remain under pressure to retain and recruit.

During this last year, demand for placements has been maintained but due to the staffing situation our focus has been on filling existing staff voids before accepting new referrals and admissions. In 2023 4 new people moved into ESPA services. Financial stability has been maintained. At the end of March '24 we were supporting 79 service users and we had 11 voids – representing an occupancy rate of 88% which we are confident will increase once the staffing situation improves.

The Finance Department have experienced yet another challenging year trying to achieve inflationary increases from many local authorities. Considerable time has also been spent trying to negotiate fee increases for some historic, loss-making placements. While we have some successes, this remains a priority for the next financial year. CQC have introduced a new Single Inspection Framework which outlines the way the Care Quality Commission inspect and rate settings. KLOE's have been replaced with Quality Statements and there is a greater focus on continuous assessment – ESPA's current position is that all Residential Services are rated Good overall.

In 2023 our internal QA processes were reviewed and a new QA Lead was appointed. The lead has a clear plan to review existing documents and standardise across services to provide a more streamlined process that generates evidence linked to CQC requirements and better captures Quality of Life outcomes.

Demand for respite placements at Ashleigh remains high. However, staffing issues continue to impact our ability to adequately resource the service. Further building work is required to provide increasing capacity for both residential and student placements.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2024

ESPA College

2023-2024 has been another very positive year for ESPA College. There has been continued stability in student numbers alongside many outstanding learner outcomes and achievements. At the end of March 24, the College was supporting 111 young people, 82 learners were on Educational placements and 29 attended the Social Hubs – 5 people were on hybrid programmes.

The Interim Contract with the NE12 Commissioning Framework officially ended on March 31st. The College now has complete autonomy and control of their fee structures going forward – potentially ensuring a profitable and sustainable future for the College.

The Social Hub continues to thrive. Numbers have risen by 10% this year and forecasts suggest this is set to continue with numbers expected to reach 45-50 in the next few years.

Going forward we need to prioritise developing a new space for this anticipated growth. This has started with the purchase of a 2year temporary Portakabin space until The Studio extension is complete in the South Hill garden, the purchase and refurbishment of Ideal House in Thornaby to replace Tithebarn alongside the search to find a bigger property to replace North Rye in Tyneside.

The College's Self-Assessment Report (SAR) was finalised in January '24. It concluded that the College is Good in each area of the inspection framework. Progress and achievements are reported through Termly Quality Reports which are shared with staff and Trustees. Areas for improvement are identified and help inform our Annual QIP (Quality Improvement Plan).

In November 2023, the College introduced a new framework for internal teaching observations. The main objective of the new approach was to improve the quality and usefulness of feedback and support received by tutors following an observation. Teaching observations conducted since the introduction of the new process has resulted in 84% of teaching and learning being judged as either Secure or Highly Proficient.

One of ESPA's Trustees is now the primary link person for Educational & Safeguarding inputs; meeting regularly with College Principal/Vice Principal and attending the College Advisory Board. He has undertaken 'learner walk' (informal less observations) and is a familiar link for the sites, students and staff.

Evidence gathered from multiple sources confirms that this year learners had made excellent progress – 43% of graduates progressed to Further of Higher Education, 27% moved on to appropriate Social Destinations, 3% moved into supported living and 15% went onto paid or voluntary work.

In December 2023, the College held the first of its termly Parents' Forums. It was well attended and was a much-appreciated opportunity to build relationships with parents and for parents to share their concerns and experiences with other families.

College leaders share a vision of celebrating authentic autistic identity. A learner voice working group was created and champions themes important to our students – for example a Learner Vlog is underway, and students have attended the national NATSPEC Parliament and organised our own Summer Olympics.

A new College Mental Health Well-Being group was established – key outcomes include writing a College Mental Health & Well-Being Policy, increased access to relevant training and improving knowledge of local well-being services and providers.

Community Services (Domiciliary Services)

We continue to be approved framework providers in Newcastle, Durham, North Tyneside, Sunderland, South Tyneside, Gateshead and Tees Valley. The last year has seen an increase in direct approaches rather than mini competitions and tenders.

As is the case across our sector Recruitment and Retention has proven to be a real barrier and limited our ability to take on new support services – much of our recruitment has been from employees originating from overseas with minimal

local uptake or interest. Nonetheless Community Services continue to be financially stable with inflationary increases being realistic and forthcoming.

In October '23 we successfully tendered for the contract to maintain operational management and control of Ware Street for up to 5 years. A detailed Action Plan is being followed to ensure the best possible service is delivered.

Burnfoot Court continues to provide support to 5 people who live in individual bungalows on a core and cluster site in Newcastle. Following a period of low staff levels and difficulties around recruitment and retention, staffing levels are now stable, and the service continues to thrive.

In August 2023 a young man moved from Queen Alexandra Road to take up a place at Coventry University having been successfully supported by staff teams from QA Road and ESPA College – working in collaboration to get him ready for the next step on his journey.

In December 2023, following an extended period of assessment and a gradual transition, a young man moved into our North Tyneside supported living service taking the building up to its capacity of 3.

Day and Vocational Services.

The Croft Centre in Sunderland and College Social Hubs make up our day service offer and provide opportunities for over 50 people. The Croft Centre currently supports 21 service users, and the Social Hubs provide opportunities for up to 35 young adults. With the creation and growth of the College Social Hubs, fewer people now transition directly from the College into other ESPA day services. We have established that the Social Hubs will only support people up to the age of 30 – beyond this they can be offered a transition to The Croft Centre. With the College portfolio at capacity, it is hoped that the acquisition of new properties in Newcastle and Teesside will create more opportunities for growth and separate The Hubs from the College model.

Post-covid there has been an increase in demand for Croft Centre sessions which has resulted in a change to the timetable; moving from 3 to 4 sessions per day opening more options and variety.

Social events are very well supported as ever. Highlights have included Summer Barbeques, East Tea and Egg hunts, Halloween and Pizza Parties, Christmas Party, 80's themed night, Valentine's Party and Cingo de Mayo – A Mexican themed event.

The Croft has also established links with a local Horticultural Organisation – Sunderland Home Grown - learning about everything from plants to beekeeping and having been involved in the maintenance and upkeep of the beehives. Regular sessions from Intertwined have introduced very popular yoga, dance and movement and mindfulness sessions.

The Summer House. The Pamper Room and The Sensory Room have all been upgraded and have proved very popular. Moreover, a brand-new Cinema Room is being developed including authentic seats and a popcorn machine.

Autism Works

In the current financial year, the enterprise made a marginal financial loss. The year has been challenging and the contracts that were agreed pre Covid are now being implemented with Johnson and Johnson's long term goals. .

Although Autism Works has a good portfolio of clients including Johnson & Johnson; post-covid the Testing sector has become increasingly competitive and challenging. This is further compounded by significant advancements in AI technology which is having a clear and direct impact on Autism Works' ability to secure new work and contracts. It is hoped that the introduction of a successful entrepreneurial specialist on a consultancy basis will help to improve the commercial outlook for Autism Works going forward.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2024

ESPA Research

We have continued to conduct research to conduct research that aims to improve the lives of people diagnosed with Autism. Our primary goals are to discover potential biomarkers; identifying and tackling biological issues to guide intervention options and to disseminate scientific findings.

In the current financial year, ESPA Research received another generous donation from the Robert Luft Foundation. They have now generously supported the enterprise for 15 years.

A working collaboration continues with Arizona State University – The work aims to develop a biomarker suite for Autism.

ESPA Research continues to contribute to work looking into developing and designing a screening questionnaire to accompany their studies. This focuses on behaviour, developmental, and somatic symptoms.

Work looking at a potential overlap between autoimmune encephalitis and autism has continued; specifically focusing on the themes of regression.

Members of ESPA Research continue to attend various conferences both on-line and in person; actively participating and contributing where possible.

Plans for future periods

Our Strategic Plan for April 2024 to March 2026 clearly defines ESPA's plans and processes, targets, expected outcomes and timescales, that will enable the Charity to build on its many achievements and retain its financial strength.

ESPA's key priorities and strategic objectives for April 2024 to March 2026 have been formally approved by the Board of Trustees. Progress against objectives is monitored and reported through the Board of Trustees Meetings and the Charity's management and meeting structures.

The key strategic objectives are summarised below:-

Governance and Central Management

- To ensure ESPA's continued financial strength with resources allocated in line with strategic priorities
- Increase income through growth in existing and new activities
- To implement the Charity's Accommodation Strategy
- To recruit, train and develop a high quality workforce
- To ensure compliance with legislative and contractual requirements and best practice
- To evidence best practice and the achievement of positive outcomes

Residential Services

- To ensure the on-going financial strength and growth of residential services
- Deliver a high-quality, Quality Assurance Process that ensures high quality person-centred, autism specific support
- To achieve and sustain 94% occupancy
- Ensure resources are allocated to meet strategic priorities
- Ensure CQC compliance and maintain or exceed a 'Good' rating in all services.

Domiciliary Agency

- To ensure the Agency's financial strength to support its on-going development
- To ensure the Agency continues to meet legislative and contractual requirements and evidence best practice
- To ensure each person receives the highest quality person centered and autism specific support
- Everyone supported achieves positive personal outcomes and enjoys a good quality of life

- To remain on Local Authority frameworks and retain current contracts
- To increase income through new support contracts
- To ensure staffing and management structures meet actual needs within income

ESPA College

- To ensure the College's financial strength in order to provide the resources to support excellence in teaching and learning
- To increase income through increased learner numbers and diversifying College activities
- Learners achieve excellent educational and personal outcomes
- To further develop College systems and activities to improve the quality of teaching and learning
- To improve employability outcomes
- To expand the social care programme for College leavers
- To meet demand for referrals by improving capacity via accommodating staff
- Maintain outstanding outcomes in Teaching and Learning

Day and Vocational Services

- To ensure the ongoing financial stability of day and vocational services
- To reintegrate residential service users
- To offer an extensive menu of high-quality autism specific activities within the building and community
- To extend the range of activities in direct response to people's needs, wishes and interests
- To develop more vocational and volunteering opportunities
- To develop links with Social Hub to support transition of College Hub leavers at 30

Autism Works

- To maintain financial strength to support the continued growth and development of the enterprise
- To build on current contracts and secure new clients
- To recruit and train a skilled workforce

ESPA Research

- To ensure the financial viability and growth of ESPA Research
- To produce high quality research for the public good
- To continue current research projects and engage in new partnerships
- To enhance marketing to raise the profile of the enterprise

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2024

Financial Review

The consolidated statement of financial activities for the year 2023-2024 reports an operating surplus of £1.236m in comparison with £1.502m last year. This is largely a result of increased charitable activities within the residential and education sector where we have seen growth within our day services. The results have exceeded our expectations in the current financial year, especially when the cost of living crisis and social care worker crisis remains within the social care sector. Occupancy has now slowed down in the residential care homes as the social care worker crisis remains to have an impact on our organisation. We have seen a marginal decrease in the agency worker utilisation to resource our current student and resident requirement but this still remains within the organisation. The cost of living crisis has started to hit key costs and at present we have not fully faced the full impact of our energy costs in Oct 2024. The Charity maintained safe levels of staffing for all services but the increased competition for staff will continue to be a factor within the care sector over the next 12 months. Any surpluses that we generate are used to build up funding for investment in future projects, and will enable the organisation to maintain its future strategic objectives.

In 2023-24, we generated total income for the year of £19.021m (2023: £17.619m) an increase of 7.95% on the previous year. The increase in the year was due to the increase in demand for our Social Care Day Service, along with annual inflationary rises. We have seen a small rise in demand for our care home placements, new admissions has been a challenge with the staffing crisis within the care sector, this has resulted in delays for new admissions into our services, occupancy levels continues to be one of our long term strategic objectives. During the year we have continued to see an increase in demand for College education placements but the challenge remains on inflationary increases and pressure on student fees. Student numbers and placement fees have increased in the year and the forecasted student numbers for 2024-25 is encouraging.

Fee income from statutory bodies represents 98.24% (2023: 96.39%) of the total income and as part of the strategic planning process, the Board of Directors and management are continuing to look at diversifying into other income streams. Adult social services increased by 11.06% to £13.90m (2023: £12.52m), which is reflective of greater demand and higher occupancy levels within the day and domiciliary care services. Education fees increased by 7.15% to £4.78m (2023: £4.46m), an increase in student numbers have impacted on this year's results. Grant income decreased by 70.69%, with grants received in the year totalling £33,583 (2023: £114,588), which includes £2,900 from the Work force development fund, £22,267 from the ESFA and £8,416 from the ESFA Capital Fund.

During 2023-24, our total charitable expenditure increased to £17.785m (2023: £16.117m), up 10.34% on the previous year. Analysis of our expenditure shows, adult social services at 70.60% (2023: 69.51%) and education fees at 28.27% (2023: 28.73%) of our total expenditure. Support costs in the year were £1.59m or 8.34% of total revenues (2023 - £1.51m, 8.60%). The current economic conditions and financial uncertainty within social care remain a challenge for ESPA, but despite marginal growth in the Education placements and nominal inflationary increases in Local Authority income, we have continued to remain focused on driving efficiencies and optimising costs to maintain a healthy surplus for the year.

The balance sheet remains in good shape at the current financial year end. The organisation has invested funds of £0.1m (2023: £0.13m) in fixed assets during the year. The main investment in the year was to address the back log of equipment and machinery within our sites and the continued investment in the organisations Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

At the end of the financial year the group has total net assets of £20.852m (2023: £19.616m) based on reporting a total net surplus of £1.236m.

The organisation continues to invest in short-term cash deposits, as these funds arise from fees received in advance. In 2024 the return on investments totalled £121.4k (2023: £43.2k), this being an increase of 180.91% (2023: 1,474.71% increase). During the financial year the Charity has retained a strong cash flow due to new placements now settled in to the income stream within the local authorities, cash flow monitoring ensures that all funds will be maintained long term.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2024

The Bank of England interest rate will continue to see an increase on our return on these short term investments. The Trustees are mindful of the investment policy and the rate of return has been continually monitored during the year to ensure that we are maximising any return on such funds.

ESPA Research Limited, our trading subsidiary, recorded financial results in the year as shown in note 24. In the current financial year we have seen a decrease in the ability to generate funds through grants and donors for the pure research activities but we are optimistic for new funding streams form the USA. The company has made a marginal loss in the year and the Board have recommended that all funds are retained within the company to fund current cash flow requirements. The outstanding intercompany loan is repayable on demand and the ESPA Board of Directors is reassured of the ability to meet this obligation. They continue their support for the trading subsidiary by defining its strategic objectives and will ensure the financial support required for the continued research activities it performs.

Autism Works Limited, our trading subsidiary, which was incorporated for the trading activity of IT software testing, recorded the financial results in the year as shown in note 24. During the year the enterprise team of Autism Works has continued to maintain a working relationship with Johnson & Johnson to develop new contracts, while retaining the involvement in existing contracts. The current financial year saw a reduction in turnover of 78.73%, the impact of covid still remains within some projects and this has resulted in the starting dates for some contracts being delayed. The results achieved in the year, although negative, was controlled by mitigating risks and uncertainty on the existing contracts to ensure maximum revenues were achieved. The company continues to work on new and existing contracts with Johnson & Johnson and the ESPA Board of Directors continue their support based on the positive forecasts and the financial stability offered on future contracts.

Reserves Policy

The reserves policy is designed to reflect the underlying risks facing the Charity and to ensure that ESPA has an appropriate level of reserves to safeguard its operation and the services to people with autism spectrum conditions.

ESPA holds restricted funds in accordance with the donors' requirements. In addition, ESPA has established a designated reserve for the management of the fixed assets of the Charity, with the future requirements of the portfolio determined in accordance with the strategic planning process.

The Trustees have considered the minimum level of free reserves i.e. excluding restricted and designated reserves, required to support the Charity's operations. The free reserves required is between three and nine months average budgeted expenditure, with six months being the optimum. Relevant factors include projected financial performance including cash flow requirements, risk management and assessment of the risks to the Charity's income streams.

Following this review, the Trustees have determined that the minimum required level of free reserves is £8.64m (2023: £8.06m), which is in line with the actual free reserves at 31 March 2024 of £11.33m (2023: £9.95m). This high level of reserves represents the trustees factoring in the effect of the heightened economic uncertainty for the next 12 months, which has increased some of the risk factors on some areas of the organisation. While the actual reserves are higher than required, our expectation is that, over the period of the strategic plan they will be in line with the required level.

The requirement and underlying factors are considered annually and the minimum reserves requirement is, therefore, expected to change over time.

Investment Policy

Whilst the Charity has wide powers to invest monies the Trustees are mindful of:

- The need to maximise income by pursuing an investment policy that produces the best investment return reasonably obtainable.

- The necessity to safeguard the assets of the Charity by not making investments of a speculative or volatile nature.

- The need to maintain a level of reserves in cash in order to meet both the foreseen and unforeseen obligations of the Charity.

It has been the policy of the Trustees for some time and continues to be current policy, that liquid reserves will be maintained in cash deposits and the Trustees will continue to look at ways of maximising the income from such deposits. This policy is reviewed and scrutinised regularly by the Trustees.

Going Concern

Financial sustainability continues to be a critical issue for the care sector. The long shadow cast by the Covid 19 pandemic, particularly on occupancy recovery, the current social care staffing crisis, the energy and cost of living crisis have increased the risks. Our strong financial position mitigates the financial risk but as part of our assessment, the long term strategic objectives identifies that the Charity will continue to focus on the financial sustainability of the organisation. The focus being on occupancy rates, recruitment and retention and efficiency savings.

As we move into 2024/2025 the Charity has undertaken a review of financial scenarios and sensitivity analysis to take into account the financial impact of the cost of living crisis and the energy crisis within the budget forecasts. The Trustees have reviewed our financial position and financial forecasts, taking into account the assumptions underlying those forecasts and the impact for the potential risks affecting them. As a result of this review, the Trustees therefore consider that there is a reasonable expectation that the Group will be able to continue in operation and meet its liabilities as they fall due. As a consequence, they continue to support the going concern basis in accounting in preparing the annual accounts.

Structure, Governance and Management

Structure

Education and Services for People with Autism Limited, known as ESPA, is a registered Charity (No.1037868) and a company limited by guarantee (No.2909953) and is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association incorporated on the 18th March 1994 and as amended on December 2012, December 2020 and August 2022.

The Charity has two wholly owned subsidiary undertakings, ESPA Research Limited and Autism Works Limited, both trading companies. The principal activities of the trading companies are Research and ICT software testing.

Organisational Structure

The Board of Trustees is currently made up of 7 Trustees, comprising a mix of suitable qualified members. The Trustees are appointed and then become Directors of the Company for the purpose of the Companies Act 2006. The Trustees, all of whom are also Directors of the Charity, are listed on page 18, along with the key management of the organisation. Since April 2022 there have been no changes in Board membership. Their skills, qualifications and experience continue to provide strong governance towards the Charity:

- Setting and maintaining the visions, mission and values
- Developing and reviewing strategic priorities and objectives
- Setting operational plans and reviewing performance
- Ensuring compliance with the governing document and the law
- Ensuring accountability including the Charity Commission and Companies House
- Effectively managing resources and funds so it can meet its charitable objectives.

Pre-pandemic the Board ordinarily met at least three times a year and held an Annual General Meeting. However during the pandemic meetings were a combination of virtual and face to face which worked well. Meetings were also shorter but held more frequently. In August 2022 the Governing documents were amended to enable hybrid Board Meetings to

continue. All Board members give their time freely and none of them receive remuneration from the Charity. The Trustees have established a management structure to guarantee the effective governance and strategic management of ESPA and to ensure that the Charity meets its objectives. The Board delegated authority for the day-to-day management to the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive.

ESPA's two trading subsidiaries each have a Board of Directors, one of which is also a Trustee of the Charity. Meetings have also been attended by ESPA's Chief Executive and Finance Director. The Trustees of ESPA receive formal reports of the Companies activities through regular Board Meetings and papers.

The Board set, monitor and review the salaries of the management team and all salaries are benchmarked against appropriate comparable organisations.

Recruitment, Appointment and Induction of New Trustees

The aim of the Charity is to ensure that the Board of Trustees have a broad mix of skills, knowledge and experience. The process for recruiting new Trustees is based on an evaluation of the diverse skills and experience needed to govern the Charity. The skills mix of the Board is formally reviewed on an annual basis. On this review, the Board will identify any gaps in skills, knowledge and experience and try to identify individuals who can extend and compliment current membership. It is normal practice that before election, Trustees will receive an Induction Pack that contains everything they need to know about the Charity, their general responsibilities and key Policies and Procedures.

New Trustees are invited to spend time with the Executive Management Team as part of their induction. Prospective Trustees are also invited to visit services to further develop their understanding of the work of the Charity. They also receive additional training and updates relevant to their roles and responsibilities.

Trustees' Indemnity

As permitted by the Articles of Association, each of the Trustees has the benefit of an indemnity which is a qualifying third party indemnity as defined by section 234 of the Companies Act 2006. The indemnity was in force throughout the last financial year, and is currently in force.

Related parties

None of the Trustees receive remuneration or benefit from their work with the Charity. Any connection or conflicts with individuals, contractors or similar organisations are disclosed to the Board of Trustees.

Staff Members

None of our work at ESPA would be possible without the dedication, hard work and commitment of our staff especially during this very challenging year. ESPA is fortunate in employing so many staff members who share our values and provide an exceptional service to the people they support. We operate a robust recruitment process, with a commitment to retaining and rewarding staff, while also ensuring that all staff are offered excellent training and personal development.

Consultation with staff members exists at all levels, with the aim that all views are taken into account when decisions are made. During the year, regular communications are provided to staff through individual meetings, team meetings and bulletins. ESPA understands and values the differences in people and has a commitment to creating an environment that treats each individual fairly.

The Charity commits to employment policies which follow best practice, based on equal opportunities in employment and aims to ensure that all employees and job applicants are treated fairly and consistently regardless of their age, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and trade union membership/non membership.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2024

Fundraising

ESPA does not actively raise funds externally or use professional fundraisers/commercial participators to actively raise funds to further charitable activities. The Charity does sometimes receive donations from our supporters which are used to help further the lives of the individuals we support. In the course of their work some staff teams host events that showcase the talents of the people they support. Any funds raised are reinvested into resources.

We are aware of the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 in relation to statements on fundraising and are reviewing our processes to ensure compliance.

Risk Management

The Charitable Group operates a formal Risk Management Procedure that provides oversight and accountability for the management of risk across all levels of the group.

Risk is managed by the Trustees, Executive Management Team and relevant members of the Senior Management Team. Our Risk Management Procedure and process are in place to identify the strategic and operational risks to the Charity, current controls, monitoring processes and further action to be taken that will minimise the potential impact and likelihood upon the group.

All information is incorporated into the group wide Risk Register, which is reviewed and approved annually by the Board of Trustees. This was last reviewed in March 2023.

The main risk categories as defined by the group are divided into four categories:

- Strategic
- Operational
- Financial
- People

Overall the areas of residual risk that would have the highest (most significant) impact on ESPA have been assessed as:

- Increased competition from other providers
- Failure to attract or retain staff
- Changing legislation, government policy and impact on commissioning strategies and funding.
- Major incident/investigations
- Significant safeguarding issue/severe injury or death of a service user, student or staff member
- Economic climate (including Ukraine War) and inflation
- Expenditure exceeds income

The risk management process demonstrates that through management review and current controls, it significantly reduces the potential impact and likelihood of risk in all areas. The Risk Register clearly defines further action to be taken within the group, which has been reflected in the strategic objectives for April 2024 to March 2026.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2024

Statement of Trustees Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also Directors of Education and Services for People with Autism Limited for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees Annual Report (including the Strategic 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 charitable company and the group and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company and the group for that period. 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 2019 (FRS 102);
- 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 charitable company and the group will continue to operate.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and the group 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 charitable company and the group, and hence for taking reasonable steps for prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.
In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

AUDITORS

The auditors, Azets Audit Services, will be proposed for re-appointment in accordance with Section 485 of the Companies Act 2006.

The Report of the Trustees including the Strategic Report was approved by the Board of Trustees on 23 December 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

Paul Shattock

Paul Shattock

Chairman

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

For The Year Ended 31 March 2024

Charity Registration Number:	1037868
Company Registration Number:	2909953
Trustees and Directors:	P E G Shattock (Chairman) P M Moxon Prof M Hooper R Jordan S Robinson G Young Dr M Maskey
Chief Executive:	K T Hardy
Key Management:	K T Hardy - Chief Executive P G Cahill - Deputy Chief Executive/College Principal M Elstob - Head of Social Care
Company Secretary:	K T Hardy
Registered Office:	North House Ferryboat Lane Sunderland Tyne and Wear SR5 3RL
Auditors:	Azets Audit Services Bulman House Regent Centre Henry St Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 3LS
Bankers:	Barclays Bank PLC 7th Floor Bank House East Pilgrim Street Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6QE

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED

Opinion on financial statements

We have audited the financial statements of Education and Services for People with Autism Limited (the 'parent charitable company') and its subsidiaries (the 'group') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the group Statement of Financial Activities, the group and parent charitable company Balance Sheet, the group Cash Flow Statement 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 group's and parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2024, and of the group's 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 responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group and parent charitable company 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 group and parent charitable company'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 trustees' 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 the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' annual report (including the strategic report and the directors' report) for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the directors' report, which are included in the trustees' report, have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of our knowledge and understanding of the group and parent charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report and the trustees' annual 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 by the parent charitable company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the parent charitable company's 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 required for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 16, the trustees (who are also the directors of the parent charitable company for the purposes 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 group and parent charitable company'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 group or parent 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.

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.

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 company 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 field in which the client operates, we identified the following areas as those most likely to have a material impact on the financial statements; compliance with the UK Charities Act, Companies Act, Care Quality Commission and Ofsted.

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.

Azets Audit Services

Graham Fitzgerald BA FCA DChA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Azets Audit Services
Accountants
Statutory Auditor
Bulman House
Regent Centre
Henry St
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE3 3LS

23 December 2025

Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities (Incorporating an income and expenditure account)
For The Year Ended 31 March 2024

Income and Expenditure Account

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	2	84,181	-	84,181	85,451
Charitable activities	3	18,690,175	33,583	18,723,758	17,101,938
Other trading activities	4	91,223	-	91,223	152,372
Investments	5	121,383	-	121,383	43,210
Other	6	-	-	-	236,648
Total income		18,986,962	33,583	19,020,545	17,619,619
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	7	17,751,056	33,583	17,784,639	16,117,816
Total expenditure		17,751,056	33,583	17,784,639	16,117,816
Net income / (expenditure)		1,235,906	-	1,235,906	1,501,803
Transfers between funds	21	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	21	1,235,906	-	1,235,906	1,501,803
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward	21	19,615,697	-	19,615,697	18,113,894
Total funds carried forward	21	20,851,603	-	20,851,603	19,615,697

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities. The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised during the year.

Balance Sheet
at 31 March 2024

	Note	Group 2024	Group 2023	Charity 2024	Charity 2023
		£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	14	8,161,660	8,376,557	8,146,497	8,358,239
Investments	15	-	-	20	20
Total fixed assets		8,161,660	8,376,557	8,146,517	8,358,259
Current assets					
Debtors	16	6,260,208	7,450,277	6,324,450	7,507,660
Cash at bank and in hand		8,430,430	5,971,264	8,398,870	5,918,406
Total current assets		14,690,638	13,421,541	14,723,320	13,426,066
Current liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	17	(1,675,601)	(2,147,940)	(1,647,170)	(2,117,935)
Net current assets		13,015,037	11,273,601	13,076,150	11,308,131
Total assets less current liabilities		21,176,697	19,650,158	21,222,667	19,666,390
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	18	(325,061)	(34,377)	(325,061)	(34,377)
Provisions for liabilities	20	(33)	(84)	-	-
Net assets		20,851,603	19,615,697	20,897,606	19,632,013
Charity Funds					
Restricted funds	21	-	-	-	-
Unrestricted funds	21	20,851,603	19,615,697	20,897,606	19,632,013
Total charity funds	21	20,851,603	19,615,697	20,897,606	19,632,013

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board on 23 December 2025.

Signed on behalf of the board of trustees:

Paul Shattock

Paul Shattock - (Chairman)

Company registered number: 2909953

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Statement of Cash Flows and Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows
For The Year Ended 31 March 2024

	Note	Group 2024	Group 2023	Charity 2024	Charity 2023
		£	£	£	£
Cash flow from operating activities	23	2,517,387	236,294	2,532,685	221,619
Net cash flow from operating activities		2,517,387	236,294	2,532,685	221,619
Cash flow from investing activities					
Receipts from sales of tangible fixed assets		-	387,515	-	387,515
Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets		(89,239)	(132,274)	(83,239)	(132,274)
Interest received		121,383	43,210	121,383	43,210
Net cash flow from investing activities		32,144	298,451	38,144	298,451
Cash flow from financing activities					
Receipts from issue of new long term loans		-	16,399	-	16,399
Repayment of long term loans		(69,468)	(89,798)	(69,468)	(89,798)
Repayment of finance lease liabilities		(4,203)	(12,196)	(4,203)	(12,196)
Interest paid		(16,694)	(20,785)	(16,694)	(20,785)
Net cash flow from financing activities		(90,365)	(106,380)	(90,365)	(106,380)
Net increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		2,459,166	428,365	2,480,464	413,690
Cash and cash equivalents at 01.04.2023		5,971,264	5,542,899	5,918,406	5,504,716
Cash and cash equivalents at 31.03.2024		8,430,430	5,971,264	8,398,870	5,918,406
Cash and cash equivalents consists of:					
Cash at bank and in hand		8,430,430	5,971,264	8,398,870	5,918,406
Cash and cash equivalents at 31.03.2024		8,430,430	5,971,264	8,398,870	5,918,406

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2024

1 Accounting policies

1.1 Company information

The Charity is a private company limited by guarantee and is incorporated in England and Wales. The address of its registered office is North House, Ferryboat Lane, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear. SR5 3RL.

The members of the company are the Trustees named on page 17. In the event of the Charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the Charity.

1.2 Basis of preparation

The Group and Charity financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: "Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) " (SORP) issued in October 2019 and the "Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland" (FRS 102). They also comply with the reporting requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

The Group and Charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

The Group and Charity financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis, under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value.

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of the Group and Charity financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

Monetary amounts in these financial statements are stated in pounds sterling and are rounded to the nearest whole £1.

1.3 Going Concern

In order to assess the appropriateness of the going concern assumption basis, the Trustees have considered the Group's financial position, reserves and forecasts for the foreseeable future. At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have considered the assumptions underlying those forecasts and the impact of potential risks affecting them. After a review, the Trustees therefore consider that there is a reasonable expectation that the Group will be able to continue in operation and meet its liabilities as they fall due. There are no material uncertainties about the Group's ability to continue as a going concern.

1.4 Basis of consolidation

The financial statements of the Charity and its two subsidiary Companies are consolidated, on a line by line basis to produce the Group financial statements. The consolidated entity is referred to as 'the Group'.

The Charity has taken advantage of the exemption in section 408 of the Companies Act 2006 from disclosing its individual Statement of Financial Activities.

1.5 Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when the Charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

a. Donations
For donations to be recognised the Charity will have been notified of the amounts and the settlement date in writing. If there are conditions attached to the donation and this requires a level of performance before entitlement can be obtained then income is deferred until those conditions are fully met or the fulfilment of those conditions is within the control of the Charity and it is probable that they will be fulfilled.

b. Investment income
Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the Charity.

c. Government grants
Income from government grants is recognised when the Charity has entitlement to the funds and any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met.

d. Legacies
Legacies are recognised at the earlier of the Charity being notified of an impending distribution or the legacy being received.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2024

1.6 Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. It is categorised under the following headings:

a. Costs of raising funds includes the costs associated with any fund raising and publicity.

b. Expenditure on charitable activities includes costs of grant awards and other direct costs incurred towards achieving the Charity's charitable objectives.

c. Expenditure on governance relate to the corporate management of the organisation. They include the audit fee and insurance costs for the corporate management.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as an expense against the activity for which expenditure arose.

1.7 Allocation of support cost

All expenses including support costs and governance costs are allocated or apportioned to the applicable expenditure headings. Where support costs cannot be directly attributed to one or more categories they are apportioned on the basis of time spent. The analysis of these costs is included in note 8.

1.8 Leases

Operating lease rentals are charged to the SOFA on a straight line basis over the term of the lease.

Assets acquired under finance leases are capitalised and depreciated over the shorter of the lease term and the expected useful life of the asset. Minimum lease payments are apportioned between the finance charge and the reduction of the outstanding lease liability using the effective interest method. The related obligations, net of future finance charges, are included in creditors.

1.9 Pension costs

The Charity operates a defined contribution scheme for the benefit of its employees. Pension contributions payable for the year are recognised as an expense and as a liability, after deducting amount already paid.

1.10 Foreign currency

Transactions in foreign currencies are translated to sterling at the exchange rate ruling at the date of transaction. Exchange differences arising are taken to the SOFA.

1.11 Taxation

The Charity is an exempt Charity within the meaning of schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes.

Taxation that may arise within the Group through its subsidiary undertakings is accounted in accordance with FRS 102 section 29 'Income tax'.

1.12 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets costing more than £500 are capitalised and included at cost including any incidental expenses of acquisition.

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets at rates calculated to write off the cost on a straight line basis over their expected useful economic lives as follows:

Asset Category	*Rate*
Freehold land	nil
Freehold buildings	2% Straight line
Short leasehold buildings	2% Straight line and over the life of the lease
Plant & Machinery	over 5 years
Fixtures, Fittings & Equipment	over 5 years
Computer equipment	over 3 years
Motor vehicles	over 4 years

1.13 Investments

Investments are stated at cost at the balance sheet date. The SOFA includes the net gains and losses arising on revaluations and disposals throughout the year.

Investments in subsidiaries which consist of ordinary share capital are carried at cost less impairment.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2024

1.14 Debtors

Debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid.

1.15 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, cash held in current accounts and deposit accounts with UK Banks. All deposits are ready realisable.

1.16 Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where there is a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in a transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any discounts due.

1.17 Financial instruments

The Group has chosen to adopt section 11 and 12 of FRS 102, identifying and classifying financial instruments as 'basic' and 'other'. The Group has identified assets that qualify for 'basic' financial instruments only.

a. **Financial assets**
Basic financial assets, including trade and other debtors, cash and bank balances, are initially recognised at transaction value 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. Such assets are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest method.

b. **Financial liabilities**
Basic financial liabilities, including trade creditors, bank loans, and other creditors, are initially recognised at transaction value unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest method.

1.18 Fund accounting

Restricted funds
Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the Charity for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund.

Unrestricted funds

a. **Designated**
Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

b. **General**
General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Transfers from general funds to restricted funds are made when the income for a specific activity does not cover the full costs. Transfers between designated funds and general funds are determined by the Trustees where deemed appropriate.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2024

2 Income from donations and legacies

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2024	Total Funds 2023
		£	£	£	£
Donations		4,181	-	4,181	5,451
Donations - Robert Luff Foundation	24	80,000	-	80,000	80,000
		84,181	-	84,181	85,451

Income from donations and legacies was £84,181 (2023 - £85,451) of which £Nil (2023 - Nil) was attributable to restricted funds and £84,181 (2023 - £85,451) was attributable to unrestricted funds.

3 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2024	Total Funds 2023
	£	£	£	£
Adult services fees	13,900,300	-	13,900,300	12,516,237
College fees	4,785,336	-	4,785,336	4,465,914
Grants	-	33,583	33,583	114,588
Other	4,539	-	4,539	5,199
	18,690,175	33,583	18,723,758	17,101,938

Income from charitable activities was £18,723,758 (2023 - £17,101,938) of which £33,583 (2023 - £114,588) was attributable to restricted funds and £18,690,175 (2023 - £16,987,350) was attributable to unrestricted funds.

During the year the Group and Charity received no capital grants (2023 - £NIL), which has no unfulfilled conditions or other conditions attached. Other forms of grant assistance from which the Group and Charity has benefitted amounts to £33,583 (2023: £114,588).

4 Income from other trading activities

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2024	Total Funds 2023
		£	£	£	£
Garden furniture income		726	-	726	2,000
Subsidiary undertakings income	24	90,497	-	90,497	150,372
		91,223	-	91,223	152,372

Income from other trading activities was £91,223 (2023 - £152,372) of which £Nil (2023 - £Nil) was attributable to restricted funds and £91,223 (2023 - £152,372) was attributable to unrestricted funds.

5 Income from investments

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2024	Total Funds 2023
	£	£	£	£
Interest received	121,383	-	121,383	43,210
	121,383	-	121,383	43,210

The group's investment income arises from money held within interest bearing deposit accounts and is attributable to unrestricted funds.

6 Other income

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2024	Total Funds 2023
	£	£	£	£
Profit on sale of tangible fixed assets	-	-	-	236,648
	-	-	-	236,648

Other income of £Nil (2023: £236,648) was attributable to unrestricted funds.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2024

7 Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

	Note	Activities undertaken directly	Support costs	2024	2023
		£	£	£	£
Adult services fees		11,748,882	807,262	12,556,144	11,202,899
College fees		4,255,691	772,622	5,028,313	4,631,382
Subsidiary undertakings expenditure	24	194,582	5,600	200,182	283,535
		16,199,155	1,585,484	17,784,639	16,117,816

£33,583 (2023 - £68,785) of the above costs were attributable to restricted funds. £17,751,056 (2023 - £16,049,031) of the above costs were attributable to unrestricted funds.

8 Allocation of support costs

Support costs are allocated to activities on a relevant basis to the nature of the underlying cost, including headcount, time spent or in proportion to resources used

Support cost (Current Year)	Note	Adult services fees	College fees	Trading Activities	2024
		£	£	£	£
Governance	9	19,714	19,714	5,600	45,028
Management		115,363	115,362	-	230,725
Finance		129,643	129,643	-	259,286
Human resources		43,828	43,828	-	87,656
Maintenance		54,765	54,765	-	109,530
Training		60,499	25,859	-	86,358
Multi disciplinary team		54,643	54,643	-	109,286
Facilities (incl. rental)		16,477	16,478	-	32,955
Admin and Office costs		312,330	312,330	-	624,660
Total support and governance costs		807,262	772,622	5,600	1,585,484
Support costs are made up of:					
Staff Costs		458,741	424,100	-	882,841
Other Costs		348,521	348,522	5,600	702,643
Total support and governance costs		807,262	772,622	5,600	1,585,484

Support cost (Prior Year)	Note	Adult services fees	College fees	Trading Activities	2023
		£	£	£	£
Governance	9	13,057	13,056	5,675	31,788
Management		118,818	118,817	-	237,635
Finance		126,955	126,955	-	253,910
Human resources		36,924	36,923	-	73,847
Maintenance		55,517	55,517	-	111,034
Training		44,844	19,065	-	63,909
Multi disciplinary team		54,515	54,516	-	109,031
Facilities (incl. rental)		18,569	18,569	-	37,138
Admin and Office costs		298,316	298,316	-	596,632
Total support and governance costs		767,515	741,734	5,675	1,514,924
Support costs are made up of:					
Staff Costs		437,573	411,793	-	849,366
Other Costs		329,942	329,941	5,675	665,558
Total support and governance costs		767,515	741,734	5,675	1,514,924

9 Governance costs

	2024	2023
	£	£
Auditor's remuneration:		
- Audit of the charity's annual accounts	36,992	23,677
- Audit of the charity's subsidiary undertakings	5,600	5,675
Trustees' indemnity insurance	2,436	2,436
	45,028	31,788

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2024

10 Net income for the year

Net income is stated after charging:	2024	2023
	£	£
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	304,099	305,600
Loss on sale of tangible fixed assets	36	22
Operating lease rentals - land and buildings	119,205	111,418
Operating lease rentals - equipment	155,692	140,348

11 Staff costs and remuneration of trustees and key management personnel

The total group staff costs and employees benefit's was as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	12,774,745	11,849,272
Social security costs	881,393	815,005
Pension costs	294,036	278,974
	13,950,174	12,943,251

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2024	2023
	Number	Number
Charitable activities	540	523
Management and administration of the charity	31	32
Subsidiary undertakings	7	7
	578	562

The number of employees who received total employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) of more than £60,000 is as follows:

	2024	2023
	Number	Number
£60,001 - £70,000	1	-
£70,001 - £80,000	1	-
£80,001 - £90,000	-	1
£90,001 - £100,000	1	-
£100,001 - £110,000	-	-
£110,001 - £120,000	-	1
	3	2

The key management personnel of the Group are the Trustees and Management listed on page 17. Total salary and employee benefits received by key management personnel during the year amounted to £246,651 (2023: £340,453) plus pension contributions of £16,950 (2023: £22,027).

The trustees neither received nor waived any emoluments during the year (2023: £Nil).

During the year no trustees (2023: Nil) were reimbursed expenses totalling £Nil (2023: £Nil). A total of £Nil (2023: £Nil) was paid directly to third parties. As permitted in the Articles of Association, Trustee indemnity insurance was purchased at a total cost of £2,436 (2023: £2,436).

12 Interest payable and similar charges

	2024	2023
	£	£
Bank loans and overdrafts	16,647	20,232
Finance charges payable under finance leases	47	553
	16,694	20,785

13 Taxation

Education and Services for People with Autism Limited is a registered charity and as such its income and gains falling within s.505 ICTA 88 or s.256 TCGA 92 are exempt from corporation tax to the extent that they are applied to its charitable activities. No material corporation or deferred tax charge has arisen in its subsidiary undertakings.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2024

14 Tangible fixed assets

Group	Freehold land and buildings £	Plant and machinery £	Fixtures and fittings £	Motor vehicles £	Computer equipment £	Total £
Cost or valuation:						
At 01.04.2023	10,919,616	247,398	689,110	42,635	321,316	12,220,075
Additions	42,948	11,312	27,216	-	7,763	89,239
Disposals	-	(2,103)	(15,278)	-	(18,389)	(35,770)
At 31.03.2024	10,962,564	256,607	701,048	42,635	310,690	12,273,544
Depreciation:						
At 01.04.2023	2,797,268	220,551	532,608	21,186	271,905	3,843,518
Charge for the year	197,620	13,592	53,328	6,600	32,959	304,099
Eliminated on disposals	-	(2,099)	(15,261)	-	(18,373)	(35,733)
At 31.03.2024	2,994,888	232,044	570,675	27,786	286,491	4,111,884
Net book value:						
At 31.03.2024	7,967,676	24,563	130,373	14,849	24,199	8,161,660
At 01.04.2023	8,122,348	26,847	156,502	21,449	49,411	8,376,557

Charity	Freehold land and buildings £	Plant and machinery £	Fixtures and fittings £	Motor vehicles £	Computer equipment £	Total £
Cost or valuation:						
At 01.04.2023	10,919,616	184,830	689,110	42,635	317,564	12,153,755
Additions	42,948	5,312	27,216	-	7,763	83,239
Disposals	-	(2,103)	(15,278)	-	(17,908)	(35,289)
At 31.03.2024	10,962,564	188,039	701,048	42,635	307,419	12,201,705
Depreciation:						
At 01.04.2023	2,797,268	175,858	532,608	21,186	268,596	3,795,516
Charge for the year	197,620	4,703	53,328	6,600	32,694	294,945
Eliminated on disposals	-	(2,099)	(15,261)	-	(17,893)	(35,253)
At 31.03.2024	2,994,888	178,462	570,675	27,786	283,397	4,055,208
Net book value:						
At 31.03.2024	7,967,676	9,577	130,373	14,849	24,022	8,146,497
At 01.04.2023	8,122,348	8,972	156,502	21,449	48,968	8,358,239

Tangible fixed assets with a net book value of £5,777,567 (2023 - £5,907,557) have been pledged as security for liabilities of the group and charity. These assets have restricted title.

Motor vehicles includes assets with a net book value of £Nil (2023: £21,448) held under finance leases.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2024

15 Fixed asset investments

	Group 2024 £	Group 2023 £	Charity 2024 £	Charity 2023 £
Market Value as at 1 April 2023	-	-	20	20
Additions	-	-	-	-
Disposal	-	-	-	-
Impairment	-	-	-	-
Market Value as at 31 March 2024	-	-	20	20

The Charity holds 100 per cent shareholdings in the two subsidiary undertakings within the Group, these are valued at cost of £20 (Espa Research Limited £10 and Autism Works Limited £10) (see note 24).

16 Debtors

	Group 2024 £	Group 2023 £	Charity 2024 £	Charity 2023 £
Trade debtors	2,977,654	3,878,283	2,965,225	3,795,744
Amounts owed by group undertakings	-	-	185,688	187,119
Other debtors	111,458	120,636	96,049	86,173
Prepayments and accrued income	3,171,096	3,451,358	3,077,488	3,438,624
	6,260,208	7,450,277	6,324,450	7,507,660

17 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Group 2024 £	Group 2023 £	Charity 2024 £	Charity 2023 £
Bank loans and overdrafts	92,202	452,354	92,202	452,354
Trade creditors	223,633	299,806	223,633	293,964
Fees in advance	344,473	328,300	344,473	328,300
Payments received on account	423,171	535,767	423,530	533,460
Other tax and social security	223,697	192,529	219,565	192,389
Finance leases	-	4,203	-	4,203
Accruals and deferred income	368,425	334,981	343,767	313,265
	1,675,601	2,147,940	1,647,170	2,117,935

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2024

18 Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	Group 2024	Group 2023	Charity 2024	Charity 2023
	£	£	£	£
Bank loans	325,061	34,377	325,061	34,377
	325,061	34,377	325,061	34,377

Bank loans include aggregate amounts of £Nil (2023 - £Nil) which fall due after five years and which are repaid by instalments. The payment terms and interest rate of each creditor for which an amount falls due after one year are given below:

The bank loans are secured by legal charges and a debenture dated 21/04/1995 over various freehold land and buildings of the Group and Charity.

	Group 2024	Group 2023	Charity 2024	Charity 2023
	£	£	£	£
2.45% above Bank of England rates secured loan repayable on 7 February 2029	325,061	34,377	325,061	34,377
	325,061	34,377	325,061	34,377

19 Leases

a) Finance leases
Finance lease payments represent rentals payable by the company for a motor vehicle. Leases include the purchase option at the end of the lease period, and no restrictions are placed on the use of the assets. The average lease term is one year. All leases are on a fixed repayment basis and no arrangements have been entered into for contingent rental payments.

Total future minimum finance lease payments are as follows:

	Group 2024	Group 2023	Charity 2024	Charity 2023
	£	£	£	£
Not later than one year	-	4,250	-	4,250
	-	4,250	-	4,250
Less finance charges	-	(47)	-	(47)
	-	4,203	-	4,203

b) Operating lease
At 31 March 2024 the Charity and the Group had total commitments under non-cancellable operating leases for Land and Buildings and Equipment as follows:

Total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases are as follows:

	Group 2024	Group 2023	Charity 2024	Charity 2023
Operating lease payments falling due:	£	£	£	£
Within one year	99,743	142,916	87,691	130,911
Between one and five years	13,583	52,849	13,583	52,849
After more than five years	-	-	-	-
	113,326	195,765	101,274	183,760

20 Provisions for liabilities

	Group 2024	Group 2023	Charity 2024	Charity 2023
	£	£	£	£
At 01.04.2023	84	186	-	-
Deferred tax provision	(51)	(102)	-	-
At 31.03.2024	33	84	-	-

The tax provision relates to the deferred taxation within the subsidiary undertaking and is resultant of a timing issue

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2024

21 Fund reconciliation

Group (Current Year)	Balance At 01.04.2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains / (losses) £	Transfers £	Balance At 31.03.2024 £
Unrestricted funds:						
General reserve	9,949,576	18,986,962	(17,751,056)	-	141,227	11,326,709
Designated funds						
Fixed asset fund	7,885,623	-	-	-	(141,227)	7,744,396
Property development fund	1,780,498	-	-		-	1,780,498
Total unrestricted funds	19,615,697	18,986,962	(17,751,056)	-	-	20,851,603
Restricted funds:						
Tyne and Wear Care Alliance	-	2,900	(2,900)	-	-	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	8,416	(8,416)	-	-	-
ESFA - Career	-	1,000	(1,000)	-	-	-
ESFA - Training	-	21,267	(21,267)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	-	33,583	(33,583)	-	-	-
Total funds	19,615,697	19,020,545	(17,784,639)	-	-	20,851,603

Group (Prior Year)	Balance At 01.04.2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains / (losses) £	Transfers £	Balance At 31.03.2023 £
Unrestricted funds:						
General reserve	9,471,667	17,505,031	(16,049,031)	-	(978,091)	9,949,576
Designated funds						
Fixed asset fund	8,124,244	-	-	-	(238,621)	7,885,623
Property development fund	517,983	-	-		1,262,515	1,780,498
Total unrestricted funds	18,113,894	17,505,031	(16,049,031)	-	45,803	19,615,697
Restricted funds:						
Tyne and Wear Care Alliance	-	3,000	(3,000)	-	-	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	82,817	(37,014)	-	(45,803)	-
ESFA - Career	-	228	(228)	-	-	-
ESFA - Training	-	27,915	(27,915)	-	-	-
Covid 19 Support funds	-	628	(628)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	-	114,588	(68,785)	-	(45,803)	-
Total funds	18,113,894	17,619,619	(16,117,816)	-	-	19,615,697

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2024

21 Fund reconciliation (continued)

Charity (Current Year)	At 01.04.2023	Income	Expenditure	Gains / (losses)	Transfers	At 31.03.2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds:						
General reserve	9,984,212	18,816,465	(17,550,872)	-	138,071	11,387,876
Designated funds						
Fixed asset fund	7,867,303	-	-	-	(138,071)	7,729,232
Property development fund	1,780,498	-	-	-	-	1,780,498
Total unrestricted funds	19,632,013	18,816,465	(17,550,872)	-	-	20,897,606
Restricted funds:						
Tyne and Wear Care Alliance	-	2,900	(2,900)	-	-	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	8,416	(8,416)	-	-	-
ESFA - Career	-	1,000	(1,000)	-	-	-
ESFA - Training	-	21,267	(21,267)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	-	33,583	(33,583)	-	-	-
Total funds	19,632,013	18,850,048	(17,584,455)	-	-	20,897,606

Charity (Prior Year)	At 01.04.2022	Income	Expenditure	Gains / (losses)	Transfers	At 31.03.2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds:						
General reserve	9,462,310	17,274,659	(15,765,495)	-	(987,262)	9,984,212
Designated funds						
Fixed asset fund	8,096,753	-	-	-	(229,450)	7,867,303
Property development fund	517,983	-	-	-	1,262,515	1,780,498
Total unrestricted funds	18,077,046	17,274,659	(15,765,495)	-	45,803	19,632,013
Restricted funds:						
Tyne and Wear Care Alliance	-	3,000	(3,000)	-	-	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	82,817	(37,014)	-	(45,803)	-
ESFA - Covid	-	228	(228)	-	-	-
ESFA - Training	-	27,915	(27,915)	-	-	-
Covid 19 Support funds	-	628	(628)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	-	114,588	(68,785)	-	(45,803)	-
Total funds	18,077,046	17,389,247	(15,834,280)	-	-	19,632,013

Fund descriptions

a) Unrestricted funds

The General reserve represents the free funds of the charity which are not designated for particular purposes.

b) Designated funds

The Fixed asset fund has been set up to assist in identifying those funds that are not free funds and it represents the net book value of tangible fixed assets less bank loans and hire purchase.

The Property Development Fund has been set up to assist in identifying funds that are not free funds and it represent funds that are required for the future development of properties.

c) Restricted funds

The restricted fund represents funds that have been received and are to be used for a specific purpose.

Tyne and Wear Care Alliance : These funds are specific funds received towards training staff.

ESFA - Training: Funding towards the student education

ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers: Funding towards the property improvements within the SEND Colleges

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2024

22 Analysis of net assets between funds

Group fund balances at 31 March 2024 are represented by:	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	8,161,660	-	8,161,660
Investments	-	-	-	-
Current assets	12,910,140	1,780,498	-	14,690,638
Current liabilities	(1,583,398)	(92,203)	-	(1,675,601)
Long term liabilities	(33)	(325,061)	-	(325,094)
Total	11,326,709	9,524,894	-	20,851,603

Group fund balances at 31 March 2023 are represented by:	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	8,376,557	-	8,376,557
Investments	-	-	-	-
Current assets	11,641,043	1,780,498	-	13,421,541
Current liabilities	(1,691,383)	(456,557)	-	(2,147,940)
Long term liabilities	(84)	(34,377)	-	(34,461)
Total	9,949,576	9,666,121	-	19,615,697

Charity fund balances at 31 March 2024 are represented by:	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	8,146,497	-	8,146,497
Investments	20	-	-	20
Current assets	12,942,822	1,780,498	-	14,723,320
Current liabilities	(1,554,966)	(92,204)	-	(1,647,170)
Long term liabilities	-	(325,061)	-	(325,061)
Total	11,387,876	9,509,730	-	20,897,606

Charity fund balances at 31 March 2023 are represented by:	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	8,358,239	-	8,358,239
Investments	20	-	-	20
Current assets	11,645,568	1,780,498	-	13,426,066
Current liabilities	(1,661,376)	(456,559)	-	(2,117,935)
Long term liabilities	-	(34,377)	-	(34,377)
Total	9,984,212	9,647,801	-	19,632,013

23 Notes to the Cash Flow Statement

a) Reconciliation of net income / (expenditure) to net cash flow from operating activities	Group 2024 £	Group 2023 £	Charity 2024 £	Charity 2023 £
Net income / (expenditure) for the year	1,235,906	1,501,803	1,265,593	1,554,967
Interest receivable	(121,383)	(43,210)	(121,383)	(43,210)
Interest payable	16,694	20,785	16,694	20,785
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	304,099	305,600	294,945	296,429
(Profit) / loss on disposal of tangible fixed assets	36	(236,626)	36	(236,626)
Provisions less payments	(49)	(102)	-	-
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	1,190,068	(1,267,044)	1,183,210	(1,313,892)
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	(107,984)	(44,912)	(106,410)	(56,834)
Net cash flow from operating activities	2,517,387	236,294	2,532,685	221,619

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2024

23 Notes to the Cash Flow Statement (continued)

a) Analysis of changes in net funds (current year)

	At 01.04.2023	Cash flows	New finance leases	Non-cash changes	At 31.03.2024
	£	£	£	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	5,971,264	2,459,166	-	-	8,430,430
Loans due within one year	(452,354)	69,468	-	290,684	(92,202)
Loans due after more than one year	(34,377)	-	-	(290,684)	(325,061)
Finance lease obligations	(4,203)	4,203	-	-	-
	5,480,330	2,532,837	-	-	8,013,167

b) Analysis of changes in net funds (prior year)

	At 01.04.2022	Cash flows	New finance leases	Non-cash changes	At 31.03.2023
	£	£	£	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	5,542,899	428,365	-	-	5,971,264
Loans due within one year	(90,535)	89,798	-	(451,617)	(452,354)
Loans due after more than one year	(485,994)	-	-	451,617	(34,377)
Finance lease obligations	-	12,196	(16,399)	-	(4,203)
	4,966,370	530,359	(16,399)	-	5,480,330

24 Subsidiary undertakings

The charity has two wholly owned non-charitable subsidiary undertakings ESPA Research Ltd (company number 6862992) and Autism Works Ltd (company number 7402411) which are registered in England and Wales. The registered address for both subsidiary undertakings is North House, Ferryboat Lane, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear. SR5 3RL

Autism Works Ltd is used for the trading activities of software testing and ESPA Research Ltd is used for academic research and non-primary purpose trading activities. All activities have been consolidated on a line by line basis in the SOFA. Any available profits are gifted to the charity, during the current financial year the subsidiaries have generated a small profit/loss on its trading activities but these have been retained in the year to fund current working capital.

A summary of the results of the subsidiaries is shown below:

	Autism Works Limited		ESPA Research Limited	
	Total 2024	Total 2023	Total 2024	Total 2023
	£	£	£	£
Turnover	57,373	102,718	-	-
Cost of sales	(71,507)	(156,219)	(1,981)	-
Gross profit	(14,134)	(53,501)	(1,981)	-
Administrative expenses	-	-	(126,745)	(128,713)
Other operating income	96	-	113,028	127,654
Profit/(Loss) on ordinary activities	(14,038)	(53,501)	(15,698)	(1,059)
Corporation tax repayable/(payable)	51	1,397	-	-
Retained (Loss)/Profit in subsidiary	(13,987)	(52,104)	(15,698)	(1,059)
The aggregate of the assets, liabilities and funds was:				
Assets	112,666	112,443	55,864	89,765
Liabilities	(116,156)	(101,947)	(98,354)	(116,557)
Reserves	(3,490)	10,496	(42,490)	(26,792)

Included within the operating income figure of Espa Research Limited, donations received during the year were £80,000 (2023: £80,000), with the largest donor being the Robert Luff Foundation of £80,000 (2023: £80,000). These funds are unrestricted and have been shown within the Group total of donations and legacies (note 2), with the balance of operating income and turnover of £33,028 (2023: £47,654) shown under trading activities (note 4).

ESPA Limited (The Charity) is prepared to provide continuing support to the trading subsidiaries.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2024

25 Pensions

The charity operates a defined contribution scheme for eligible employees and contributions are charged in the statement of financial activities as they accrue. The charge for the year was £294,036 (2023: £278,974). From February 2014, all employees have been automatically enrolled into the defined contribution scheme and the charity contributes between 3% and 10% of pensionable salaries.

The defined contribution liability is wholly allocated to unrestricted funds and is charged to the charitable activities in proportion to the staffing costs incurred.

Total pension commitments which are included in the balance sheet amount to £55,517 (2023: £51,613).

26 Events after the end of the period

On 23 April 2025 Education and Services for People with Autism Limited completed on the purchase of a residential building at Allensway, Thornaby, Stockton on Tees, which will be developed as a education day service for people with autism spectrum disorders. The building was purchased at market value for £375,000.

27 Related party transactions

The charity has taken advantage of the exemption conferred by paragraph 33.1A of FRS 102, 'related party transactions', that transactions with wholly owned subsidiaries do not need to be disclosed.

28 Financial instruments

The carrying amounts of the charity's financial instruments are as follows:

	Note	Group 2024 £	Group 2023 £	Charity 2024 £	Charity 2023 £
Financial assets					
Debt instruments measured at amortised cost:					
- Trade debtors	16	2,977,654	3,878,283	2,965,225	3,795,744
- Amounts owed by group undertakings	16	-	-	185,688	187,119
- Other debtors and accrued income		3,020,087	3,289,849	2,926,552	3,277,186
- Cash at bank and in hand		8,430,430	5,971,264	8,398,870	5,918,406
		14,428,171	13,139,396	14,476,335	13,178,455
Financial liabilities					
Measured at amortised cost					
- Bank loans and overdraft	17/18	417,263	486,731	417,263	486,731
- Trade creditors	17	223,633	299,806	223,633	293,964
- Accruals		143,623	141,253	119,145	119,537
		784,519	927,790	760,041	900,232

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED

England & Wales - Charity number 1037868

Accounts

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

REPORT AND GROUP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1037868

COMPANY NO: 2909953

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED

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For The Year Ended 31 March 2023

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Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2023

The Trustees submit their annual Board of Directors' report including Strategic Report, together with the audited consolidated financial statements of the Charity and its subsidiaries for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies, set out in notes to the accounts and comply with the Charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 and 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 October 2019).

STRATEGIC REPORT

Objectives and Activities

The objectives of Education and Services for People with Autism Limited (ESPA) and its subsidiary undertakings are for the public benefit to promote the health and wellbeing of people with autism, learning disabilities, communication, social or behavioural conditions, by enhancing the quality of life of such persons, in particular by:

- Providing or assisting in the provision of education, training and employment opportunities for such people and advancing the education of others with autism, learning disabilities, communication, social or behavioural conditions;
- Providing accommodation, support and services to meet the needs of these individuals; and
- Carrying out or commissioning of research to improve the quality of life for autistic people and publish the useful results of such research.

ESPA's Mission Statement is:

"Enabling people across the autism spectrum to enjoy rewarding and fulfilling lives"

We currently support 245 (2022: 236) people in a wide range of person centred services including:

- Independent Specialist Further Education College
- Residential services
- Independent Supported Living services
- Community services
- Day and vocational opportunities

The majority of the people we support have additional or associated difficulties and disabilities including: learning disabilities, mental health conditions, ADHD, OCD, sensory and communication difficulties and display behaviours that challenge. We currently employ 562 (2022: 570) highly skilled, trained and highly committed staff.

All of our services share a common vision which is to provide everyone with the highest quality autism specific support and education that is tailored to meet their needs, wishes and expectations.

Our primary objectives for the coming year are to:

- Continue to offer the highest quality autism specific, person centred and compassionate care and support
- Work in partnership with all stakeholders to ensure individuals achieve excellent personal outcomes
- Develop new services and support arrangements to meet the needs of other autistic people
- Achieve best practice through continuous quality improvement
- Ensure resources are allocated to meet strategic objectives
- Recruit and train a high quality and professional workforce
- Evidence public benefit and social value in all charitable activities
- Demonstrate best value.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2023

Our long-term ambition is to continue to be a leading regional autism specific charity and build on our excellent track record and reputation. We aim to continue to develop new and innovative services in direct response to the changing needs of the people we support, identify gaps in provision and services procured by Local Authorities. With strong financial management, we will continue to ensure that resources are invested in areas of the Charity that meet the longer term strategic objectives of the organisation. We have a clear accommodation strategy that we are continuing to work towards, which has involved a review and re-provision of some of our current buildings to ensure they meet the changing needs of the Charity, expectations of funders and the needs of people being referred. This work will continue over the coming years and will support ESPA's continued growth and diversification.

We measure the success of our work by:

- The positive outcomes people achieve and the quality of life they enjoy
- The growing numbers of people we support
- Feedback from individuals, families and other health and social care professionals
- Self- assessments, internal and external inspections and audits.

Public Benefit

In all the Charity's planning and activities the Trustees have reviewed and considered the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit. As a registered Charity, public benefit and social value are embedded within our charitable objectives and mission. ESPA provides tangible benefits to the public through providing high quality care and education for autistic people.

All of our support and education aims to enhance people's independence and improve health and well-being outcomes, towards reducing their reliance on health and social care services, reducing health inequalities and increasing their economic independence.

Through our day-to-day work of supporting autistic people to become valued and accepted members of their community: we support the sustainability of other organisations and charities; provide volunteers; educate the public about autism and associated disabilities and provide practical support to community groups and clubs.

As a large and growing regional employer we are constantly creating new job opportunities for local people and to help reduce unemployment. In line with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy we are keen to attract a diverse workforce especially those who may experience social or economic barriers to employment or may be at risk of discrimination including people with disabilities or due to a person's ethnicity, nationality or religion.

Our commitment to public benefit is exemplified through our two trading subsidiaries: Autism Works and ESPA Research. Autism Works is a software testing company that employs autistic people as software testers. This recognises that many of the autistic characteristics can be a commercial asset in this field of work. The company has been highly commended for the quality of their work through some very high profile customers. Autism Works business plan aims to continue to grow its workforce offering more real work opportunities to autistic people. ESPA Research's aims are to improve the quality of life for autistic people through high quality publishable research investigations.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2023

Objectives and Activities

The significant charitable activities undertaken by ESPA are:

Adult Social Care

a) Residential Homes

ESPA operates 14 residential homes across Newcastle, Sunderland and Durham. We currently support 79 (2022: 77) people in these services. Residential services currently represent 50% (2022: 54%) of the Charity's income.

Each service is unique and individually tailored to meet the needs, wishes and expectations of the individuals living there. These services range from single person apartments to shared living arrangements. Most of the people we support have challenging and complex needs. Many individuals also have additional or associated difficulties or disabilities, therefore all our services offer intensive and specialist support in highly structured, autism-specific environments. All our homes offer 24 hour person centred care and support and staffing levels are based upon the actual assessed needs of the people they support. Each person receives structured and consistent support from highly skilled, experienced and knowledgeable staff. 258 staff are currently employed in the residential services.

Each individual has a Person Centred Plan which enables us to understand what is important to them and what they want from their lives. The setting of realistic personal goals ensures that individuals achieve positive outcomes in all aspects of their life. The primary measure of the success of our residential services is the positive life outcomes the individuals achieve and their families' satisfaction with the support we offer. Feedback is consistently captured through on-going dialogue, Service User Reviews and Satisfaction Surveys. Internal quality assurance processes including Senior Management Audits all support the continuous quality improvements of services, Care Quality Commission (CQC) compliance and best practice. CQC inspections provide an independent assessment of quality, safety and compliance and 12 homes have been awarded an overall rating of 'Good' and two have been awarded an 'Outstanding'.

For some people our residential services provide an excellent stepping stone towards a more independent future.

b) Community Services (Domiciliary Services)

ESPA has three CQC registered branches across the North East: Sunderland, Newcastle and Middlesbrough. This enables us to support people across the region. We always ensure that through individual service designs and Person-Centred Plans the people we support remain at the heart of everything we do.

We are committed to providing each person with high quality care and support that is autism specific, person-centred, flexible and responsive. We aim to enable each person to live as independently as possible and to become a valued and respected member of their community. Everyone receives an individual package of care and support to meet their specific needs, wishes and aspirations to enable them to enjoy a lifestyle of their choice.

We offer support in a variety of ways, depending on people's needs and preferences. Support can be provided for specific hours during the week up to 24-hours a day. We currently offer a wide range of services through the Agency including:

- Supported living services
- A core and cluster service
- Day provision from a community hub

Over the past 12 months the Agency has maintained financial stability and represents 20% (2022: 19%) of overall income and it currently employs 116 (2022: 118) staff.

The Domiciliary Agency is currently supporting 34 people (2022: 35). We have 8 supported living services and 12 people are supported from a community hub in Stockton. Burnfoot Court, is a core and cluster service funded through Individual Service Funds (ISF's). It currently supports 6 tenants in individual bungalows.

c) Day and Vocational Services

The Croft Centre in Sunderland is a creative and innovative, community-based day provision that offers person-centred programmes of meaningful and stimulating activities for autistic people, many of whom have additional or associated difficulties or disabilities. In addition to the extensive range of activities offered within the building, people also take part in a wide range of activities in the local and wider community.

Everyone in our residential services has the opportunity to take full advantage of all of these day opportunities. It also offers specialist full and part-time day placements for people living at home. These placements are commissioned by Local Authorities or purchased directly through Personal Budgets, Direct Payments or Individual Service Funds. We currently support 20 (2022: 22) people for day placements from across the region. The Croft Centre is open for 44 weeks a year and it currently employs 25 (2022: 25) staff.

Education

a) Independent Specialist Further Education College

ESPA operates an Independent Specialist Further Education College that is based within the North East of England, with day sites in Sunderland, Newcastle upon Tyne and Stockton. Students have access to residential accommodation in Sunderland and Newcastle. The College offers day and residential placements for young autistic people between the ages of 16 and 25 years. Most learners are local however some come from across the country to access this specialist provision.

Each College site is specifically tailored to meet the needs of learners with similar abilities and needs. Person-centred goals and transition plans ensure that each person achieves their personal and academic ambitions. In March 2023 we were supporting 112 learners (2022: 102) across the sites. We offer a 38 week academic year, but can offer residential placements for up to 52 weeks and respite. The College now represents 25% (2022: 24%) of the Charity's overall income and employs 159 (2022: 120) staff.

We have earned an excellent reputation and have a good track record of offering learners a high quality, autism specific and person centred learning experience, towards them achieving positive educational and personal outcomes in preparation for life after College. Demand for placements continue to grow. We are continuing to significantly invest in our College buildings to offer state of the art educational and residential facilities that will provide us with the capacity for further growth and to enable us to meet the needs of increasingly complex and challenging learners.

The College offers each learner a bespoke, innovative and creative curriculum. All our learning sessions are designed to be engaging, enjoyable, individualised and challenging. Each person has a programme of study tailored to their specific needs and aspirations. We consistently aim to develop the whole person and blend our autism specific core curriculum (Social Communication, Emotional Literacy and Behaviour Self-Management) with academic and vocational subjects. College learning sessions occur in a variety of settings, many of which are community based. Work experience, employability skills, enterprise and independence feature highly within the College's learning activities.

A growth area for the College over the past 2 years has been the creation of social hub placements as a positive transition opportunity for some leavers. These are social care funded. In March of the 112 people supported by the College 27 were on social care programmes.

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Subsidiaries

a) Autism Works

Autism Works Limited is a wholly owned trading subsidiary of the Charity, offering independent software testing services. Established in 2010, its primary objective is to employ autistic people, giving them the opportunity for sustainable employment and to reduce their reliance on state benefits. The company currently employs five people, three who are autistic. Our Business Plan demonstrates our commitment to create opportunities for many more people to gain meaningful employment as the enterprise grows.

b) ESPA Research

ESPA Research is also a wholly owned subsidiary of the Charity. Incorporated in 2009, its aims are to improve the quality of life for people with autism through high quality publishable research investigations. It currently employs two people and the majority of their work is carried out from a laboratory in Sunderland's Business Innovation Centre.

Achievements and Performance

The Charity has remained financially strong over the past 12 months, despite being another challenging year. As Covid pressures have reduced this has been replaced with significant recruitment and retention problems. In all social care settings this is as a direct result of the pandemic. Staff have continued to work creatively and tirelessly to minimise the impact on the lives of the people they support and keeping everyone safe, happy and well.

During the pandemic many Local Authorities took the option to extend current commissioning frameworks and Contracts. Therefore this has resulted in ESPA having to apply to be approved on four new Social Care Frameworks and an Interim Framework for our educational provision this year. All applications were successful and have enabled us to retain all existing contracts and provides opportunities for further growth.

Robust financial management has enabled us to accommodate the National Living Wage (NLW) increases, offer salary inflationary increases to all staff and cover increasing costs. However from April 2023 the new NLW and cost of living crisis is going to significantly impact on budgets. Unlike 51% of charities who have used reserves to cover core cost, ESPA still has the funds to see the organisation through the expected challenges over the next 12 months.

We have invested a lot of time trying to achieve realistic inflationary increases from Local Authorities to enable us to meet growing cost, especially in our residential services. We are also continuing to renegotiate fees for some historic placements and agree back dated inflationary increases. Some outcomes have been successful but a number are ongoing, which is impacting on cash flow.

In August 2022 the Chief Executive announced her intention to retire on 31st March 2023.

On the 1st April the Finance Executive will become the new Chief Executive supported by a Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Social Care. With these new roles being created it also offers other career development opportunities. The Trustees are confident that this provides a stable and secure plan for the Charity now and a succession plan for the future.

Directors and Senior Managers

The NE12 framework responsible for procuring specialist post-16 education was extended to July 2022. Due to low year on year inflationary increases this contract was putting the College's financial stability at risk. For the 1st August they introduced a new Interim Contract which has enabled us to set realistic fees that will enable us to regain the College's financial strength. This will be replaced with a permanent contract from March 2024. The full impact of this new funding model is still to be realised.

In June 2022 we were informed that our submission for the North Tyneside framework had been successful and in December we were approved on Newcastle's Flexible Procurement Agreement.

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The Tees Valley framework for individuals with complex care and support needs was also advertised in October 2023 and again our application was successful.

All contracts commence on the 1st April 2023 and have enabled us to retain all our current contracts and provide opportunities to tender for new services.

Ware Street is Stockton's day opportunities contract. We have been running this service since it opened 8 years ago and it currently support 14 people. Procurement regulations required this service to go out to open tender. It was advertised in September and ESPA put in a strong submission. However, prior to the award date they withdrew the tender stating that all submissions exceeded their budget. They have extended our current contract until October 2023 and will be going out to tender again in the Spring, with a revised service specification and budget.

We have continued to populate the Data Security Protection Toolkit which is a social care specific framework that enables us to evidence compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). In June 2022 we achieved "Standards Met". This was last reviewed in March 2023 and needs to be updated annually.

Following a strategic review of our challenging behaviour training, document and systems we withdrew from our Studio III contract and have entered into a new agreement with NAPPI. This well-recognised accredited body which better meets our current needs and offers extensive support. We now have two qualified Train the Trainers and the training is now being rolled out across ESPA.

In December the Maintenance Manager left ESPA. He was replaced by his deputy but this triggered a review of the department. A new team member has been recruited and a broader range of subcontractors are being sourced.

Towards the end of the pandemic we received Recruitment and Retention Grants from the North East Local Authorities for residential and domiciliary services. The allocation varied between Authorities. As the criteria for the fund included retention bonuses we passed this money onto staff as a sign of appreciation for their outstanding work.

Over the year we have been trying to recruit a Speech and Language Therapist to join our MDT, but to date have not been successful. We are also looking to recruit a part time Psychologist with skills and expertise to support us to meet the needs of an increasingly complex population.

Demand for respite placements at Ashleigh have continued to grow. However, during Covid and due to staffing shortages these have been difficult to resource. We are confident that in 2023 we will be in a position to increase this offer.

ESPA has remained compliant with all legislative, regulatory and contractual requirements. Policies and procedures continue to be systematically reviewed to reflect changes and best practice.

We have updated some of our marketing and promotional materials for use at local marketing and recruitment events. ESPA's use of social media has increased but is an area we still need to develop further. In March we also secured some space in the Bridges Shopping Centre in Sunderland to showcase ESPA during Autism Acceptance week. This ran from 27th March to 2nd April.

We are progressing with our Accommodation Strategy however, timescales have been significantly impacted due to the pandemic, rising costs and our ability to secure contractors. In June 2022 we finally sold the Cloisters in Sunderland. This money will be reinvested into our new developments. Plans are still in place to build a new studio in the grounds of South Hill and to refurbish Abigail house. These College developments will enable us to increase capacity. As Stockton may be disposing of our Teesside site, we have started looking for a new permanent location as we have seen significant growth in student numbers this year.

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Residential Services

During this year demand for placements have significantly increased, but due to the staffing situation our priority has been to fill existing staff voids before accepting new referrals. The position is slowly improving. We currently have four people who have had their funding agreed. Three other people are being assessed and we are confident that their placements will also be funded.

After being suspended during Covid the CQC has restarted their inspections. Three services so far have had a full inspection. One of these had previously been rated "Requires Improvement" but this has now been assessed as "Good". Both others retained their "Good" rating. All other services have evidenced continued compliance through their Provider Information Returns (PIRs). Two services have maintained their award of "Outstanding", which is an exceptional achievement.

In 2022 our internal quality assurance processes were reviewed and a new toolkit was introduced aligned to the CQC's Key Lines of Enquiry. This aimed to harness the broader expertise of central managers and department. However, after being piloted everyone agreed it was too complex and onerous. We have reverted back to themed audits currently being conducted by the General Manager. The plan is to review this again next year to continue to evidence CQC and contractual requirements, but also to capture quality of life outcomes for the people we support.

Face to face Registered Managers Meetings have been reinstated, which are bi-monthly with Clinical Meetings on alterative months. These are attended by representative from our Psychiatric Partnership. In additional to clinical support, they also deliver specialist mental health training. This forum has now opened up to College Managers.

A Training Needs Analysis has been completed for each service. It identifies specific training needs based upon the actual needs of the people they support. This is informed by Risk Assessments and is enabling our training to be more targeted, efficient and proportionate.

All services now have an Infection Control Champion.

One of our services was involved in a pilot involving the use of an interactive computer system (RITA). It is pre-programmed with an extensive range of meaningful activities that can be tailored to individual interests. The ultimate aim is providing stimulating and enjoyable activities that may lead to a reduction in behaviours that challenge. The pilot was a great success and ESPA received an award. This is now going to be introduced in to a second service.

ESPA College

This has been a very positive year for ESPA College. We have seen further growth in student numbers and many outstanding learner outcomes and achievements.

A highlight of the year was the long anticipated Ofsted inspection which took place in October 2022. We were assessed as continuing to be "Good" in all areas against the Educational Inspection Framework. This is an excellent achievement and their feedback captured the many strengths across the College's activities. This included employability, safeguarding, behaviour management, Governance, curriculum and well qualified and experienced staff.

A significant area of growth has been the growing number of learners being referred for Social Hub placements. This is now being offered in all sites. We are continuing to expect year on year growth as very few suitable alternative services are available across the region. Our Accommodation Strategy will enable us to develop new discrete provisions North and South of the Tyne. A Coordinator has been appointed to develop and manage this new offer and a dedicated team of staff are being identified.

One of ESPA's Board of Trustees has been nominated as the primary link person for the College. He meets more regularly with the College Principal and has done observations and walk-throughs to become more familiar with the sites, learners and staff.

The College's Self-Assessment Report (SAR) was published in November 2022. This inclusive self-assessment process drives continuous quality improvement and seeks the views of learners, parents/carers, staff and Trustees. The College assessed itself as "Good" in all areas which was verified during the Ofsted inspection. Identified actions are detailed

within the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and strategic objectives. Progress and achievements are reported through Termly Quality Reports which are shared with staff and Trustees.

The first Termly Quality Report for 2022/23 reported that 28% of teaching and learning were graded as "Outstanding" which was an increase on the previous year. No observations were rated as "inadequate".

The annual external quality assurance visit took place in August 2022. This was another remote inspection. Feedback was very positive and no actions were identified. Each site has also had a successful quality audit conducted by their respective Local Authority SEND Teams.

The Curriculum Review Committee continues to meet termly to ensure that courses respond proactively to learners' needs and expectations.

Of the leavers in July 2022 overall academic qualification achievement rates were 79% (67% in 2021). 48% progressed into further education or training and 16% entered paid employment. This is a significant increase on previous years.

The Work Placement Co-ordinator has established a wide range of external and meaningful work placements.

All sites now have Job Board, the QIP has a much stronger emphasis on employability and many students have attended local careers events. The Gatsby Benchmark and Compass educational tool have highlighted examples of good practice in each area.

The half termly Equality and Diversity Committee meetings have nominees from each site. They have received and update the College Equality and Diversity Policy and included 8 Dimensions of Wellness. The group have discussed a wide range of topical issues and events. A LGBTQ+ social group has also been established and regular workshops are to be held in each site. North Rye hosted the first workshop in December.

The Student Committee is enjoying face to face meetings again. These meetings have representatives from all sites and enable the learner's voice to be heard and have an influence on their learning experience.

Plans are progressing to develop a new horticulture and woodwork enterprise in the grounds of South Hill. This will be a shared resource with The Croft Centre. A seasonal programme of activities will provide products and produce for sale. An outline Business Plan has been developed and we are trying to source a Consultant to support this to become a vibrant project by the summer.

Due to Covid, geographical issues and work pressures convening Advisory Board Meetings were a challenge. With recent changes in Board membership we are now confident that a regular cycle of meetings can be established.

The Parent Forum has restarted and last met on the 8th March. These will be held termly and are an opportunity for people to meet and support each other. It is intended that each meeting also has a learning element to help parents/carers gain a better understanding of the College and key Policies and Procedures.

Community Services (Domiciliary Services)

We continue to be approved framework providers in Newcastle, Durham, North Tyneside, Sunderland, South Tyneside, Gateshead and across the Tees Valley. Over the past 12 months we have seen the greatest demand for our community services primarily through direct approaches from Local Authorities. Our ability to meet this demand however, has been limited due to recruitment but hopefully this picture will improve over coming months.

Burnfoot Court (Core and cluster – Newcastle) welcomed a new 6th tenant in June 2022. Due to his complex and challenging needs Continuing Health Care agreed an enhanced hourly rate. These hours are shared by the team. Due to the size of the team needed for this service recruitment and retention has been particularly challenging putting significant pressure on current staff and increasing reliance on Agency staff. This picture is now gradually improving.

In September a young man moved into the void at Queen Alexandra Road (Sunderland). He also attends ESPA College and has been awarded a place at University from September. He settled in very well and is making excellent progress personally and academically. To achieve this placement we needed to be approved on the North Yorkshire Providers Framework.

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We have been awarded a new contract by Stockton Borough Council to support two brothers to move from the family home into a shared tenancy. One of the men currently attends Ware Street. They took up their new tenancy in September 2022 and their transition has involved spending increasing amounts of time in their new home.

Due to the pace of recruitment they still spend part of the weekend with their parents.

As part of our Tees Valley Complex Care and Support Framework we needed to review and update our Driving up Quality Self-Assessment. This now forms part of our internal quality assurance processes.

Bi-monthly Staffing and Finance Meetings have ensured that staffing and management structures meet actual support needs.

Since the lifting of restrictions due to the pandemic Burnfoot is the only location that has received a CQC inspection. They retained their rating of "Good". Middlesbrough and Sunderland locations have completed their Provider Information Returns which has evidenced their continued compliance.

As part of the Teeswide PBS Framework a PBS Monitoring Tool was completed for Ware Street and all supported living services commissioned through this framework.

In January 2023, partly due to staffing challenges, the decision was made to terminate our only two community enablement support packages to coincide with the end of the PBS Framework. These hours have been reinvested into our other community services.

Day and Vocational Services.

The Croft Centre is now fully open to day service users and anyone living in our residential services.

With the creation of the College social hubs for College leavers we are promoting The Croft Centre as a possible next step as the social hubs will only support individuals up to the age of 30 years.

Social events restarted in June beginning with a spectacular Queen's Jubilee Garden Party. There was a fantastic turnout from across ESPA and everyone enjoyed spending time together again. Events have continued to be enjoyed monthly and there is already a busy fun packed programme for 2023.

The Croft Centre currently incorporates Deliver me Timbers which is a small woodwork and horticulture project. This is going to become amalgamated into the new enterprise at South Hill, "Eden" which will become a larger vocational area. This will be shared by The Croft Centre and South Hill learners. It aims to produce and sell a wide range of seasonal products.

ESPA received a generous donation which is being invested into updating and refurbishing the sensory room. This will become a resource everyone can enjoy. They also have plans to convert the summer house into a jungle themed space.

The Croft Centre contributed to a pop in shop in Sunderland,ESPA secured to celebrate Autism Acceptance Week. This ran from the 27th March to the 2nd April. It gave us the opportunity to raise public awareness, promote ESPA and showcase the many talents of the people we support.

Autism Works

In 2022/23 the enterprise made a marginal financial loss due to two of their large contracts being suspended as a result of Covid. These have now restarted and has enabled Autism Works to regain its financial stability and generate a small surplus. Post pandemic the team have continued hybrid working which has not had any impact on productivity.

Strong working relationships have been maintained with Johnson & Johnson who highly value their independent software testing services. We deliver against a number of national and international contracts.

Last year we were in discussions with CapGemini about working in partnership to develop an academy to recruit and train autistic Software Testers. It reached the point of developing a Business Plan and Partnership Agreement. Since then little progress has been made but it still maybe an opportunity for the future.

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The enterprise is keen to employ more Trainees in line with its Business Plan now all restrictions have been lifted. To achieve this we are continuing to investigate growth opportunities. With a growth in the workforce we would also need to review the office accommodation.

ESPA Research

In July 2022 ESPA Research received another £80,000 donation from the Robert Luff Foundation who have now generously supported the enterprise for 14 years. In March 2023 we submitted a report on how their funding has supported their research efforts and plans for the future. We remain confident of their financial support but are realistic that we may see a reduction in the amount awarded.

Two new collaborations have been developed over the past 12 months. The first is with a Professor from Arizona State University where they aim to develop a biomarker suite for autism. The second is working with an English-German collective group working on vitamin D. Both of these pieces of work have the potential to become significant research projects and generate new income.

The team have contributed to work looking to develop and design a screening questionnaire to accompany their biomarker study. They have also been involved in the development of a "what works" intervention app. This provides research-based information on pharmaceutical and nutritional interventions for autism for professionals and lay people.

Their work on looking at a potential overlap between autoimmune encephalitis and autism has continued. This has specifically been focussing on regression.

Members of the ESPA Research team have attended and presented at a number of on-line and face to face conferences to disseminate their research findings and explore new partnerships.

Plans for future periods

Our Strategic Plan for April 2023 to March 2025 clearly defines ESPA's plans and processes, targets, expected outcomes and timescales, that will enable the Charity to build on its many achievements and retain its financial strength.

ESPA's key priorities and strategic objectives for April 2023 to March 2025 have been formally approved by the Board of Trustees. Progress against objectives is monitored and reported through the Board of Trustees Meetings and the Charity's management and meeting structures.

The key strategic objectives are summarised below:-

Governance and Central Management

- To ensure ESPA's continued financial strength with resources allocated according to priorities
- Increase income through growth in existing and new activities
- To implement the Charity's Accommodation Strategy
- To recruit, train and develop a high quality workforce
- To ensure compliance with legislative and contractual requirements and best practice
- To evidence best practice and the achievement of positive outcomes

Residential Services

- To ensure the on-going financial strength and growth of residential services
- To deliver the highest quality person centered and autism specific support
- To ensure all homes continue to meet legislative requirements, local and national policy and best practice
- To achieve and sustain 94% occupancy
- To ensure resources are allocated to meet strategic priorities and objectives
- All services to maintain a 'Good' rating by the CQC but recognised for some outstanding practices

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Domiciliary Agency

- To ensure the Agency's financial strength to support its on-going development
- To ensure the Agency continues to meet legislative and contractual requirements and evidences best practice
- To ensure each person receives the highest quality person centered and autism specific support
- Everyone supported achieves positive personal outcomes and enjoys a good quality of life
- To remain on Local Authority frameworks and retain current contracts
- To increase income through new support contracts
- To ensure staffing and management structures meet actual needs within income

ESPA College

- To ensure the College's financial strength in order to provide the resources to support excellence in teaching and learning
- To increase income through increased learner numbers and diversifying College activities
- Learners achieve excellent educational and personal outcomes
- To further develop College systems and activities to improve the quality of teaching and learning
- To improve employability outcomes
- To expand the social care programme for College leavers

Day and Vocational Services

- To ensure the ongoing financial stability of day and vocational services
- To reintegrate residential service users
- To offer an extensive menu of high quality autism specific activities within the building and community
- To extend the range of activities in direct response to people's needs, wishes and interests
- To develop more vocational and volunteering opportunities

Autism Works

- To maintain financial strength to support the continued growth and development of the enterprise
- To build on current contracts and secure new clients
- To develop an Academy in partnership with Capgemini
- To recruit and train a skilled workforce

ESPA Research

- To ensure the financial viability and growth of ESPA Research
- To produce high quality research for the public good
- To continue current research projects and engage in new partnerships
- To enhance marketing to raise the profile of the enterprise

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Financial Review

The consolidated statement of financial activities for the year 2022-2023 reports an operating surplus of £1.502m in comparison with £1.531m last year (Restated). This is largely a result of increased charitable activities within the residential and education sector where we have seen occupancy rates starting to recover following the Covid 19 pandemic. The results have exceeded our expectations in the current financial year, especially when the cost of living crisis and social care worker crisis remains within the social care sector. Occupancy has now slowed down in the residential care homes as the social care worker crisis remains to have an impact on our organisation. We have seen an increase in the agency worker utilisation to resource our current student and resident requirement. The cost of living crisis started to hit harder in the latter half of the year and at present we have not fully faced the full impact of our energy costs. The Charity maintained safe levels of staffing for all services but the increased competition for staff will continue to be a factor within the care sector over the next 12 months. Any surpluses that we generate are used to build up funding for investment in future projects, and will enable the organisation to maintain its future strategic objectives.

In 2022-23, we generated total income for the year of £17.619m (2022: £16.348m – as restated) an increase of 7.78% on the previous year. The increase in the year was due to the increase in demand for College education and Residential placements, along with annual inflationary rises. We have seen a rise in demand for our care home placements, new admissions has been a challenge with the staffing crisis within the care sector, this has resulted in delays for new admissions into our services, occupancy levels continues to be one of our long term strategic objectives. During the year we have continued to see an increase in demand for College education placements but the challenge of the NE12 Funding Framework remains due to marginal inflationary increases and pressure on student fees. Student numbers and placement fees have increased in the year and the forecasted student numbers for 2023-24 is encouraging.

A prior year adjustment, increasing opening general reserves by £230,231, has been posted and details of this adjustment are included in Note 26 to the accounts.

Fee income from statutory bodies represents 96.39% (2022: 94.27% - as restated) of the total income and as part of the strategic planning process, the Board of Directors and management are continuing to look at diversifying into other income streams. Adult social services increased by 7.19% to £12.52m (2022: £11.68m – as restated), which is reflective of greater demand and higher occupancy levels within the day and domiciliary care services. Education fees increased by 19.57% to £4.46m (2022: £3.73m), an increase in student numbers have impacted on this year's results. Grant income decreased by 76.19%, with grants received in the year totalling £114,588 (2022: £481,217), which includes £3,000 from the Work force development fund, £27,915 from the ESFA and £82,817 from the ESFA Capital Fund.

During 2022-23, our total charitable expenditure increased to £16.117m (2022: £14.817m), up 8.78% on the previous year. Analysis of our expenditure shows, adult social services at 69.51% (2022: 69.98%) and education fees at 28.73% (2022: 28.14%) of our total expenditure. Support costs in the year were £1.51m or 8.60% of total revenues (2022 - £1.56m, 9.53%). The current economic conditions and financial uncertainty within social care remain a challenge for ESPA, but despite marginal growth in the Education placements and nominal inflationary increases in Local Authority income, we have continued to remain focused on driving efficiencies and optimising costs to maintain a healthy surplus for the year.

The balance sheet remains in good shape at the current financial year end. The organisation has invested funds of £0.13m (2022: £0.16m) in fixed assets during the year. The main investment in the year was to address the back log of equipment and machinery within our sites and the continued investment in the organisations Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

At the end of the financial year the group has total net assets of £19.616m (2022: £18.114m – as restated) based on reporting a total net surplus of £1.502m.

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The organisation continues to invest in short-term cash deposits, as these funds arise from fees received in advance. In 2023 the return on investments totalled £43.2k (2022: £2.7k), this being an increase of 1,474.71% (2022: 365.08% increase). During the financial year the Charity has retained a strong cash flow due to new placements now settled in to the income stream within the local authorities, cash flow monitoring ensures that all funds will be maintained long term. The Bank of England interest rate will continue to see an increase on our return on these short term investments. The Trustees are mindful of the investment policy and the rate of return has been continually monitored during the year to ensure that we are maximising any return on such funds.

ESPA Research Limited, our trading subsidiary, recorded financial results in the year as shown in note 24. In the current financial year we have seen a decrease in the ability to generate funds through grants and donors for the pure research activities. The company has made distributable profits in the year and the Board have recommended that these funds are retained within the company to fund current cash flow requirements. The outstanding intercompany loan is repayable on demand and the ESPA Board of Directors is reassured of the ability to meet this obligation. They continue their support for the trading subsidiary by defining its strategic objectives and will ensure the financial support required for the continued research activities it performs.

Autism Works Limited, our trading subsidiary, which was incorporated for the trading activity of IT software testing, recorded the financial results in the year as shown in note 24. During the year the enterprise team of Autism Works has successfully maintained a working relationship with Johnson & Johnson to develop new contracts, while retaining the involvement in existing contracts. The current financial year saw a reduction in turnover of 34.1%, the impact of covid still remains within some projects and this has resulted in the starting dates for some contracts being delayed. The results achieved in the year, although negative, was controlled by mitigating risks and uncertainty on the existing contracts to ensure maximum revenues were achieved. The company continues to work on new and existing contracts with Johnson & Johnson and the ESPA Board of Directors continue their support based on the positive forecasts and the financial stability offered on future contracts.

Reserves Policy

The reserves policy is designed to reflect the underlying risks facing the Charity and to ensure that ESPA has an appropriate level of reserves to safeguard its operation and the services to people with autism spectrum conditions.

ESPA holds restricted funds in accordance with the donors' requirements. In addition, ESPA has established a designated reserve for the management of the fixed assets of the Charity, with the future requirements of the portfolio determined in accordance with the strategic planning process.

The Trustees have considered the minimum level of free reserves i.e. excluding restricted and designated reserves, required to support the Charity's operations. The free reserves required is between three and nine months average budgeted expenditure, with six months being the optimum. Relevant factors include projected financial performance including cash flow requirements, risk management and assessment of the risks to the Charity's income streams.

Following this review, the Trustees have determined that the minimum required level of free reserves is £8.06m (2022: £7.40m), which is in line with the actual free reserves at 31 March 2023 of £9.98m (2022: £9.46m – as restated). This high level of reserves represents the trustees factoring in the effect of the heightened economic uncertainty for the next 12 months, which has increased some of the risk factors on some areas of the organisation. While the actual reserves are higher than required, our expectation is that, over the period of the strategic plan they will be in line with the required level.

The requirement and underlying factors are considered annually and the minimum reserves requirement is, therefore, expected to change over time.

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Investment Policy

Whilst the Charity has wide powers to invest monies the Trustees are mindful of:

- The need to maximise income by pursuing an investment policy that produces the best investment return reasonably obtainable.
- The necessity to safeguard the assets of the Charity by not making investments of a speculative or volatile nature.
- The need to maintain a level of reserves in cash in order to meet both the foreseen and unforeseen obligations of the Charity.

It has been the policy of the Trustees for some time and continues to be current policy, that liquid reserves will be maintained in cash deposits and the Trustees will continue to look at ways of maximising the income from such deposits. This policy is reviewed and scrutinised regularly by the Trustees.

Going Concern

Financial sustainability continues to be a critical issue for the care sector. The impact of Covid 19 remains, particularly on occupancy recovery, the current social care staffing crisis, the energy and cost of living crisis has increased the risks. Our strong financial position mitigates the financial risk but as part of our assessment, the long term strategic objectives identifies that the Charity will continue to focus on the financial sustainability of the organisation. The focus being on occupancy rates, recruitment and retention and efficiency savings.

As we move into 2023/2024 the Charity has undertaken a review of financial scenarios and sensitivity analysis to take into account the financial impact of the cost of living crisis and the energy crisis within the budget forecasts. The Trustees have reviewed our financial position and financial forecasts, taking into account the assumptions underlying those forecasts and the impact for the potential risks affecting them. As a result of this review, the Trustees therefore consider that there is a reasonable expectation that the Group will be able to continue in operation and meet its liabilities as they fall due. As a consequence, they continue to support the going concern basis in accounting in preparing the annual accounts.

Structure, Governance and Management

Structure

Education and Services for People with Autism Limited, known as ESPA, is a registered Charity (No.1037868) and a company limited by guarantee (No.2909953) and is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association incorporated on the 18th March 1994 and as amended on December 2012, December 2020 and August 2022.

The Charity has two wholly owned subsidiary undertakings, ESPA Research Limited and Autism Works Limited, both trading companies. The principal activities of the trading companies are Research and ICT software testing.

Organisational Structure

The Board of Trustees is currently made up of 7 Trustees, comprising a mix of suitable qualified members. The Trustees are appointed and then become Directors of the Company for the purpose of the Companies Act 2006. The Trustees, all of whom are also Directors of the Charity, are listed on page 18, along with the key management of the organisation. Since April 2022 there have been no changes in Board membership. Their skills, qualifications and experience continue to provide strong governance towards the Charity:

- Setting and maintaining the visions, mission and values
- Developing and reviewing strategic priorities and objectives
- Setting operational plans and reviewing performance

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- Ensuring compliance with the governing document and the law
- Ensuring accountability including the Charity Commission and Companies House
- Effectively managing resources and funds so it can meet its charitable objectives.

Pre-pandemic the Board ordinarily met at least three times a year and held an Annual General Meeting. However during the pandemic meetings were a combination of virtual and face to face which worked well. Meetings were also shorter but held more frequently. In August 2022 the Governing documents were amended to enable hybrid Board Meetings to continue. All Board members give their time freely and none of them receive remuneration from the Charity. The Trustees have established a management structure to guarantee the effective governance and strategic management of ESPA and to ensure that the Charity meets its objectives. The Board delegated authority for the day-to-day management to the Chief Executive and the Finance Executive. From 1st April 2023 this becomes the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive.

ESPA's two trading subsidiaries each have a Board of Directors, one of which is also a Trustee of the Charity. Meetings have also been attended by ESPA's Chief Executive and Finance Director. From 1st April 2023 this will be attended by the new Chief Executive. The Trustees of ESPA receive formal reports of the Companies activities through regular Board Meetings and papers.

The Board set, monitor and review the salaries of the management team and all salaries are benchmarked against appropriate comparable organisations.

Recruitment, Appointment and Induction of New Trustees

The aim of the Charity is to ensure that the Board of Trustees have a broad mix of skills, knowledge and experience. The process for recruiting new Trustees is based on an evaluation of the diverse skills and experience needed to govern the Charity. The skills mix of the Board is formally reviewed on an annual basis. On this review, the Board will identify any gaps in skills, knowledge and experience and try to identify individuals who can extend and compliment current membership. It is normal practice that before election, Trustees will receive an Induction Pack that contains everything they need to know about the Charity, their general responsibilities and key Policies and Procedures.

New Trustees are invited to spend time with the Executive Management Team as part of their induction. Prospective Trustees are also invited to visit services to further develop their understanding of the work of the Charity. They also receive additional training and updates relevant to their roles and responsibilities.

Trustees' Indemnity

As permitted by the Articles of Association, each of the Trustees has the benefit of an indemnity which is a qualifying third party indemnity as defined by section 234 of the Companies Act 2006. The indemnity was in force throughout the last financial year, and is currently in force.

Related parties

None of the Trustees receive remuneration or benefit from their work with the Charity. Any connection or conflicts with individuals, contractors or similar organisations are disclosed to the Board of Trustees.

Staff Members

None of our work at ESPA would be possible without the dedication, hard work and commitment of our staff especially during this very challenging year. ESPA is fortunate in employing so many staff members who share our values and provide an exceptional service to the people they support. We operate a robust recruitment process, with a commitment to retaining and rewarding staff, while also ensuring that all staff are offered excellent training and personal development.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2023

Consultation with staff members exists at all levels, with the aim that all views are taken into account when decisions are made. During the year, regular communications are provided to staff through individual meetings, team meetings and bulletins. ESPA understands and values the differences in people and has a commitment to creating an environment that treats each individual fairly.

The Charity commits to employment policies which follow best practice, based on equal opportunities in employment and aims to ensure that all employees and job applicants are treated fairly and consistently regardless of their age, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and trade union membership/non membership.

Fundraising

ESPA does not actively raise funds externally or use professional fundraisers/commercial participators to actively raise funds to further charitable activities. The Charity does sometimes receive donations from our supporters which are used to help further the lives of the individuals we support. In the course of their work some staff teams host events that showcase the talents of the people they support. Any funds raised are reinvested into resources.

We are aware of the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 in relation to statements on fundraising and are reviewing our processes to ensure compliance.

Risk Management

The Charitable Group operates a formal Risk Management Procedure that provides oversight and accountability for the management of risk across all levels of the group.

Risk is managed by the Trustees, Executive Management Team and relevant members of the Senior Management Team. Our Risk Management Procedure and process are in place to identify the strategic and operational risks to the Charity, current controls, monitoring processes and further action to be taken that will minimise the potential impact and likelihood upon the group.

All information is incorporated into the group wide Risk Register, which is reviewed and approved annually by the Board of Trustees. This was last reviewed in March 2023.

The main risk categories as defined by the group are divided into four categories:

- Strategic
- Operational
- Financial
- People

Overall the areas of residual risk that would have the highest (most significant) impact on ESPA have been assessed as:

- Increased competition from other providers
- Failure to attract or retain staff
- Changing legislation, government policy and impact on commissioning strategies and funding.
- Major incident/investigations
- Significant safeguarding issue/severe injury or death of a service user, student or staff member
- Economic climate (including Ukraine War) and inflation
- Expenditure exceeds income

The risk management process demonstrates that through management review and current controls, it significantly reduces the potential impact and likelihood of risk in all areas. The Risk Register clearly defines further action to be taken within the group, which has been reflected in the strategic objectives for April 2023 to March 2025.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2023

Statement of Trustees Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also Directors of Education and Services for People with Autism Limited for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees Annual Report (including the Strategic 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 charitable company and the group and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company and the group for that period. 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 2019 (FRS 102);
- 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 charitable company and the group will continue to operate.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and the group 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 charitable company and the group, and hence for taking reasonable steps for prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.
In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

AUDITORS

The auditors, Azets Audit Services, will be proposed for re-appointment in accordance with Section 485 of the Companies Act 2006.

The Report of the Trustees including the Strategic Report was approved by the Board of Trustees on 31 October 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Paul Shattock

Paul Shattock

Chairman

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

For The Year Ended 31 March 2023

Charity Registration Number:	1037868
Company Registration Number:	2909953
Trustees and Directors:	P E G Shattock (Chairman) P M Moxon Prof M Hooper R Jordan S Robinson G Young Dr M Maskey
Chief Executive:	K T Hardy
Key Management:	K T Hardy - Chief Executive P G Cahill - Deputy Chief Executive/College Principal M Elstob - Head of Social Care
Company Secretary:	K T Hardy
Registered Office:	North House Ferryboat Lane Sunderland Tyne and Wear SR5 3RL
Auditors:	Azets Audit Services Bulman House Regent Centre Henry St Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 3LS
Bankers:	Barclays Bank PLC 7th Floor Bank House East Pilgrim Street Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6QE

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED

Opinion on financial statements

We have audited the financial statements of Education and Services for People with Autism Limited (the 'parent charitable company') and its subsidiaries (the 'group') for the year ended 31 March 2023 which comprise the group Statement of Financial Activities, the group and parent charitable company Balance Sheet, the group Cash Flow Statement 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 group's and parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2023, and of the group's 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 responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group and parent charitable company 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 group and parent charitable company'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 trustees' 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 the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' annual report (including the strategic report and the directors' report) for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the directors' report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of our knowledge and understanding of the group and parent charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report and the trustees' annual 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 by the parent charitable company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the parent charitable company's financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of directors' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we required for our audit.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 17, the trustees (who are also the directors of the parent charitable company for the purposes 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 group and parent charitable company'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 group or parent 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

We have been appointed auditor under the Companies Act 2006 and report in accordance with this Act.

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.

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.

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 company 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.

Azets Audit Services

Graham Fitzgerald BA FCA DChA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Azets Audit Services
Accountants
Statutory Auditor
Bulman House
Regent Centre
Henry St
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE3 3LS

31 October 2024

Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities (Incorporating an income and expenditure account)
For The Year Ended 31 March 2023

Income and Expenditure Account

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £	Total Funds (as restated) 2022 £
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	2	85,451	-	85,451	99,191
Charitable activities	3	16,987,350	114,588	17,101,938	15,896,223
Other trading activities	4	152,372	-	152,372	199,631
Investments	5	43,210	-	43,210	2,744
Other	6	236,648	-	236,648	150,622
Total income		17,505,031	114,588	17,619,619	16,348,411
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	7	16,049,031	68,785	16,117,816	14,817,535
Total expenditure		16,049,031	68,785	16,117,816	14,817,535
Net income / (expenditure)		1,456,000	45,803	1,501,803	1,530,876
Transfers between funds	21	45,803	(45,803)	-	-
Net movement in funds	21	1,501,803	-	1,501,803	1,530,876
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward	21	18,113,894	-	18,113,894	16,583,018
Total funds carried forward	21	19,615,697	-	19,615,697	18,113,894

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities. The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised during the year.

Balance Sheet
at 31 March 2023

	Note	Group 2023 £	Group 2022 (as restated) £	Charity 2023 £	Charity 2022 (as restated) £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	14	8,376,557	8,700,773	8,358,239	8,673,283
Investments	15	-	-	20	20
Total fixed assets		8,376,557	8,700,773	8,358,259	8,673,303
Current assets					
Debtors	16	7,450,277	6,183,232	7,507,660	6,193,768
Cash at bank and in hand		5,971,264	5,542,899	5,918,406	5,504,716
Total current assets		13,421,541	11,726,131	13,426,066	11,698,484
Current liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	17	(2,147,940)	(1,826,830)	(2,117,935)	(1,808,747)
Net current assets		11,273,601	9,899,301	11,308,131	9,889,737
Total assets less current liabilities		19,650,158	18,600,074	19,666,390	18,563,040
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	18	(34,377)	(485,994)	(34,377)	(485,994)
Provisions for liabilities	20	(84)	(186)	-	-
Net assets		19,615,697	18,113,894	19,632,013	18,077,046
Charity Funds					
Restricted funds	21	-	-	-	-
Unrestricted funds	21	19,615,697	18,113,894	19,632,013	18,077,046
Total charity funds	21	19,615,697	18,113,894	19,632,013	18,077,046

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board on 31 October 2024.

Signed on behalf of the board of trustees:

Paul Shattock

Paul Shattock - (Chairman)

Company registered number: 2909953

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Statement of Cash Flows and Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows
For The Year Ended 31 March 2023

	Note	Group 2023 £	Group 2022 (as restated) £	Charity 2023 £	Charity 2022 (as restated) £
Cash flow from operating activities	23	236,294	(166,720)	221,619	(148,586)
Net cash flow from operating activities		236,294	(166,720)	221,619	(148,586)
Cash flow from investing activities					
Receipts from sales of tangible fixed assets		387,515	370,533	387,515	368,133
Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets		(132,274)	(165,934)	(132,274)	(150,557)
Interest received		43,210	2,744	43,210	2,744
Net cash flow from investing activities		298,451	207,343	298,451	220,320
Cash flow from financing activities					
Receipts from issue of new long term loans		16,399	-	16,399	-
Repayment of long term loans		(89,798)	(87,895)	(89,798)	(87,895)
Repayment of finance lease liabilities		(12,196)	-	(12,196)	-
Interest paid		(20,785)	(21,859)	(20,785)	(21,859)
Net cash flow from financing activities		(106,380)	(109,754)	(106,380)	(109,754)
Net increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		428,365	(69,131)	413,690	(38,020)
Cash and cash equivalents at 01.04.2022		5,542,899	5,612,030	5,504,716	5,542,736
Cash and cash equivalents at 31.03.2023		5,971,264	5,542,899	5,918,406	5,504,716
Cash and cash equivalents consists of:					
Cash at bank and in hand		5,971,264	5,542,899	5,918,406	5,504,716
Cash and cash equivalents at 31.03.2023		5,971,264	5,542,899	5,918,406	5,504,716

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2023

1 Accounting policies

1.1 Company information

The Charity is a private company limited by guarantee and is incorporated in England and Wales. The address of its registered office is North House, Ferryboat Lane, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear. SR5 3RL.

The members of the company are the Trustees named on page 18. In the event of the Charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the Charity.

1.2 Basis of preparation

The Group and Charity financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: "Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) " (SORP) issued in October 2019 and the "Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland" (FRS 102). They also comply with the reporting requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

The Group and Charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

The Group and Charity financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis, under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value.

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of the Group and Charity financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

Monetary amounts in these financial statements are stated in pounds sterling and are rounded to the nearest whole £1.

1.3 Going Concern

In order to assess the appropriateness of the going concern assumption basis, the Trustees have considered the Group's financial position, reserves and forecasts for the foreseeable future. At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have considered the assumptions underlying those forecasts and the impact of Covid-19 for the potential risks affecting them. After a review, the Trustees therefore consider that there is a reasonable expectation that the Group will be able to continue in operation and meet its liabilities as they fall due. There are no material uncertainties about the Group's ability to continue as a going concern.

1.4 Basis of consolidation

The financial statements of the Charity and its two subsidiary Companies are consolidated, on a line by line basis to produce the Group financial statements. The consolidated entity is referred to as 'the Group'.

The Charity has taken advantage of the exemption in section 408 of the Companies Act 2006 from disclosing its individual Statement of Financial Activities.

1.5 Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when the Charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

a. **Donations**
For donations to be recognised the Charity will have been notified of the amounts and the settlement date in writing. If there are conditions attached to the donation and this requires a level of performance before entitlement can be obtained then income is deferred until those conditions are fully met or the fulfilment of those conditions is within the control of the Charity and it is probable that they will be fulfilled.

b. **Investment income**
Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the Charity.

c. **Government grants**
Income from government grants is recognised when the Charity has entitlement to the funds and any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met.

d. **Legacies**
Legacies are recognised at the earlier of the Charity being notified of an impending distribution or the legacy being received.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2023

1.6 Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. It is categorised under the following headings:

a. Costs of raising funds includes the costs associated with any fund raising and publicity.

b. Expenditure on charitable activities includes costs of grant awards and other direct costs incurred towards achieving the Charity's charitable objectives.

c. Expenditure on governance relate to the corporate management of the organisation. They include the audit fee and insurance costs for the corporate management.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as an expense against the activity for which expenditure arose.

1.7 Allocation of support cost

All expenses including support costs and governance costs are allocated or apportioned to the applicable expenditure headings. Where support costs cannot be directly attributed to one or more categories they are apportioned on the basis of time spent. The analysis of these costs is included in note 8.

1.8 Leases

Operating lease rentals are charged to the SOFA on a straight line basis over the term of the lease.

Assets acquired under finance leases are capitalised and depreciated over the shorter of the lease term and the expected useful life of the asset. Minimum lease payments are apportioned between the finance charge and the reduction of the outstanding lease liability using the effective interest method. The related obligations, net of future finance charges, are included in creditors.

1.9 Pension costs

The Charity operates a defined contribution scheme for the benefit of its employees. Pension contributions payable for the year are recognised as an expense and as a liability, after deducting amount already paid.

1.10 Foreign currency

Transactions in foreign currencies are translated to sterling at the exchange rate ruling at the date of transaction. Exchange differences arising are taken to the SOFA.

1.11 Taxation

The Charity is an exempt Charity within the meaning of schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes.

Taxation that may arise within the Group through its subsidiary undertakings is accounted in accordance with FRS 102 section 29 'Income tax'.

1.12 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets costing more than £500 are capitalised and included at cost including any incidental expenses of acquisition.

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets at rates calculated to write off the cost on a straight line basis over their expected useful economic lives as follows:

Asset Category	*Rate*
Freehold land	nil
Freehold buildings	2% Straight line
Short leasehold buildings	2% Straight line and over the life of the lease
Plant & Machinery	over 5 years
Fixtures, Fittings & Equipment	over 5 years
Computer equipment	over 3 years
Motor vehicles	over 4 years

1.13 Investments

Investments are stated at cost at the balance sheet date. The SOFA includes the net gains and losses arising on revaluations and disposals throughout the year.

Investments in subsidiaries which consist of ordinary share capital are carried at cost less impairment.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2023

1.14 Debtors

Debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid.

1.15 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, cash held in current accounts and deposit accounts with UK Banks. All deposits are ready realisable.

1.16 Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where there is a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in a transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any discounts due.

1.17 Financial instruments

The Group has chosen to adopt section 11 and 12 of FRS 102, identifying and classifying financial instruments as 'basic' and 'other'. The Group has identified assets that qualify for 'basic' financial instruments only.

a. **Financial assets**
Basic financial assets, including trade and other debtors, cash and bank balances, are initially recognised at transaction value 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. Such assets are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest method.

b. **Financial liabilities**
Basic financial liabilities, including trade creditors, bank loans, and other creditors, are initially recognised at transaction value unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest method.

1.18 Fund accounting

Restricted funds
Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the Charity for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund.

Unrestricted funds

a. **Designated**
Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

b. **General**
General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Transfers from general funds to restricted funds are made when the income for a specific activity does not cover the full costs. Transfers between designated funds and general funds are determined by the Trustees where deemed appropriate.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2023

2 Income from donations and legacies

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2023	Total Funds 2022
		£	£	£	£
Donations		5,451	-	5,451	19,191
Donations - Robert Luff Foundation	24	80,000	-	80,000	80,000
		85,451	-	85,451	99,191

Income from donations and legacies was £85,451 (2022 - £99,191) of which £Nil (2022 - Nil) was attributable to restricted funds and £85,451 (2022 - £99,191) was attributable to unrestricted funds.

3 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2023	Total Funds 2022 (as restated)
	£	£	£	£
Adult services fees	12,516,237	-	12,516,237	11,676,411
College fees	4,465,914	-	4,465,914	3,734,864
Grants	-	114,588	114,588	481,217
Other	5,199	-	5,199	3,731
	16,987,350	114,588	17,101,938	15,896,223

Income from charitable activities was £17,101,938 (2022 - £15,896,223) of which £114,588 (2022 - £481,217) was attributable to restricted funds and £16,987,350 (2022 - £15,415,006) was attributable to unrestricted funds.

During the year the Group and Charity received no capital grants (2022 - £NIL), which has no unfulfilled conditions or other conditions attached. Other forms of grant assistance from which the Group and Charity has benefitted amounts to £114,588 (2022: £481,217).

4 Income from other trading activities

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2023	Total Funds 2022
		£	£	£	£
Garden furniture income		2,000	-	2,000	1,396
Subsidiary undertakings income	24	150,372	-	150,372	198,235
		152,372	-	152,372	199,631

Income from other trading activities was £152,372 (2022 - £199,631) of which £Nil (2022 - £Nil) was attributable to restricted funds and £152,372 (2022 - £199,631) was attributable to unrestricted funds.

5 Income from investments

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2023	Total Funds 2022
	£	£	£	£
Interest received	43,210	-	43,210	2,744
	43,210	-	43,210	2,744

The group's investment income arises from money held within interest bearing deposit accounts and is attributable to unrestricted funds.

6 Other income

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2023	Total Funds 2022
	£	£	£	£
Profit on sale of tangible fixed assets	236,648	-	236,648	150,622
	236,648	-	236,648	150,622

Other income of £236,648 (2022: £150,622) was attributable to unrestricted funds.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2023

7 Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

	Note	Activities undertaken directly	Support costs	2023	2022
		£	£	£	£
Adult services fees		10,435,384	767,515	11,202,899	10,368,781
College fees		3,889,648	741,734	4,631,382	4,169,326
Subsidiary undertakings expenditure	24	277,860	5,675	283,535	279,428
		14,602,892	1,514,924	16,117,816	14,817,535

£68,783 (2022 - £454,369) of the above costs were attributable to restricted funds. £16,043,533 (2022 - £14,363,166) of the above costs were attributable to unrestricted funds.

8 Allocation of support costs

Support costs are allocated to activities on a relevant basis to the nature of the underlying cost, including headcount, time spent or in proportion to resources used.

Support cost (Current Year)	Note	Adult services fees	College fees	Trading Activities	2023
		£	£	£	£
Governance	9	13,057	13,056	5,675	31,788
Management		118,818	118,817	-	237,635
Finance		126,955	126,955	-	253,910
Human resources		36,924	36,923	-	73,847
Maintenance		55,517	55,517	-	111,034
Training		44,844	19,065	-	63,909
Multi disciplinary team		54,515	54,516	-	109,031
Facilities (incl. rental)		18,569	18,569	-	37,138
Admin and Office costs		298,316	298,316	-	596,632
Total support and governance costs		767,515	741,734	5,675	1,514,924
Support costs are made up of:					
Staff Costs		437,573	411,793	-	849,366
Other Costs		329,942	329,941	5,675	665,558
Total support and governance costs		767,515	741,734	5,675	1,514,924

Support cost (Prior Year)	Note	Adult services fees	College fees	Trading Activities	2022
		£	£	£	£
Governance	9	15,765	15,765	5,655	37,185
Management		114,904	114,903	-	229,807
Finance		116,770	116,769	-	233,539
Human resources		34,249	34,248	-	68,497
Maintenance		64,826	64,826	-	129,652
Training		72,036	29,162	-	101,198
Multi disciplinary team		70,205	70,206	-	140,411
Facilities (incl. rental)		19,195	19,195	-	38,390
Admin and Office costs		289,826	289,826	-	579,652
Total support and governance costs		797,776	754,900	5,655	1,558,331
Support costs are made up of:					
Staff Costs		472,990	430,114	-	903,104
Other Costs		324,786	324,786	5,655	655,227
Total support and governance costs		797,776	754,900	5,655	1,558,331

9 Governance costs

	2023	2022
	£	£
Auditor's remuneration:		
- Audit of the charity's annual accounts	23,677	29,290
- Audit of the charity's subsidiary undertakings	5,675	5,655
Trustees' indemnity insurance	2,436	2,240
	31,788	37,185

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2023

10 Net income for the year

Net income is stated after charging:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	305,600	302,658
Loss on sale of tangible fixed assets	22	735
Operating lease rentals - land and buildings	111,418	113,370
Operating lease rentals - equipment	140,348	137,897

11 Staff costs and remuneration of trustees and key management personnel

The total group staff costs and employees benefit's was as follows:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Wages and salaries	11,849,272	10,842,790
Social security costs	815,005	717,818
Pension costs	278,974	273,761
	12,943,251	11,834,369

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2023	2022
	Number	Number
Charitable activities	523	529
Management and administration of the charity	32	34
Subsidiary undertakings	7	7
	562	570

The number of employees who received total employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) of more than £60,000 is as follows:

	2023	2022
	Number	Number
£60,001 - £70,000	-	-
£70,001 - £80,000	-	1
£80,001 - £90,000	1	-
£90,001 - £100,000	-	-
£100,001 - £110,000	-	1
£110,001 - £120,000	1	-
	1	2

The key management personnel of the Group are the Trustees and Management listed on page 18. Total salary and employee benefits received by key management personnel during the year amounted to £340,453 (2022: £329,092) plus pension contributions of £22,027 (2022: £21,207).

The trustees neither received nor waived any emoluments during the year (2022: £Nil).

During the year no trustees (2022: Nil) were reimbursed expenses totalling £Nil (2022: £Nil), which represented accommodation, travel and subsistence expenses incurred for attendance at the Trustees' meetings. A total of £Nil (2022: £Nil) was paid directly to third parties. As permitted in the Articles of Association, Trustee indemnity insurance was purchased at a total cost of £2,436 (2022: £2,240).

12 Interest payable and similar charges

	2023	2022
	£	£
Bank loans and overdrafts	20,232	21,859
Finance charges payable under finance leases	553	-
	20,785	21,859

13 Taxation

Education and Services for People with Autism Limited is a registered charity and as such its income and gains falling within s.505 ICTA 88 or s.256 TCGA 92 are exempt from corporation tax to the extent that they are applied to its charitable activities. No material corporation or deferred tax charge has arisen in its subsidiary undertakings.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2023

14 Tangible fixed assets

Group	Freehold land and buildings £	Plant and machinery £	Fixtures and fittings £	Motor vehicles £	Computer equipment £	Total £
Cost or valuation:						
At 01.04.2022	11,159,777	248,292	607,952	16,236	317,559	12,349,816
Additions	-	-	84,428	26,399	21,447	132,274
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	(240,161)	(894)	(3,270)	-	(17,690)	(262,015)
At 31.03.2023	10,919,616	247,398	689,110	42,635	321,316	12,220,075
Depreciation:						
At 01.04.2022	2,688,507	205,671	486,141	15,219	253,505	3,649,043
Charge for the year	198,054	15,773	49,732	5,967	36,074	305,600
Eliminated on disposals	(89,293)	(893)	(3,265)	-	(17,674)	(111,125)
At 31.03.2023	2,797,268	220,551	532,608	21,186	271,905	3,843,518
Net book value:						
At 31.03.2023	8,122,348	26,847	156,502	21,449	49,411	8,376,557
At 01.04.2022	8,471,270	42,621	121,811	1,017	64,054	8,700,773

Charity	Freehold land and buildings £	Plant and machinery £	Fixtures and fittings £	Motor vehicles £	Computer equipment £	Total £
Cost or valuation:						
At 01.04.2022	11,159,777	185,724	607,952	16,236	313,807	12,283,496
Additions	-	-	84,428	26,399	21,447	132,274
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	(240,161)	(894)	(3,270)	-	(17,690)	(262,015)
At 31.03.2023	10,919,616	184,830	689,110	42,635	317,564	12,153,755
Depreciation:						
At 01.04.2022	2,688,507	169,612	486,141	15,219	250,734	3,610,213
Charge for the year	198,054	7,139	49,732	5,967	35,537	296,429
Eliminated on disposals	(89,293)	(893)	(3,265)	-	(17,675)	(111,126)
At 31.03.2023	2,797,268	175,858	532,608	21,186	268,596	3,795,516
Net book value:						
At 31.03.2023	8,122,348	8,972	156,502	21,449	48,968	8,358,239
At 01.04.2022	8,471,270	16,112	121,811	1,017	63,073	8,673,283

Tangible fixed assets with a net book value of £5,907,557 (2022 - £6,049,845) have been pledged as security for liabilities of the group and charity. These assets have restricted title.

Motor vehicles includes assets with a net book value of £21,448 (2022: £Nil) held under finance leases.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2023

15 Fixed asset investments

	Group 2023 £	Group 2022 £	Charity 2023 £	Charity 2022 £
Market Value as at 1 April 2022	-	-	20	20
Additions	-	-	-	-
Disposal	-	-	-	-
Impairment	-	-	-	-
Market Value as at 31 March 2023	-	-	20	20

The Charity holds 100 per cent shareholdings in the two subsidiary undertakings within the Group, these are valued at cost of £20 (Espa Research Limited £10 and Autism Works Limited £10) (see note 24).

16 Debtors

	Group 2023	Group 2022 (as restated)	Charity 2023	Charity 2022 (as restated)
	£	£	£	£
Trade debtors	3,878,283	2,808,431	3,795,744	2,731,835
Amounts owed by group undertakings	-	-	187,119	159,470
Other debtors	120,636	88,640	86,173	72,015
Prepayments and accrued income	3,451,358	3,286,161	3,438,624	3,230,448
	7,450,277	6,183,232	7,507,660	6,193,768

17 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Group 2023	Group 2022	Charity 2023	Charity 2022
	£	£	£	£
Bank loans and overdrafts	452,354	90,535	452,354	90,535
Trade creditors	299,806	278,234	293,964	278,234
Fees in advance	328,300	329,102	328,300	329,102
Payments received on account	535,767	589,608	533,460	588,964
Other tax and social security	192,529	264,389	192,389	263,065
Finance leases	4,203	-	4,203	-
Accruals and deferred income	334,981	274,962	313,265	258,847
	2,147,940	1,826,830	2,117,935	1,808,747

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2023

18 Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	Group 2023	Group 2022	Charity 2023	Charity 2022
	£	£	£	£
Bank loans	34,377	485,994	34,377	485,994
	34,377	485,994	34,377	485,994

Bank loans include aggregate amounts of £Nil (2022 - £Nil) which fall due after five years and which are repaid by instalments. The payment terms and interest rate of each creditor for which an amount falls due after one year are given below:

The bank loans are secured by legal charges and a debenture dated 21/04/1995 over various freehold land and buildings of the Group and Charity.

	Group 2023	Group 2022	Charity 2023	Charity 2022
	£	£	£	£
2.50% above Bank of England rates secured loan repayable on 22 June 2025	34,377	55,920	34,377	55,920
3.69% fixed rate secured loan repayable on 2 November 2023	-	430,074	-	430,074
	34,377	485,994	34,377	485,994

19 Leases

a) Finance leases
Finance lease payments represent rentals payable by the company for a motor vehicle. Leases include the purchase option at the end of the lease period, and no restrictions are placed on the use of the assets. The average lease term is one year. All leases are on a fixed repayment basis and no arrangements have been entered into for contingent rental payments.

Total future minimum finance lease payments are as follows:

	Group 2023	Group 2022	Charity 2023	Charity 2022
	£	£	£	£
Not later than one year	4,250	-	4,250	-
	4,250	-	4,250	-
Less finance charges	(47)	-	(47)	-
	4,203	-	4,203	-

b) Operating lease
At 31 March 2023 the Charity and the Group had total commitments under non-cancellable operating leases for Land and Buildings and Equipment as follows:

Total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases are as follows:

	Group 2023	Group 2022	Charity 2023	Charity 2022
	£	£	£	£
Operating lease payments falling due:				
Within one year	142,916	149,850	130,911	133,217
Between one and five years	52,849	115,041	52,849	114,069
After more than five years	-	-	-	-
	195,765	264,891	183,760	247,286

20 Provisions for liabilities

	Group 2023	Group 2022	Charity 2023	Charity 2022
	£	£	£	£
At 01.04.2022	186	276	-	-
Deferred tax provision	(102)	(90)	-	-
At 31.03.2023	84	186	-	-

The tax provision relates to the deferred taxation within the subsidiary undertaking and is resultant of a timing issue.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2023

21 Fund reconciliation

Group (Current Year)	Balance At 01.04.2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains / (losses) £	Transfers £	Balance At 31.03.2023 £
Unrestricted funds:						
General reserve	9,471,667	17,505,031	(16,049,031)	-	(978,091)	9,949,576
Designated funds						
Fixed asset fund	8,124,244	-	-	-	(238,621)	7,885,623
Property development fund	517,983	-	-		1,262,515	1,780,498
Total unrestricted funds	18,113,894	17,505,031	(16,049,031)	-	45,803	19,615,697
Restricted funds:						
Tyne and Wear Care Alliance	-	3,000	(3,000)		-	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	82,817	(37,014)	-	(45,803)	-
ESFA - Covid	-	228	(228)	-	-	-
ESFA - Training	-	27,915	(27,915)	-	-	-
Covid 19 Support funds	-	628	(628)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	-	114,588	(68,785)	-	(45,803)	-
Total funds	18,113,894	17,619,619	(16,117,816)	-	-	19,615,697

Group (Prior Year) - (as restated)		Balance At 01.04.2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains / (losses) £	Transfers £	Balance At 31.03.2022 £
Unrestricted funds:							
General reserve		8,189,299	15,636,963	(14,363,166)	-	(221,660)	9,241,436
Prior year adjustment	Note 26	-	230,231	-	-	-	230,231
Designated funds							
Fixed asset fund		8,393,719	-	-	-	(269,475)	8,124,244
Property development fund		-	-	-		517,983	517,983
Total unrestricted funds		16,583,018	15,867,194	(14,363,166)	-	26,848	18,113,894
Restricted funds:							
Tyne and Wear Care Alliance		-	8,700	(8,700)	-	-	-
Good Things Foundation		-	3,300	-	-	(3,300)	-
Ian Karten Charitable Trust		-	15,700			(15,700)	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers		-	-	-	-	-	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers		-	7,848	-	-	(7,848)	-
ESFA - Covid		-	37,110	(37,110)	-	-	-
Job retention scheme		-	35,222	(35,222)	-	-	-
Covid 19 Support funds		-	373,337	(373,337)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds		-	481,217	(454,369)	-	(26,848)	-
Total funds		16,583,018	16,348,411	(14,817,535)	-	-	18,113,894

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2023

21 Fund reconciliation (continued)

Charity (Current Year)	At 01.04.2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains / (losses) £	Transfers £	At 31.03.2023 £
Unrestricted funds:						
General reserve	9,462,310	17,274,659	(15,765,495)	-	(987,262)	9,984,212
Designated funds						
Fixed asset fund	8,096,753	-	-	-	(229,450)	7,867,303
Property development fund	517,983	-	-	-	1,262,515	1,780,498
Total unrestricted funds	18,077,046	17,274,659	(15,765,495)	-	45,803	19,632,013
Restricted funds:						
Tyne and Wear Care Alliance	-	3,000	(3,000)	-	-	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	82,817	(37,014)	-	(45,803)	-
ESFA - Covid	-	228	(228)	-	-	-
ESFA - Training	-	27,915	(27,915)	-	-	-
Covid 19 Support funds	-	628	(628)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	-	114,588	(68,785)	-	(45,803)	-
Total funds	18,077,046	17,389,247	(15,834,280)	-	-	19,632,013

Charity (Prior Year) - (as restated)		At 01.04.2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains / (losses) £	Transfers £	At 31.03.2022 £
Unrestricted funds:							
General reserve		8,176,387	15,358,718	(14,083,739)	-	(219,287)	9,232,079
Prior year adjustment	Note 26	-	230,231	-	-	-	230,231
Designated funds							
Fixed asset fund		8,368,601	-	-	-	(271,848)	8,096,753
Property development fund		-				517,983	517,983
Total unrestricted funds		16,544,988	15,588,949	(14,083,739)	-	26,848	18,077,046
Restricted funds:							
Tyne and Wear Care Alliance		-	8,700	(8,700)	-	-	-
Good Things Foundation		-	3,300	-	-	(3,300)	-
Ian Karten Charitable Trust			15,700			(15,700)	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers		-	-	-	-	-	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers		-	7,848	-	-	(7,848)	-
ESFA - Covid		-	37,110	(37,110)	-	-	-
Job retention scheme		-	35,222	(35,222)	-	-	-
Covid 19 Support funds		-	373,337	(373,337)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds		-	481,217	(454,369)	-	(26,848)	-
Total funds		16,544,988	16,070,166	(14,538,108)	-	-	18,077,046

Fund descriptions

a) Unrestricted funds

The General reserve represents the free funds of the charity which are not designated for particular purposes.

b) Designated funds

The Fixed asset fund has been set up to assist in identifying those funds that are not free funds and it represents the net book value of tangible fixed assets less bank loans and hire purchase.

The Property Development Fund has been set up to assist in identifying funds that are not free funds and it represent funds that are required for the future development of properties.

c) Restricted funds

The restricted fund represents funds that have been received and are to be used for a specific purpose.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2023

22 Analysis of net assets between funds

Group fund balances at 31 March 2023 are represented by:	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	8,376,557	-	8,376,557
Investments	-	-	-	-
Current assets	11,641,043	1,780,498	-	13,421,541
Current liabilities	(1,691,383)	(456,557)	-	(2,147,940)
Long term liabilities	(84)	(34,377)	-	(34,461)
Total	9,949,576	9,666,121	-	19,615,697

Group fund balances at 31 March 2022 are represented by:	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2022 (as restated) £
Tangible fixed assets	-	8,700,773	-	8,700,773
Investments	-	-	-	-
Current assets	11,208,148	517,983	-	11,726,131
Current liabilities	(1,736,295)	(90,535)	-	(1,826,830)
Long term liabilities	(186)	(485,994)	-	(486,180)
Total	9,471,667	8,642,227	-	18,113,894

Charity fund balances at 31 March 2023 are represented by:	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	8,358,239	-	8,358,239
Investments	20	-	-	20
Current assets	11,645,568	1,780,498	-	13,426,066
Current liabilities	(1,661,376)	(456,559)	-	(2,117,935)
Long term liabilities	-	(34,377)	-	(34,377)
Total	9,984,212	9,647,801	-	19,632,013

Charity fund balances at 31 March 2022 are represented by:	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2022 (as restated) £
Tangible fixed assets	-	8,673,283	-	8,673,283
Investments	20	-	-	20
Current assets	11,180,501	517,983	-	11,698,484
Current liabilities	(1,718,211)	(90,536)	-	(1,808,747)
Long term liabilities	-	(485,994)	-	(485,994)
Total	9,462,310	8,614,736	-	18,077,046

23 Notes to the Cash Flow Statement

a) Reconciliation of net income / (expenditure) to net cash flow from operating activities	Group 2023 £	Group 2022 (as restated) £	Charity 2023 £	Charity 2022 (as restated) £
Net income / (expenditure) for the year	1,501,803	1,530,876	1,554,967	1,532,058
Interest receivable	(43,210)	(2,744)	(43,210)	(2,744)
Interest payable	20,785	21,859	20,785	21,859
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	305,600	302,658	296,429	292,769
(Profit) / loss on disposal of tangible fixed assets	(236,626)	(149,887)	(236,626)	(150,603)
Provisions less payments	(102)	(90)	-	-
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	(1,267,044)	(2,244,336)	(1,313,892)	(2,218,578)
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	(44,912)	374,944	(56,834)	376,653
Net cash flow from operating activities	236,294	(166,720)	221,619	(148,586)

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2023

23 Notes to the Cash Flow Statement (continued)

a) Analysis of changes in net funds (current year)

	At 01.04.2022	Cash flows	New finance leases	Non-cash changes	At 31.03.2023
	£	£	£	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	5,542,899	428,365	-	-	5,971,264
Loans due within one year	(90,535)	89,798	-	(451,617)	(452,354)
Loans due after more than one year	(485,994)	-	-	451,617	(34,377)
Finance lease obligations	-	12,196	(16,399)	-	(4,203)
	4,966,370	530,359	(16,399)	-	5,480,330

b) Analysis of changes in net funds (prior year)

	At 01.04.2021	Cash flows	New finance leases	Non-cash changes	At 31.03.2022
	£	£	£	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	5,612,030	(69,131)	-	-	5,542,899
Loans due within one year	(87,352)	87,895	-	(91,078)	(90,535)
Loans due after more than one year	(577,072)	-	-	91,078	(485,994)
	4,947,606	18,764	-	-	4,966,370

24 Subsidiary undertakings

The charity has two wholly owned non-charitable subsidiary undertakings ESPA Research Ltd (company number 6862992) and Autism Works Ltd (company number 7402411) which are registered in England and Wales. The registered address for both subsidiary undertakings is North House, Ferryboat Lane, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear. SR5 3RL

Autism Works Ltd is used for the trading activities of software testing and ESPA Research Ltd is used for academic research and non-primary purpose trading activities. All activities have been consolidated on a line by line basis in the SOFA. Any available profits are gifted to the charity, during the current financial year the subsidiaries have generated a small profit/loss on its trading activities but these have been retained in the year to fund current working capital.

A summary of the results of the subsidiaries is shown below:

	Autism Works Limited		ESPA Research Limited	
	Total 2023	Total 2022	Total 2023	Total 2022
	£	£	£	£
Turnover	102,718	155,993	-	6,742
Cost of sales	(156,219)	(152,472)	-	-
Gross profit	(53,501)	3,521	-	6,742
Administrative expenses	-	-	(128,713)	(125,751)
Other operating income	-	-	127,654	115,510
Profit/(Loss) on ordinary activities	(53,501)	3,521	(1,059)	(3,499)
Corporation tax repayable/(payable)	1,397	(1,205)	-	-
Retained (Loss)/Profit in subsidiary	(52,104)	2,316	(1,059)	(3,499)
The aggregate of the assets, liabilities and funds was:				
Assets	111,147	135,517	89,765	79,089
Liabilities	(100,651)	(72,917)	(116,557)	(104,822)
Reserves	10,496	62,600	(26,792)	(25,733)

Included within the operating income figure of Espa Research Limited, donations received during the year were £80,000 (2022: £80,010), with the largest donor being the Robert Luff Foundation of £80,000 (2022: £80,000). These funds are unrestricted and have been shown within the Group total of donations and legacies (note 2), with the balance of operating income and turnover of £47,654 (2022: £35,000) shown under trading activities (note 4).

ESPA Limited (The Charity) is prepared to provide continuing support to the trading subsidiaries.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2023

25 Pensions

The charity operates a defined contribution scheme for eligible employees and contributions are charged in the statement of financial activities as they accrue. The charge for the year was £278,974 (2022: £273,761). From February 2014, all employees have been automatically enrolled into the defined contribution scheme and the charity contributes between 1% and 10% of pensionable salaries.

The defined contribution liability is wholly allocated to unrestricted funds and is charged to the charitable activities in proportion to the staffing costs incurred.

Total pension commitments which are included in the balance sheet amount to £51,613 (2022: £47,966).

26 Prior period adjustments

An adjustment has been made to prior years figures in relation to accrued income. The uncertainty of funding during the covid pandemic has resulted in the charity's omission of fees for a residential care placement that were disputed. The adjustment has had the effect of increasing closing unrestricted funds at 31 March 2022 by £250,231.

27 Related party transactions

The charity has taken advantage of the exemption conferred by paragraph 33.1A of FRS 102, 'related party transactions', that transactions with wholly owned subsidiaries do not need to be disclosed.

28 Financial instruments

The carrying amounts of the charity's financial instruments are as follows:	Note	Group 2023 £	Group (as restated) 2022 £	Charity 2023 £	Charity (as restated) 2022 £
Financial assets					
Debt instruments measured at amortised cost:					
- Trade debtors	16	3,878,283	2,808,431	3,795,744	2,731,835
- Amounts owed by group undertakings	16	-	-	187,119	159,470
- Other debtors and accrued income		3,289,849	3,101,873	3,277,186	3,046,224
- Cash at bank and in hand		5,971,264	5,542,899	5,918,406	5,504,716
		13,139,396	11,453,203	13,178,455	11,442,245
Financial liabilities					
Measured at amortised cost					
- Bank loans and overdraft	17/18	486,731	576,529	486,731	576,529
- Trade creditors	17	299,806	278,234	293,964	278,234
- Accruals		141,253	111,628	119,537	95,513
		927,790	966,391	900,232	950,276

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED

England & Wales - Charity number 1037868

Accounts

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

REPORT AND GROUP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1037868

COMPANY NO: 2909953

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED

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For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

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Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2022

The Trustees submit their annual Board of Directors' report including Strategic Report, together with the audited consolidated financial statements of the Charity and its subsidiaries for the year ended 31 March 2022.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies, set out in notes to the accounts and comply with the Charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 and 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 October 2019).

STRATEGIC REPORT

Objectives and Activities

The objectives of Education and Services for People with Autism Limited (ESPA) and its subsidiary undertakings are for the public benefit to promote the health and wellbeing of people with autism, learning disabilities, communication, social or behavioural conditions, by enhancing the quality of life of such persons, in particular by

- Providing or assisting in the provision of education, training and employment opportunities for such people and advancing the education of others with autism, learning disabilities, communication, social or behavioural conditions;
- Providing accommodation, support and services to meet the needs of these individuals; and
- Carrying out or commissioning of research to improve the quality of life for autistic people and publish the useful results of such research.

ESPA's Mission Statement is:

"Enabling people across the autism spectrum to enjoy rewarding and fulfilling lives"

We currently support 236 (2021: 224) people in a wide range of person centred services including:

- Independent Specialist Further Education College
- Residential services
- Independent Supported Living services
- Domiciliary support
- Community enablement
- Day and vocational opportunities

The majority of the people we support have additional or associated difficulties and disabilities including: learning disabilities, mental health conditions, ADHD, OCD, sensory and communication difficulties and display behaviours that challenge. We currently employ 578 highly skilled, trained and highly committed staff.

All of our services share a common vision which is to provide everyone with the highest quality autism specific support and education that is tailored to meet their needs, wishes and expectations.

Our primary objectives for the coming year are to:

- Continue to offer the highest quality autism specific, person centred and compassionate care and support
- Work in partnership with all stakeholders to ensure individuals achieve excellent personal outcomes
- Develop new services and support arrangements to meet the needs of other on the autism spectrum
- Achieve best practice through continuous quality improvement
- Ensure resources are allocated to meet strategic objectives
- Recruit and train a high quality and professional workforce
- Evidence public benefit and social value in all charitable activities

- Demonstrate best value.

Our long term ambition is to continue to be a leading regional autism specific charity and build on our excellent track record and reputation. We aim to continue to develop new and innovative services in direct response to the changing needs of the people we support, identified gaps in provision and services procured by Local Authorities. With strong financial management, we will continue to ensure that resources are invested in areas of the Charity that meet the longer term strategic objectives of the organisation. We have a clear accommodation strategy that we are continuing to work towards, which has involved a review and re-provision of some of our current buildings to ensure they meet the changing needs of the Charity, expectations of funders and the needs of people being referred. This work will continue over the coming years and will support ESPA's continued growth and diversification.

We measure the success of our work by:

- The positive outcomes people achieve and the quality of life they enjoy
- The growing numbers of people we support
- Feedback from individuals, families and other health and social care professionals
- Self- assessments, internal and external inspections and audits.

Public Benefit

In all the Charity's planning and activities the Trustees have reviewed and considered the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit. As a registered Charity, public benefit and social value are embedded within our charitable objectives and mission. ESPA provides tangible benefits to the public through providing high quality care and education for people on the autism spectrum.

All of our support and education aims to enhance people's independence and improve health and well-being outcomes, towards reducing their reliance on health and social care services, reducing health inequalities and increasing their economic independence.

Through our day-to-day work of supporting people with autism to become valued and accepted members of their community: we support the sustainability of other organisations and charities; provide volunteers; educate the public about autism and associated disabilities and provide practical support to community groups and clubs.

As a large and growing regional employer we are constantly creating new job opportunities for local people and to help reduce unemployment. In line with our Equal Opportunities Policy we are keen to attract a diverse workforce especially those who may experience social or economic barriers to employment or may be at risk of discrimination including people with disabilities or due to a person's ethnicity, nationality or religion.

Our commitment to public benefit is exemplified through our two trading subsidiaries: Autism Works and ESPA Research. Autism Works is a software testing company that employs people on the autism spectrum as software testers. This recognises that many of the autistic characteristics can be a commercial asset in this field of work. The company has been highly commended for the quality of their work through some very high profile customers. Autism Works business plan aims to continue to grow its workforce offering more real work opportunities to people on the spectrum. ESPA Research's aims are to improve the quality of life for people on the autism spectrum through high quality publishable research investigations.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2022

Objectives and Activities

The significant charitable activities undertaken by ESPA are:

Adult Social Care

a) Residential Homes

ESPA operates 14 residential homes across Newcastle, Sunderland and Durham. We currently support 77 (2021: 74) people in these services. Residential services currently represent 54% (2021: 56%) of the Charity's income.

Each service is unique and individually tailored to meet the needs, wishes and expectations of the individuals living there. These services range from single person apartments to shared living arrangements. Most of the people we support have challenging and complex needs. Many individuals also have additional or associated difficulties or disabilities, therefore all our services offer intensive and specialist support in highly structured, autism-specific environments. All our homes offer 24 hour person centred care and support and staffing levels are based upon the actual assessed needs of the people they support. Each person receives structured and consistent support from highly skilled, experienced and knowledgeable staff. 269 staff are currently employed in the residential services.

Each individual has a Person Centred Plan which enables us to understand what is important to them and what they want from their lives. The setting of realistic personal goals ensures that individuals achieve positive outcomes in all aspects of their life. The primary measure of the success of our residential services is the positive life outcomes the individuals achieve and their families' satisfaction with the support we offer. Feedback is consistently captured through on-going dialogue, Service User Reviews and Satisfaction Surveys. Internal quality assurance processes including Senior Management Audits all support the continuous quality improvements of services, contract and Care Quality Commission (CQC) compliance and best practice. CQC inspections provide an independent assessment of quality, safety and compliance and 11 homes have been awarded an overall rating of 'Good', two have been awarded an 'Outstanding' and one was rated 'Requires Improvement'. All areas for improvement were immediately addressed.

For some people our residential services provide an excellent stepping stone towards a more independent future.

b) Domiciliary Agency

ESPA's Domiciliary Agency has three branches across the North East: Sunderland, Newcastle and Middlesbrough. This enables us to support people across the region. We always ensure that through individual service designs and Person-Centred Plans the people we support remain at the heart of everything we do.

We are committed to providing each person with high quality care and support that is autism specific, person-centred, flexible and responsive. We aim to enable each person to live as independently as possible and to become a valued and respected member of their community. Everyone receives an individual package of care and support to meet their specific needs, wishes and aspirations to enable them to enjoy a lifestyle of their choice.

We offer support in a variety of ways depending on people's needs and preferences. Support can be provided for specific hours during the week up to 24-hours a day. We currently offer a wide range of services through the Agency including:

- Supported living services
- Community enablement
- A core and cluster service
- Day provision from a community hub

Over the past 12 months the Agency has maintained financial stability and represents 19% (2021: 18%) of overall income and it currently employs 118 (2021: 107) staff.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2022

The Domiciliary Agency is currently supporting 35 (2021:32). We have 7 supported living services, 4 community enablement services and 15 people are supported from a community hub in Stockton. Burnfoot Court, is a core and cluster service funded through Individual Service Funds (ISF's). It currently supports 5 tenants in individual bungalows.

c) Day and Vocational Services

The Croft Centre in Sunderland is a creative and innovative, community-based day provision that offers person-centred programmes of meaningful and stimulating activities for people across the autism spectrum, many of whom have additional or associated difficulties or disabilities. The Croft Centre also incorporates a vocational project 'Deliver me Timbers'. In addition to the extensive range of activities offered within the building, people also take part in a wide range of activities in the local and wider community.

Everyone in our residential services has the opportunity to take full advantage of all of these day opportunities. It also offers specialist full and part-time day placements for people living at home. These placements are commissioned by Local Authorities or purchased directly through Personal Budgets, Direct Payments or Individual Service Funds. We currently support 22 (2021: 25) people for day placements from across the region. The Croft Centre is open for 44 weeks a year and it currently employs 25 (2021: 30) staff.

Education

a) Independent Specialist Further Education College

ESPA operates an Independent Specialist Further Education College that is based within the North East of England, with day sites in Sunderland, Newcastle upon Tyne and Middlesbrough. Students have access to residential accommodation in Sunderland and Newcastle. The College offers day and residential placements for young people on the autism spectrum between the ages of 16 and 25 years. Most students are local however some come from across the country to access this specialist provision.

As we support students across the autism spectrum each College site is specifically tailored to meet the needs of students with similar abilities and needs. Person-centred goals and transition plans ensure that each person achieves their personal ambitions. In March 2022 we were supporting 102 students (2021: 94) across the sites. We offer a 38 week academic year, but can offer residential placements for up to 52 weeks and respite. The College now represents 24% (2021: 21%) of the Charity's overall income and employs 120 (2021: 147) staff.

We have earned an excellent reputation and have a good track record of offering students a high quality, autism specific and person centred learning experience, towards them achieving positive educational and personal outcomes in preparation for life after College. We remain confident that we will see further growth in student numbers and income in coming years. We are also continuing to significantly invest in our College buildings to offer state of the art educational and residential facilities that will provide us with the capacity for growth and to enable us to meet the needs of increasingly complex and challenging learners.

The College offers each student a bespoke, innovative and creative curriculum. All our learning sessions are designed to be engaging, enjoyable, individualised and challenging. Each person has a programme of study tailored to their specific needs and aspirations. We consistently aim to develop the whole person and blend our autism specific core curriculum (Social Communication, Emotional Literacy and Behaviour Self-Management) with academic and vocational subjects. College learning sessions occur in a variety of settings, many of which are community based. Work experience, employability skills, enterprise and independence feature highly within the College's learning activities.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2022

Subsidiaries

a) Autism Works

Autism Works Limited is a wholly owned trading subsidiary of the Charity, offering independent software testing services. Established in 2010, its primary objective is to employ people on the autism spectrum, giving them the opportunity for sustainable employment and to reduce their reliance on state benefits. The company currently employs five people, three of whom have Asperger Syndrome. Our Business Plan demonstrates our commitment to create opportunities for many more people to gain meaningful employment as the enterprise grows.

b) ESPA Research

ESPA Research is also a wholly owned subsidiary of the Charity. Incorporated in 2009, its aims are to improve the quality of life for people on the autism spectrum through high quality publishable research investigations. It currently employs two people and the majority of their work is carried out from a laboratory in Sunderland's Business Innovation Centre.

Achievements and Performance

The Charity's activities have continued to be dominated by another 12 months of managing the impact of the on-going Covid 19 pandemic in all our services. Our overriding priority has been the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone we support and our staff. This has impacted on performance against many strategic objectives for April 2021 to March 2022.

Despite staff facing many challenges both personally and professionally staff have remained amazingly positive. They have continued to provide exceptional and compassionate support to the people they support and each other.

Over the year our Crisis Management Team have ensured that we have consistently and proactively complied with new legislation and ever changing Government guidance. They have provided timely and clear communications to ensure we meet the requirements of all stakeholders, including Local Authorities, Public Health and CQC.

Despite the introduction of the vaccination programme we have seen an increase in Covid positive cases but with milder symptoms. Government restrictions are now gradually lifting and community activities are being resumed.

Recruitment and retention of staff is having a significant impact on ESPA. It is now becoming a critical risk across all health and social care settings. Additional Health and Government funding specifically for recruitment and retention in residential and domiciliary services have supported us to employ additional strategies to help reduce the pressure on staff teams. We also introduced a Refer a Friend Scheme in October 2021 and enhanced additional hour's payments.

The commitment and dedication of all staff across the Charity has been exceptional and highly commended by families and our Trustees. We are now becoming more confident that over the coming months the impact of the pandemic will continue to lessen and we will see people getting back to enjoying a full, meaningful and enriched quality of life.

Our organisational Risk Register and Business Continuity Plan have been systematically reviewed throughout the year. Most recent changes have reflected managing the impact of the Ukraine/Russia war. We are anticipating a financial impact due to increased costs and supplies being disrupted. We are putting strategies in place to try and reduced likelihood and risks.

Directors and Central Management

Achieving inflationary increases from Local Authorities for people in our residential services has continued to be challenging and time consuming. The Finance Department have also been trying to resolve ongoing funding issues and fee reviews that are impacting on the Charity's cash flow, with some degree of success. Inflationary increases for domiciliary services have been more realistic.

Since February 2021 we have been trying to engage with the NE12 Framework's Commissioners responsible for procuring post 16 specialist education. Since the outset of this contract inflationary increases awarded have been

significantly lower than increased expenditure. This is not sustainable and is putting the future of the College at risk. Despite slow engagement we were able to communicate our position and provide supporting financial data. We believe other specialist Colleges are in a similar position. In February 2022 we were informed of an extension of the current contract to July 2022 giving time to procure a new 2 year interim framework. This removes the capping of fees enabling us to set realistic fees that will enable us to regain the College's financial stability. We are currently waiting for this tender opportunity to be published.

We continued to comply with the National Living Wage increase from 1st April 2021. We took the decision to apply the new hourly rate to all staff regardless of age. For domiciliary services in Newcastle and Teesside they received their contract specific hourly rate. All other salary increases were announced in September and backdated to 1st April.

We are progressing with our Accommodation Strategy, however timescales have been impacted due to the pandemic and inability to secure contractors. Westfield was sold on the 24th August 2021 and The Cloisters completed on 31st March 2022. The sale of these properties will be invested into our new developments; the studio at South Hill and Abigail House in Newcastle. Work has also restarted at Ashleigh to create all ensuite bedrooms including two respite rooms.

We have continued to populate the Data Security Protection Toolkit. This is a supportive framework to enable us to evidence compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations and provides a secure platform to access NHS mail. We have now completed and published 'Standards Met'. This document will be formally reviewed and updated annually to reflect changes and best practice.

Our full Investors in People award was due in June 2021. However, following a cost benefit analysis we made the decision not to participate. Although the scheme has support our quality assurance processes we believe that our current systems robustly inform our continuous quality improvement and on-going service and staff development.

Over the past year there has only been one published framework tender. This was for supported living and domiciliary services in North Tyneside. We submitted our application in December 2021 and are awaiting the outcome. Remaining on this framework will enable us to retain our Annitsford contract and respond to new local business opportunities. All other Authorities took the option to extend their current frameworks for a further year. A number are therefore likely to be advertised over the next 12 months.

Despite restrictions we have ensured all staff training and development has been kept up to date and without compromising on quality. Most training has been done remotely but whenever possible face to face in small groups or bubbles has been introduced. We are currently conducting a Training Needs Analysis for each service to enable us to develop bespoke training plans designed around the actual needs of the people they support.

The Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) Lead and Training Manager have updated behaviour management and PBS policies and procedures. All supporting documentation and data collection procedures are currently being reviewed. Restrictive practice audits have been concluded in all residential and supported living services to scrutinise practice and identify areas for improvement. This information will inform a review of Behaviour Support Plans and incident reporting and recording.

Liberty Protection Standards introduced in the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019 were intended to replace the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. There have been significant delays in its implementation and the target launch date of April 2022 was not achieved. No new date has been announced but in March 2022 the Government began a public consultation on the proposed Code of Conduct.

We have developed and maintained excellent relationships with an extensive range of health and social care professionals and agencies. These arrangements are enabling us to successfully support the more diverse and complex needs of learners and service users.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2022

Residential Services

All our residential services have continued to operate over the past 12 months. They have faced exceptional pressures due to Government restrictions, Covid testing, vaccination and reporting regimes and staff absences and turnover. During these challenging times staff have been outstanding in maintaining everyone's safety and well-being. They have worked creatively and innovatively to meet individual's needs and ensure people enjoyed meaningful and fun activities within ever changing Government guidelines. Throughout the year many of these have been celebrated in the Chief Executives Bulletin and commended by the Trustees.

A distressing consequence of restrictions was people not being able to spend time with their families. Staff again tried to creatively maintain contact through phones and other technology which many people found difficult. Through some Government grant funding and a legacy we bought and installed partitioned summer houses in the grounds of most of our residential services. This created a safe meeting space which most people greatly appreciated.

On the 31st March 2022 we were supporting 77 service users across our 14 residential sites and have remained financially stable. Demand for placements has increased however due to the pandemic and massive challenges with recruitment we have not been able to progress with these referrals. However, we are confident that this will change over the coming months.

CQC inspections remained suspended until January 2022 other than services rated 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate'. This only applied to one of our services who remedied the area for improvement immediately after the inspection. CQC have conducted a desk top and telephone inspection. We are awaiting the report and are very confident it will regain its previous 'Good' rating. Other services have been required to complete Provider Information Returns to self-assess ongoing compliance.

Residential Managers have continued to meet across the year, primarily virtually. Meetings are now held bimonthly alternating with Clinical Meetings with our Psychiatric Partnership. In addition to providing clinical support they have also delivered specialist training on prevalent mental health disorders and management strategies.

The management quality assurance audit process has been updated to gather more information and to feed into staffs supervisions and appraisals and training. Its framework is still aligned to CQC's Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) but has harnessed the knowledge and expertise of other central staff and senior managers. They conduct specialist audits in their field.

In February 2022 we conducted satisfaction surveys with the people we support and their families. Overall feedback was very positive, especially around how we have maintained our person centred support during the pandemic.

ESPA College

Over the past year the College has remained open and is now back up to full numbers. Some pockets of remote learning did continue where learners were unable to attend. Staff have continued to work creatively to ensure minimal disruption to teaching and learning. This has enabled learners to achieve positive outcomes.

In March 2022 the College was supporting 87 educationally funded learners and 15 young people in the social hubs. This is an increase of 8 learners from the previous year. Demand for placements have continued to grow and our plans for Abigail House and a new studio at South Hill will create the capacity to further increase numbers.

A significant area of growth has been the creation of social hubs primarily for College leavers. We are anticipating this to continue to grow and expand in coming years. We are working towards this being discrete provisions rather than integrated into the main body of the College, although resources can be shared.

Ofsted preparations have continued as an inspection is imminent. The College's Self-Assessment Report was published in November 2021. The College has assessed itself as 'Good' in all areas against the Education Inspection Framework. Identified actions and areas for further improvement are detailed in the Quality Improvement Plan. Progress is reported in termly quality reports which are shared with all staff and Trustees.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2022

In 2021/22 we saw a further increase in observed teaching and learning rated as 'Good or 'Outstanding' and walk throughs are now an integral part of the quality cycle. On 24th September the College had an External Quality Assurance visit. Feedback was positive and no actions were identified.

This year the pandemic did impact on achievement rates, attendance and work experience opportunities. Strategies have now been developed to improve engagement with learners and low attendance. Lower achievements were directly linked to attendance. With the appointment of new Work Experience Coordinator and Government restrictions being lifted we are again enjoying a diverse range of work placements. Enhancing employment opportunities and improving destination outcomes remains one of the College's top priorities.

The Equality and Diversity Committee continues to meet termly. As a result of a significant increase in learners identifying as trans or non-binary the group have made some local links and staff have received specialist training. This work was recognised when the College was shortlisted for a Natspec Award in the 'Wellbeing and Mental Health' category.

A business plan has been developed to create a woodwork and horticulture enterprise in the grounds of South Hill. Named 'Eden' it will become a shared resource between the College and our neighbouring day provision. Promotional materials are being designed and the site is being developed with the aim of fully launching in September 2022.

Over the summer, thanks to Karten Media grant an interactive sensory room was installed at South Hill. This state of the art resource has become hugely popular and is being made available to others across ESPA.

Strong relationships have been maintained with Local Authority SEND Teams and local feeder schools, albeit primarily remotely. Professional partnerships have also been created with three other North East Specialist Colleges to share best practice and support continuous quality improvement.

Domiciliary Agency

All domiciliary services have continued to operate throughout the pandemic within Government restrictions. However these have been fewer in supported living services as the majority of people live on their own or with one other person. Staff have been highly creative in ensuring the people they support have stayed safe and continue to enjoy a full and meaningful life.

Stockton intended to retender the Ware Street community hub for April 2022 which we have managed since it opened 7 years ago. However, they have taken the option to extend the contract for a further year. We are confident we can make a very strong application to retain this work.

In September 2021 we opened a new supported living service for a young man living in his own tenancy in Stockton. We were also working towards developing another single person tenancy in Teesside however this contract did not proceed. However, plans are progressing towards supporting one person from Ware Street and his brother to move into a shared property in Stockton. A staff team are currently being recruited.

Burnfoot Court currently supports 5 tenants in their individual bungalows. A sixth person has been assessed for the remaining bungalow and his team is being recruited. In October 2021 the Burnfoot Court team began to deliver a 24/7 outreach service to another person living in Newcastle. In the core and cluster buildings 'Just Roaming' assistive technology has been installed which has resulted in successful reduction in night time cover.

Our supported living service in Sunderland has continued to carry a void. Despite interest from some Local Authorities these referrals did not proceed due to being incompatible with the current householders. North Tyneside are also seeking to place another tenant in the supported living service we manage in Annitsford. Again compatibility needs to be a priority. This service particularly has found recruitment and retention challenging however there is now more stability within the team.

CQC have not conducted full inspections in any of the domiciliary branches during 2021/22. Through their Provider Information Returns they have remotely assessed all branches to continue to be compliant with all requirements. Over

the summer the Sunderland and Teesside branches had a telephone discussion specifically in line with CQC's Emergency Support Framework and a remote inspection on the 'Well-led' domain. Feedback was very positive.

In February 2022 we sent surveys to the people we support and their families. These aim to identify levels of satisfaction about people's lives and the support we provide. Any identified areas for improvement are responded to on an individual basis. Overall feedback was very positive.

Day and Vocational Services.

Over the past year The Croft Centre has remained open to day service users only. Residential service users have been supported from their homes. This has all been managed through robust risk assessments and risk management plans.

A total of 3 people have transferred from The Croft Centre to Ware Street in Stockton as this is closer to their home.

The service has remained financially stable during the pandemic despite periods of closure and reduced attendance. There is still some capacity to increase day service users but our current priority is to re-introduce our residential service users gradually and restarted the greatly missed social events.

Deliver Me Timbers is a woodwork and horticulture project. Plans are being developed to extend this provision into a larger enterprise. This is to be called 'Eden' and will become a shared resource between The Croft Centre and ESPA College.

Autism Works

Autism Works has remained productive over the past year and the team have maximised return through ongoing contracts. The pandemic only impacted on two contracts both of which were put on hold. They are expected to restart in the coming months. This has resulted in a reduction in income for this financial year however, financial forecasts are looking positive.

Strong working relationships have been maintained with Johnson & Johnson and other clients. They have also been awarded a new user acceptance testing contract from Janssen Biologics Systems for Covid vaccination data.

Autism Works is in discussion with Capgemini towards developing an academy to recruit and train Software Testers. Autism Works would do the recruitment and training with the intention of the trainees becoming permanent Capgemini employees after 18 months. Capgemini will provide the income for the enterprise through contracted work.

Predominantly the team have been working from home which has not impacted on productivity. As blended working is likely to continue this has enabled us to reduce the office space and therefore costs.

ESPA Research

During the pandemic the enterprise has continued to operate, however, income has reduced due to limited new funded research opportunities. The next 12 months are looking much more positive primarily due to a new collaboration with a Professor from Arizona State University (ASU).

In June 2021 they received an £80,000 donation from The Robert Luff Foundation who have now generously supported the enterprise for 13 years. In March 2022 we submitted our report to them on how their funding has support their research efforts and plans for next year. We remain confident of their continued financial support.

a2 Milk commissioned a further digestive study which has now been completed. The findings of all a2Milk studies are due to be published.

There are 2 new projects being developed in collaboration with ASU. The first is developing potential biomarkers suites for an objective diagnostic test for autism. The second is developing a 'What Works' intervention app for autism. This will provide research based information on pharmaceutical and nutritional interventions for use by professionals and lay people. ESPA Research will contribute to both the design of the survey and how the data is collected.

The team is also involved in establishing a collaborative group with an interest in Autoimmune Encephalitis and autism and in discussions on biological data collection following interventions delivered to individuals with Pitt Hopkins

Syndrome. Other projects include developing a research protocol for identifying 'best responder' tests for Faecal Microbiota Transplant therapy and developing a screening test for autistic people in the criminal justice system.

Plans for future periods

Our Strategic Plan for April 2022 to March 2024 clearly defines ESPA's plans and processes, targets, expected outcomes and timescales, that will enable the Charity to build on its many achievements and retain its financial strength.

ESPA's key priorities and strategic objectives for April 2022 to March 2024 have been formally approved by the Board of Trustees. Progress against objectives is monitored and reported through the Board of Trustees Meetings and the Charity's management and meeting structures.

The key strategic objectives are summarised below:-

Governance and Central Management

- To ensure ESPA's continued financial strength with resources allocated according to priorities
- Increase income through growth in existing and new activities
- To implement the Charity's Accommodation Strategy
- To recruit, train and develop a high quality workforce
- To ensure compliance with legislative and contractual requirements and best practice
- To evidence best practice and the achievement of positive outcomes

Residential Services

- To ensure the on-going financial strength and growth of residential services
- To deliver the highest quality person centred and autism specific support
- To ensure all homes continue to meet legislative requirements, local and national policy and best practice
- To achieve and sustain 94% occupancy
- To ensure resources are allocated to meet strategic priorities and objectives
- All services to maintain a 'Good' rating by the CQC but recognised for some outstanding practices

Domiciliary Agency

- To ensure the Agency's financial strength to support its on-going development
- To ensure the Agency continues to meet legislative and contractual requirements and evidences best practice
- To ensure each person receives the highest quality person centred and autism specific support
- Everyone supported achieves positive personal outcomes and enjoys a good quality of life
- To remain on Local Authority frameworks and retain current contracts
- To increase income through new support contracts
- To ensure staffing and management structures meet actual needs within income

ESPA College

- To ensure the College's financial strength in order to provide the resources to support excellence in teaching and learning
- To increase income through increased learner numbers and diversifying College activities
- Learners achieve excellent educational and personal outcomes
- To further develop College systems and activities to improve the quality of teaching and learning
- To improve employability outcomes
- To expand the social care programme for College leavers

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2022

Day and Vocational Services

- To ensure the ongoing financial stability of day and vocational services
- To reintegrate residential service users
- To offer an extensive menu of high quality autism specific activities within the building and community
- To extend the range of activities in direct response to people's needs, wishes and interests
- To develop more vocational and volunteering opportunities

Autism Works

- To maintain financial strength to support the continued growth and development of the enterprise
- To build on current contracts and secure new clients
- To develop an Academy in partnership with Capgemini
- To recruit and train a skilled workforce

ESPA Research

- To ensure the financial viability and growth of ESPA Research
- To produce high quality research for the public good
- To continue current research projects and engage in new partnerships
- To enhance marketing to raise the profile of the enterprise

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2022

Financial Review

The consolidated statement of financial activities for the year 2021-2022 reports an operating surplus of £1.301m in comparison with £1.163m last year. This is largely a result of increased charitable activities within the organisation, which exceeded our expectations. The impact of Covid 19 remained prevalent in the financial year along with the development of a staff crisis within the social care sector. The Charity maintained safe levels of staffing for all services but the increased completion for staff will continue to be a factor within the care sector over the next 12 months. Any surpluses that we generate are used to build up funding for investment in future projects, and will enable the organisation to maintain its future strategic objectives.

In 2021-22, we generated total income for the year of £16.118m (2021: £15.332m) an increase of 5.13% on the previous year. The increase in the year was due to the continued increase in demand for College education placements and support from local authority and Government funds. During the pandemic we have seen a slight reduction in the number of people living in our care homes, new admissions has been a challenge with the staffing crisis within the care sector but occupancy levels continues to be one of our strategic objectives this year. During the year we have continued to see an increase in demand for College education placements but the challenge of the NE12 Funding Framework remains due to marginal inflationary increases and pressure on student fees. Student numbers and placement fees have increased in the year and the forecasted student numbers for 2022-23 is encouraging.

Fee income from statutory bodies represents 94.18% (2021: 94.40%) of the total income and as part of the strategic planning process, the Board of Directors and management are continuing to look at diversifying into other income streams. Adult social services increased by 3.33% to £11.45m (2021: £11.07m), which is reflective of greater demand and higher occupancy levels within the day and domiciliary care services. Education fees increased by 9.97% to £3.73m (2021: £3.39m), an increase in student numbers have impacted on this year's results. Grant income increased by 16.16%, with grants received in the year totalling £481,217 (2021: £414,259), which includes £8,700 from the Work force development fund, £373,337 from Government Covid-19 funds, £37,110 from the ESFA, £35,222 from the job retention scheme, £15,700 from Ian Karten Charitable Trust, £3,300 from Good Things and £7,848 from the EFA Capital Fund.

During 2021-22, our total charitable expenditure increased to £14.817m (2021: £14.169m), up 4.58% on the previous year. Analysis of our expenditure shows, adult social services at 69.98% (2021: 70.56%) and education fees at 28.14% (2021: 27.47%) of our total expenditure. Support costs in the year were £1.56m or 9.67% of total revenues (2021 - £1.55m, 10.13%). The current economic conditions and financial uncertainty within social care remain a challenge for ESPA, but despite marginal growth in the Education placements and nominal inflationary increases in Local Authority income, we have continued to remain focused on driving efficiencies and optimising costs to maintain a healthy surplus for the year.

The balance sheet remains in good shape at the current financial year end. The organisation has invested funds of £0.16m (2021: £0.11m) in fixed assets during the year. The main investment in the year was to address the back log of equipment and machinery within our sites and the continued investment in the organisations Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

At the end of the financial year the group has total net assets of £17.884m (2021: £16.583m) based on reporting a total net surplus of £1.301m.

The organisation continues to invest in short-term cash deposits, as these funds arise from fees received in advance. In 2022 the return on investments totalled £2.7k (2021: £0.6k), this being an increase of 365.08% (2021: 96.78% decrease). During the financial year the Charity has retained a strong cash flow due to new placements now settled in to the income stream within the local authorities, cash flow monitoring ensures that all funds will be maintained long term. The changes to the Bank of England interest rate will start to see an increase our return on these short term investments. The Trustees are mindful of the investment policy and the rate of return has been continually monitored during the year to ensure that we are maximising any return on such funds.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2022

ESPA Research Limited, our trading subsidiary, recorded financial results in the year as shown in note 24. During the pandemic, we have seen a decrease in the ability to generate funds through grants and donors for the pure research activities. The results achieved in the year, although negative was controlled by mitigating risks and the company is currently working on new projects with new organisations to further their research activities. The outstanding intercompany loan is repayable on demand and the ESPA Board of Directors is reassured of the ability to meet this obligation. They continue their support for the trading subsidiary by defining its strategic objectives and will ensure the financial support required for the continued research activities it performs.

Autism Works Limited, our trading subsidiary, which was incorporated for the trading activity of IT software testing, recorded the financial results in the year as shown in note 24. During the year the enterprise team of Autism Works has successfully maintained a working relationship with Johnson & Johnson to develop new contracts, while retaining the involvement in existing contracts. Autism Works achieved marginal growth in the year and increased turnover by 5.77%, this enabled the company make distributable profits in the year and the Board have recommended that these funds are retained within the company to fund current cash flow requirements. The company continues to work on new and existing contracts with Johnson & Johnson and the ESPA Board of Directors continue their support based on the positive forecasts and the financial stability offered on future contracts.

Reserves Policy

The reserves policy is designed to reflect the underlying risks facing the Charity and to ensure that ESPA has an appropriate level of reserves to safeguard its operation and the services to people with autism spectrum conditions.

ESPA holds restricted funds in accordance with the donors' requirements. In addition, ESPA has established a designated reserve for the management of the fixed assets of the Charity, with the future requirements of the portfolio determined in accordance with the strategic planning process.

The Trustees have considered the minimum level of free reserves i.e. excluding restricted and designated reserves, required to support the Charity's operations. The free reserves required is between three and nine months average budgeted expenditure, with six months being the optimum. Relevant factors include projected financial performance including cash flow requirements, risk management and assessment of the risks to the Charity's income streams.

Following this review, the Trustees have determined that the minimum required level of free reserves is £3.70m (2021: £3.54m), which is in line with the actual free reserves at 31 March 2022 of £9.24m (2021: £8.19m). This high level of reserves represents the trustees factoring in the effect of the heightened economic uncertainty for the next 12 months, which has increased some of the risk factors on some areas of the organisation. While the actual reserves are higher than required, our expectation is that, over the period of the strategic plan they will be in line with the required level.

The requirement and underlying factors are considered annually and the minimum reserves requirement is, therefore, expected to change over time.

Investment Policy

Whilst the Charity has wide powers to invest monies the Trustees are mindful of:

- The need to maximise income by pursuing an investment policy that produces the best investment return reasonably obtainable.
- The necessity to safeguard the assets of the Charity by not making investments of a speculative or volatile nature.
- The need to maintain a level of reserves in cash in order to meet both the foreseen and unforeseen obligations of the Charity.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2022

It has been the policy of the Trustees for some time and continues to be current policy that liquid reserves will be maintained in cash deposits and the Trustees will continue to look at ways of maximising the income from such deposits. This policy is reviewed and scrutinised regularly by the Trustees.

Going Concern

Financial sustainability is a critical issue for the care sector. The impact of Covid 19, the current social care staffing crisis, the energy and cost of living crisis has increased the risks. Our strong financial position mitigates the financial risk but as part of our assessment, the long term strategic objectives identifies that the Charity will continue to focus on the financial sustainability of the organisation. The focus being on occupancy rates, recruitment and retention and efficiency savings.

The Trustees have reviewed our financial position and financial forecasts, taking into account the assumptions underlying those forecasts and the impact for the potential risks affecting them. As a result of this review, the Trustees therefore consider that there is a reasonable expectation that the Group will be able to continue in operation and meet its liabilities as they fall due. As a consequence, they continue to support the going concern basis in accounting in preparing the annual accounts.

Structure, Governance and Management

Structure

Education and Services for People with Autism Limited, known as ESPA, is a registered Charity (No.1037868) and a company limited by guarantee (No.2909953) and is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association incorporated on the 18th March 1994 and as amended on 8th August 2022.

The Charity has two wholly owned subsidiary undertakings, ESPA Research Limited and Autism Works Limited, both trading companies. The principal activities of the trading companies are Research and ICT software testing.

Organisational Structure

The Board of Trustees is currently made up of 7 Trustees, comprising a mix of suitable qualified members. The Trustees are appointed and then become Directors of the Company for the purpose of the Companies Act 2006. The Trustees, all of whom are also Directors of the Charity, are listed on page 18, along with the key management of the organisation. Since April 2021 there have been no changes in Board membership. Their skills, qualifications and experience continue to provide strong governance towards the charity:

- Setting and maintaining the visions, mission and values
- Developing and reviewing strategic priorities and objectives
- Setting operational plans and reviewing performance
- Ensuring compliance with the governing document and the law
- Ensuring accountability including the Charity Commission and Companies House
- Effectively managing resources and funds so it can meet its charitable objectives.

Pre-pandemic The Board ordinarily met at least three times a year and holds an Annual General Meeting. However during the pandemic meetings were a combination of virtual and face to face. We intend to amend our Governing documents to enable virtual meetings to continue. All Board members give their time freely and none of them receive remuneration from the Charity. The Trustees have established a management structure to guarantee the effective governance and strategic management of ESPA and to ensure that the Charity meets its objectives. The Board delegates authority for the day-to-day management to the Chief Executive and the Finance Executive.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2022

ESPA's two trading subsidiaries each have a Board of Directors, one of which is also a Trustee of the Charity. Meetings are also attended by ESPA's Chief Executive and Finance Executive. The Trustees of ESPA receive formal reports of the Companies activities through regular Board Meetings and papers.

The Board set, monitor and review the salaries of the management team and all salaries are benchmarked against appropriate comparable organisations.

Recruitment, Appointment and Induction of New Trustees

The aim of the Charity is to ensure that the Board of Trustees have a broad mix of skills, knowledge and experience. The process for recruiting new Trustees is based on an evaluation of the diverse skills and experience needed to govern the Charity. The skills mix of the Board is formally reviewed on an annual basis. On this review, the Board will identify any gaps in skills, knowledge and experience and try to identify individuals who can extend and compliment current membership. It is normal practice that before election, Trustees will receive an Induction Pack that contains everything they need to know about the Charity, their general responsibilities and key Policies and Procedures.

New Trustees are invited to spend time with the Executive Management Team as part of their induction. Prospective Trustees are also invited to visit services to further develop their understanding of the work of the Charity. They also receive additional training and updates relevant to their roles and responsibilities.

Trustees' Indemnity

As permitted by the Articles of Association, each of the Trustees has the benefit of an indemnity which is a qualifying third party indemnity as defined by section 234 of the Companies Act 2006. The indemnity was in force throughout the last financial year, and is currently in force.

Related parties

None of the Trustees receive remuneration or benefit from their work with the Charity. Any connection or conflicts with individuals, contractors or similar organisations are disclosed to the Board of Trustees.

Staff Members

None of our work at ESPA would be possible without the dedication, hard work and commitment of our staff especially during this very challenging year. ESPA is fortunate in employing so many staff members who share our values and provide an exceptional service to the people they support. We operate a robust recruitment process, with a commitment to retaining and rewarding staff, while also ensuring that all staff are offered excellent training and personal development.

Consultation with staff members exists at all levels, with the aim that all views are taken into account when decisions are made. During the year, regular communications are provided to staff through individual meetings, team meetings and bulletins. ESPA understands and values the differences in people and has a commitment to creating an environment that treats each individual fairly.

The Charity commit's to employment policies which follow best practice, based on equal opportunities in employment and aims to ensure that all employees and job applicants are treated fairly and consistently regardless of their sex, marital status, race, colour, religion, nationality or ethnic or national origins, disability, age, sexual orientation and trade union membership/non membership.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2022

Fundraising

ESPA does not actively raise funds externally or use professional fundraisers/commercial participators to actively raise funds to further charitable activities. The Charity does sometimes receive donations from our supports which are used to help further the lives of the individuals we support. In the course of their work some staff teams host events that showcase the talents of the people they support. Any funds raised are reinvested into resources.

We are aware of the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 in relation to statements on fundraising and are reviewing our processes to ensure compliance.

Risk Management

The Charitable Group operates a formal Risk Management Procedure that provides oversight and accountability for the management of risk across all levels of the group.

Risk is managed by the Trustees, Executive Management Team and relevant members of the Senior Management Team. Our Risk Management Procedure and process are in place to identify the strategic and operational risks to the Charity, current controls, monitoring processes and further action to be taken that will minimise the potential impact and likelihood upon the group.

All information is incorporated into the group wide Risk Register, which is reviewed and approved annually by the Board of Trustees. This was last reviewed in June 2022.

The main risk categories as defined by the group are divided into four categories:

- Strategic
- Operational
- Financial
- People

Overall the areas of residual risk that would have the highest (most significant) impact on ESPA have been assessed as:

- Increased competition from other providers
- Failure to attract or retain staff
- Employee absence
- Changing legislation, government policy and impact on commissioning strategies and funding.
- Major incident/investigations
- Severe injury or death of a service user, student or staff member (due to the increasingly complex and challenging needs of the people being supported)
- Economic environment/government funding
- Retaining existing contracts or not being awarded new contracts

The risk management process demonstrates that through management review and current controls, it significantly reduces the potential impact and likelihood of risk in all areas. The Risk Register clearly defines further action to be taken within the group, which has been reflected in the strategic objectives for 2022/24.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2022

Statement of Trustees Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also Directors of Education and Services for People with Autism Limited for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees Annual Report (including the Strategic 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 charitable company and the group and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company and the group for that period. 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 2019 (FRS 102);
- 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 charitable company and the group will continue to operate.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and the group 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 charitable company and the group, and hence for taking reasonable steps for prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.
In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

AUDITORS

The auditors, Azets Audit Services, will be proposed for re-appointment in accordance with Section 485 of the Companies Act 2006.

The Report of the Trustees including the Strategic Report was approved by the Board of Trustees on 15 August 2023 and signed on its behalf by:

Paul Shattock

Paul Shattock

Chairman

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

Charity Registration Number:	1037868
Company Registration Number:	2909953
Trustees and Directors:	P E G Shattock (Chairman) P M Moxon Prof M Hooper R Jordan S Robinson G Young Dr M Maskey
Chief Executive:	Ms L Lane
Key Management:	L Lane - Chief Executive (Retired 31.03.2023) K T Hardy - Chief Executive P G Cahill - Deputy Chief Executive/College Principal M Elstob - Head of Social Care
Company Secretary:	K T Hardy
Registered Office:	North House Ferryboat Lane Sunderland Tyne and Wear SR5 3RL
Auditors:	Azets Audit Services 32 Brenkley Way Blezard Business Park Seaton Burn Newcastle upon Tyne NE13 6DS
Bankers:	Barclays Bank PLC Barclays House 5 St Ann's Street Quayside Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 3DX

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED

Opinion on financial statements

We have audited the financial statements of Education and Services for People with Autism Limited (the 'parent charitable company') and its subsidiaries (the 'group') for the year ended 31 March 2022 which comprise the group Statement of Financial Activities, the group and parent charitable company Balance Sheet, the group Cash Flow Statement 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 group's and parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2022, and of the group's 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 responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group and parent charitable company 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 group and parent charitable company'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 trustees' 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 the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' annual report (including the strategic report and the directors' report) for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the directors' report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of our knowledge and understanding of the group and parent charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report and the trustees' annual 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 by the parent charitable company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the parent charitable company's financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of directors' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we required for our audit.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 17, the trustees (who are also the directors of the parent charitable company for the purposes 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 group and parent charitable company'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 group or parent 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

We have been appointed auditor under the Companies Act 2006 and report in accordance with this Act.

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.

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.

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 company 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.

Azets Audit Services

Graham Fitzgerald BA FCA DChA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Azets Audit Services
Accountants
Statutory Auditor
32 Brenkley Way
Blezard Business Park
Seaton Burn
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE13 6DS

15 August 2023

Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities (Incorporating an income and expenditure account)
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

Income and Expenditure Account

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £	Total Funds 2021 £
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	2	99,191	-	99,191	230,629
Charitable activities	3	15,184,775	481,217	15,665,992	14,897,608
Other trading activities	4	199,631	-	199,631	203,227
Investments	5	2,744	-	2,744	590
Other	6	150,622	-	150,622	-
Total income		15,636,963	481,217	16,118,180	15,332,054
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	7	14,363,166	454,369	14,817,535	14,169,147
Total expenditure		14,363,166	454,369	14,817,535	14,169,147
Net income / (expenditure)		1,273,797	26,848	1,300,645	1,162,907
Transfers between funds	21	26,848	(26,848)	-	-
Net movement in funds	21	1,300,645	-	1,300,645	1,162,907
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward	21	16,583,018	-	16,583,018	15,420,111
Total funds carried forward	21	17,883,663	-	17,883,663	16,583,018

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities. The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised during the year.

Balance Sheet
at 31 March 2022

	Note	Group 2022 £	Group 2021 £	Charity 2022 £	Charity 2021 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	14	8,700,773	9,058,143	8,673,283	9,033,025
Investments	15	-	-	20	20
Total fixed assets		8,700,773	9,058,143	8,673,303	9,033,045
Current assets					
Debtors	16	5,953,001	3,938,896	5,963,537	3,975,190
Cash at bank and in hand		5,542,899	5,612,030	5,504,716	5,542,736
Total current assets		11,495,900	9,550,926	11,468,253	9,517,926
Current liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	17	(1,826,830)	(1,448,703)	(1,808,747)	(1,428,911)
Net current assets		9,669,070	8,102,223	9,659,506	8,089,015
Total assets less current liabilities		18,369,843	17,160,366	18,332,809	17,122,060
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	18	(485,994)	(577,072)	(485,994)	(577,072)
Provisions for liabilities	20	(186)	(276)	-	-
Net assets		17,883,663	16,583,018	17,846,815	16,544,988
Charity Funds	21	-	-	-	-
Restricted funds					
Unrestricted funds	21	17,883,663	16,583,018	17,846,815	16,544,988
Total charity funds	21	17,883,663	16,583,018	17,846,815	16,544,988

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board on 15 August 2023.

Signed on behalf of the board of trustees:

Paul Shattock

Paul Shattock - (Chairman)

Company registered number: 2909953

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Statement of Cash Flows and Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

	Note	Group 2022 £	Group 2021 £	Charity 2022 £	Charity 2021 £
Cash flow from operating activities	23	(166,720)	2,591,288	(148,586)	2,682,992
Net cash flow from operating activities		(166,720)	2,591,288	(148,586)	2,682,992
Cash flow from investing activities					
Receipts from sales of tangible fixed assets		370,533	-	368,133	-
Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets		(165,934)	(105,264)	(150,557)	(92,593)
Interest received		2,744	590	2,744	590
Net cash flow from investing activities		207,343	(104,674)	220,320	(92,003)
Cash flow from financing activities					
Repayment of long term loans		(87,895)	(85,380)	(87,895)	(85,380)
Interest paid		(21,859)	(24,762)	(21,859)	(24,762)
Net cash flow from financing activities		(109,754)	(110,142)	(109,754)	(110,142)
Net increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		(69,131)	2,376,472	(38,020)	2,480,847
Cash and cash equivalents at 01.04.2021		5,612,030	3,235,558	5,542,736	3,061,889
Cash and cash equivalents at 31.03.2022		5,542,899	5,612,030	5,504,716	5,542,736
Cash and cash equivalents consists of:					
Cash at bank and in hand		5,542,899	5,612,030	5,504,716	5,542,736
Cash and cash equivalents at 31.03.2022		5,542,899	5,612,030	5,504,716	5,542,736

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

1 Accounting policies

1.1 Company information

The Charity is a private company limited by guarantee and is incorporated in England and Wales. The address of its registered office is North House, Ferryboat Lane, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear. SR5 3RL.

The members of the company are the Trustees named on page 18. In the event of the Charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the Charity.

1.2 Basis of preparation

The Group and Charity financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: "Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) " (SORP) issued in October 2019 and the "Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland" (FRS 102). They also comply with the reporting requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

The Group and Charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

The Group and Charity financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis, under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value.

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of the Group and Charity financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

Monetary amounts in these financial statements are stated in pounds sterling and are rounded to the nearest whole £1.

1.3 Going Concern

In order to assess the appropriateness of the going concern assumption basis, the Trustees have considered the Group's financial position, reserves and forecasts for the foreseeable future. At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have considered the assumptions underlying those forecasts and the impact of Covid-19 for the potential risks affecting them. After a review, the Trustees therefore consider that there is a reasonable expectation that the Group will be able to continue in operation and meet its liabilities as they fall due. There are no material uncertainties about the Group's ability to continue as a going concern.

1.4 Basis of consolidation

The financial statements of the Charity and its two subsidiary Companies are consolidated, on a line by line basis to produce the Group financial statements. The consolidated entity is referred to as 'the Group'.

The Charity has taken advantage of the exemption in section 408 of the Companies Act 2006 from disclosing its individual Statement of Financial Activities.

1.5 Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when the Charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

a. **Donations**
For donations to be recognised the Charity will have been notified of the amounts and the settlement date in writing. If there are conditions attached to the donation and this requires a level of performance before entitlement can be obtained then income is deferred until those conditions are fully met or the fulfilment of those conditions is within the control of the Charity and it is probable that they will be fulfilled.

b. **Investment income**
Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the Charity.

c. **Government grants**
Income from government grants is recognised when the Charity has entitlement to the funds and any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met.

d. **Legacies**
Legacies are recognised at the earlier of the Charity being notified of an impending distribution or the legacy being received.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

1.6 Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. It is categorised under the following headings:

a. Costs of raising funds includes the costs associated with any fund raising and publicity.

b. Expenditure on charitable activities includes costs of grant awards and other direct costs incurred towards achieving the Charity's charitable objectives.

c. Expenditure on governance relate to the corporate management of the organisation. They include the audit fee and insurance costs for the corporate management.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as an expense against the activity for which expenditure arose.

1.7 Allocation of support cost

All expenses including support costs and governance costs are allocated or apportioned to the applicable expenditure headings. Where support costs cannot be directly attributed to one or more categories they are apportioned on the basis of time spent. The analysis of these costs is included in note 8.

1.8 Operating leases

Operating lease rentals are charged to the SOFA on a straight line basis over the term of the lease.

1.9 Pension costs

The Charity operates a defined contribution scheme for the benefit of its employees. Pension contributions payable for the year are recognised as an expense and as a liability, after deducting amount already paid.

1.10 Foreign currency

Transactions in foreign currencies are translated to sterling at the exchange rate ruling at the date of transaction. Exchange differences arising are taken to the SOFA.

1.11 Taxation

The Charity is an exempt Charity within the meaning of schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes.

Taxation that may arise within the Group through its subsidiary undertakings is accounted in accordance with FRS 102 section 29 'Income tax'.

1.12 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets costing more than £500 are capitalised and included at cost including any incidental expenses of acquisition.

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets at rates calculated to write off the cost on a straight line basis over their expected useful economic lives as follows:

Asset Category	*Rate*
Freehold land	nil
Freehold buildings	2% Straight line
Short leasehold buildings	2% Straight line and over the life of the lease
Plant & Machinery	over 5 years
Fixtures, Fittings & Equipment	over 5 years
Computer equipment	over 3 years
Motor vehicles	over 4 years

1.13 Investments

Investments are stated at cost at the balance sheet date. The SOFA includes the net gains and losses arising on revaluations and disposals throughout the year.

Investments in subsidiaries which consist of ordinary share capital are carried at cost less impairment.

1.14 Debtors

Debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

1.15 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, cash held in current accounts and deposit accounts with UK Banks. All deposits are ready realisable.

1.16 Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where there is a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in a transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any discounts due.

1.17 Financial instruments

The Group has chosen to adopt section 11 and 12 of FRS 102, identifying and classifying financial instruments as 'basic' and 'other'. The Group has identified assets that qualify for 'basic' financial instruments only.

a. **Financial assets**
Basic financial assets, including trade and other debtors, cash and bank balances, are initially recognised at transaction value 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. Such assets are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest method.

b. **Financial liabilities**
Basic financial liabilities, including trade creditors, bank loans, and other creditors, are initially recognised at transaction value unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest method.

1.18 Fund accounting

Restricted funds
Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the Charity for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund.

Unrestricted funds

a. **Designated**
Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

b. **General**
General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Transfers from general funds to restricted funds are made when the income for a specific activity does not cover the full costs. Transfers between designated funds and general funds are determined by the Trustees where deemed appropriate.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

2 Income from donations and legacies

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2022	Total Funds 2021
		£	£	£	£
Donations		19,191	-	19,191	150,629
Donations - Robert Luff Foundation	24	80,000	-	80,000	80,000
		99,191	-	99,191	230,629

Income from donations and legacies was £99,191 (2021 - £230,629) of which £Nil (2021 - Nil) was attributable to restricted funds and £99,191 (2021 - £230,629) was attributable to unrestricted funds.

3 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2022	Total Funds 2021
	£	£	£	£
Adult services fees	11,446,180	-	11,446,180	11,076,901
College fees	3,734,864	-	3,734,864	3,396,231
Grants	-	481,217	481,217	414,260
Other	3,731	-	3,731	10,216
	15,184,775	481,217	15,665,992	14,897,608

Income from charitable activities was £15,665,992 (2021 - £14,897,608) of which £481,217 (2021 - £414,260) was attributable to restricted funds and £15,184,775 (2021 - £14,483,348) was attributable to unrestricted funds.

During the year the Group and Charity received no capital grants (2021 - £NIL), which has no unfulfilled conditions or other conditions attached. Other forms of grant assistance from which the Group and Charity has benefitted amounts to £481,217 (2021: £414,260).

4 Income from other trading activities

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2022	Total Funds 2021
		£	£	£	£
Garden furniture income		1,396	-	1,396	-
Subsidiary undertakings income	24	198,235	-	198,235	203,227
		199,631	-	199,631	203,227

Income from other trading activities was £199,631 (2021 - £203,227) of which £Nil (2021 - £Nil) was attributable to restricted funds and £199,631 (2021 - £203,227) was attributable to unrestricted funds.

5 Income from investments

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2022	Total Funds 2021
	£	£	£	£
Interest received	2,744	-	2,744	590
	2,744	-	2,744	590

The group's investment income arises from money held within interest bearing deposit accounts and is attributable to unrestricted funds.

6 Other income

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2022	Total Funds 2021
	£	£	£	£
Profit on sale of tangible fixed assets	150,622	-	150,622	-
	150,622	-	150,622	-

Other income of £150,622 (2021: £Nil) was attributable to unrestricted funds.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

7 Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

	Note	Activities undertaken directly	Support costs	2022	2021
		£	£	£	£
Adult services fees		9,571,005	797,776	10,368,781	9,997,047
College fees		3,414,426	754,900	4,169,326	3,891,680
Subsidiary undertakings expenditure	24	273,773	5,655	279,428	280,420
		13,259,204	1,558,331	14,817,535	14,169,147

£454,369 (2021 - £387,239) of the above costs were attributable to restricted funds. £14,363,166 (2021 - £13,781,908) of the above costs were attributable to unrestricted funds.

8 Allocation of support costs

Support costs are allocated to activities on a relevant basis to the nature of the underlying cost, including headcount, time spent or in proportion to resources used.

Support cost (Current Year)	Note	Adult services fees	College fees	Trading Activities	2022
		£	£	£	£
Governance	9	15,765	15,765	5,655	37,185
Management		114,904	114,903	-	229,807
Finance		116,770	116,769	-	233,539
Human resources		34,249	34,248	-	68,497
Maintenance		64,826	64,826	-	129,652
Training		72,036	29,162	-	101,198
Multi disciplinary team		70,205	70,206	-	140,411
Facilities (incl. rental)		19,195	19,195	-	38,390
Admin and Office costs		289,826	289,826	-	579,652
Total support and governance costs		797,776	754,900	5,655	1,558,331
Support costs are made up of:					
Staff Costs		472,990	430,114	-	903,104
Other Costs		324,786	324,786	5,655	655,227
Total support and governance costs		797,776	754,900	5,655	1,558,331

Support cost (Prior Year)	Note	Adult services fees	College fees	Trading Activities	2021
		£	£	£	£
Governance	9	10,241	10,241	4,559	25,041
Management		117,606	117,606	-	235,212
Finance		114,780	114,779	-	229,559
Human resources		29,327	29,327	-	58,654
Maintenance		62,234	62,234	-	124,468
Training		38,344	15,522	-	53,866
Multi disciplinary team		64,149	64,150	-	128,299
Facilities (incl. rental)		24,239	24,240	-	48,479
Admin and Office costs		324,401	324,401	-	648,802
Total support and governance costs		785,321	762,500	4,559	1,552,380
Support costs are made up of:					
Staff Costs		426,440	403,618	-	830,058
Other Costs		358,881	358,882	4,559	722,322
Total support and governance costs		785,321	762,500	4,559	1,552,380

9 Governance costs

	2022	2021
	£	£
Auditor's remuneration:	29,290	18,410
- Audit of the charity's annual accounts	5,655	4,559
- Audit of the charity's subsidiary undertakings	2,240	2,072
Trustees' indemnity insurance	37,185	25,041

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

10 Net income for the year

Net income is stated after charging:	2022	2021
	£	£
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	302,658	312,625
Loss on sale of tangible fixed assets	735	80
Operating lease rentals - land and buildings	113,370	101,725
Operating lease rentals - equipment	137,897	151,734

11 Staff costs and remuneration of trustees and key management personnel

The total group staff costs and employees benefit's was as follows:	2022	2021
	£	£
Wages and salaries	10,842,790	10,391,312
Social security costs	717,818	641,595
Pension costs	273,761	273,772
	11,834,369	11,306,679

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:	2022	2021
	Number	Number
Charitable activities	529	543
Management and administration of the charity	34	35
Subsidiary undertakings	7	7
	570	585

The number of employees who received total employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) of more than £60,000 is as follows:	2022	2021
	Number	Number
£60,001 - £70,000	1	1
£70,001 - £80,000	-	-
£80,001 - £90,000	-	-
£90,001 - £100,000	1	1
£100,001 - £110,000	2	2

The key management personnel of the Group are the Trustees and Management listed on page 19. Total salary and employee benefits received by key management personnel during the year amounted to £329,092 (2021: £327,784) plus pension contributions of £21,207 (2021: £21,036).

The trustees neither received nor waived any emoluments during the year (2021: £Nil).

During the year no trustees (2021: Nil) were reimbursed expenses totalling £Nil (2021: £Nil), which represented accommodation, travel and subsistence expenses incurred for attendance at the Trustees' meetings. A total of £Nil (2021: £Nil) was paid directly to third parties. As permitted in the Articles of Association, Trustee indemnity insurance was purchased at a total cost of £2,240 (2021: £2,072).

12 Interest payable and similar charges

	2022	2021
	£	£
Bank loans and overdrafts	21,859	24,762
	21,859	24,762

13 Taxation

Education and Services for People with Autism Limited is a registered charity and as such its income and gains falling within s.505 ICTA 88 or s.256 TCGA 92 are exempt from corporation tax to the extent that they are applied to its charitable activities. No material corporation or deferred tax charge has arisen in its subsidiary undertakings.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

14 Tangible fixed assets

Group	Freehold land and buildings £	Plant and machinery £	Fixtures and fittings £	Motor vehicles £	Computer equipment £	Total £
Cost or valuation:						
At 01.04.2021	11,518,067	253,291	597,304	28,574	307,775	12,705,011
Additions	5,465	25,198	89,550		45,721	165,934
Transfers						-
Disposals	(363,755)	(30,197)	(78,902)	(12,338)	(35,937)	(521,129)
At 31.03.2022	11,159,777	248,292	607,952	16,236	317,559	12,349,816
Depreciation:						
At 01.04.2021	2,630,406	213,039	528,979	23,497	250,947	3,646,868
Charge for the year	204,495	19,702	35,933	4,059	38,469	302,658
Eliminated on disposals	(146,394)	(27,070)	(78,771)	(12,337)	(35,911)	(300,483)
At 31.03.2022	2,688,507	205,671	486,141	15,219	253,505	3,649,043
Net book value:						
At 31.03.2022	8,471,270	42,621	121,811	1,017	64,054	8,700,773
At 01.04.2021	8,887,661	40,252	68,325	5,077	56,828	9,058,143

Charity	Freehold land and buildings £	Plant and machinery £	Fixtures and fittings £	Motor vehicles £	Computer equipment £	Total £
Cost or valuation:						
At 01.04.2021	11,518,067	201,748	597,304	28,574	304,125	12,649,818
Additions	5,465	9,923	89,550		45,619	150,557
Transfers						-
Disposals	(363,755)	(25,947)	(78,902)	(12,338)	(35,937)	(516,879)
At 31.03.2022	11,159,777	185,724	607,952	16,236	313,807	12,283,496
Depreciation:						
At 01.04.2021	2,630,406	185,157	528,979	23,497	248,754	3,616,793
Charge for the year	204,495	10,391	35,933	4,059	37,891	292,769
Eliminated on disposals	(146,394)	(25,936)	(78,771)	(12,337)	(35,911)	(299,349)
At 31.03.2022	2,688,507	169,612	486,141	15,219	250,734	3,610,213
Net book value:						
At 31.03.2022	8,471,270	16,112	121,811	1,017	63,073	8,673,283
At 01.04.2021	8,887,661	16,591	68,325	5,077	55,371	9,033,025

Tangible fixed assets with a net book value of £6,049,845 (2021 - £6,188,628) have been pledged as security for liabilities of the group and charity. These assets have restricted title.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

15 Fixed asset investments

	Group 2022 £	Group 2021 £	Charity 2022 £	Charity 2021 £
Market Value as at 1 April 2021	-	-	20	20
Additions	-	-	-	-
Disposal	-	-	-	-
Impairment	-	-	-	-
Market Value as at 31 March 2022	-	-	20	20

The Charity holds 100 per cent shareholdings in the two subsidiary undertakings within the Group, these are valued at cost of £20 (Espa Research Limited £10 and Autism Works Limited £10) (see note 24).

16 Debtors

	Group 2022 £	Group 2021 £	Charity 2022 £	Charity 2021 £
Trade debtors	2,808,431	1,896,540	2,731,835	1,885,392
Amounts owed by group undertakings	-	-	159,470	99,344
Other debtors	88,640	98,643	72,015	91,742
Prepayments and accrued income	3,055,930	1,943,713	3,000,217	1,898,712
	5,953,001	3,938,896	5,963,537	3,975,190

17 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Group 2022 £	Group 2021 £	Charity 2022 £	Charity 2021 £
Bank loans and overdrafts	90,535	87,352	90,535	87,352
Trade creditors	278,234	153,581	278,234	153,581
Fees in advance	329,102	68,735	329,102	68,735
Payments received on account	589,608	651,362	588,964	650,226
Other tax and social security	264,389	172,182	263,065	164,645
Accruals and deferred income	274,962	315,491	258,847	304,372
	1,826,830	1,448,703	1,808,747	1,428,911

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

18 Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	Group 2022	Group 2021	Charity 2022	Charity 2021
	£	£	£	£
Bank loans	485,994	577,072	485,994	577,072
	485,994	577,072	485,994	577,072

Bank loans include aggregate amounts of £Nil (2021 - £Nil) which fall due after five years and which are repaid by instalments. The payment terms and interest rate of each creditor for which an amount falls due after one year are given below:

The bank loans are secured by legal charges and a debenture dated 21/04/1995 over various freehold land and buildings of the Group and Charity.

	Group 2022	Group 2021	Charity 2022	Charity 2021
	£	£	£	£
2.50% above Bank of England rates secured loan repayable on 22 June 2025	55,920	79,985	55,920	79,985
3.69% fixed rate secured loan repayable on 2 November 2023	430,074	497,087	430,074	497,087
	485,994	577,072	485,994	577,072

19 Operating lease

At 31 March 2022 the Charity and the Group had total commitments under non-cancellable operating leases for Land and Buildings and Equipment as follows:

	Group 2022	Group 2021	Charity 2022	Charity 2021
	£	£	£	£
Operating lease payments falling due:				
Within one year	149,850	162,762	133,217	148,873
Between one and five years	115,041	89,788	114,069	89,788
After more than five years	-	-	-	-
	264,891	252,550	247,286	238,661

20 Provisions for liabilities

	Group 2022	Group 2021	Charity 2022	Charity 2021
	£	£	£	£
At 01.04.2021	276	-	-	-
Deferred tax provision	(90)	276	-	-
At 31.03.2022	186	276	-	-

The tax provision relates to the deferred taxation within the subsidiary undertaking and is resultant of a timing issue.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

21 Fund reconciliation

Group (Current Year)	Balance At 01.04.2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains / (losses) £	Transfers £	Balance At 31.03.2022 £
Unrestricted funds:						
General reserve	8,189,299	15,636,963	(14,363,166)	-	(221,660)	9,241,436
Designated funds						
Fixed asset fund	8,393,719	-	-	-	(269,475)	8,124,244
Property development fund	-	-	-		517,983	517,983
Total unrestricted funds	16,583,018	15,636,963	(14,363,166)	-	26,848	17,883,663
Restricted funds:						
Tyne and Wear Care Alliance	-	8,700	(8,700)	-	-	-
Good Things Foundation	-	3,300	-	-	(3,300)	-
Ian Karten Charitable Trust	-	15,700			(15,700)	
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	7,848	-	-	(7,848)	-
ESFA - Covid	-	37,110	(37,110)	-	-	-
Job retention scheme	-	35,222	(35,222)	-	-	-
Covid 19 Support funds	-	373,337	(373,337)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	-	481,217	(454,369)	-	(26,848)	-
Total funds	16,583,018	16,118,180	(14,817,535)	-	-	17,883,663

Group (Prior Year)	Balance At 01.04.2020 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains / (losses) £	Transfers £	Balance At 31.03.2021 £
Unrestricted funds:						
General reserve	6,904,331	14,917,794	(13,781,908)	-	149,082	8,189,299
Designated funds						
Fixed asset fund	8,515,780	-	-	-	(122,061)	8,393,719
Total unrestricted funds	15,420,111	14,917,794	(13,781,908)	-	27,021	16,583,018
Restricted funds:						
Tyne and Wear Care Alliance	-	11,200	(11,200)	-	-	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	20,652	-	-	(20,652)	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	6,369	-	-	(6,369)	-
Job retention scheme		115,808	(115,808)			-
Covid 19 Support funds		260,231	(260,231)			-
Total restricted funds	-	414,260	(387,239)	-	(27,021)	-
Total funds	15,420,111	15,332,054	(14,169,147)	-	-	16,583,018

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

21 Fund reconciliation (continued)

Charity (Current Year)	At 01.04.2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains / (losses) £	Transfers £	At 31.03.2022 £
Unrestricted funds:						
General reserve	8,176,387	15,358,718	(14,083,739)	-	(219,287)	9,232,079
Designated funds						
Fixed asset fund	8,368,601	-	-	-	(271,848)	8,096,753
Property development fund	-				517,983	517,983
Total unrestricted funds	16,544,988	15,358,718	(14,083,739)	-	26,848	17,846,815
Restricted funds:						
Tyne and Wear Care Alliance	-	8,700	(8,700)	-	-	-
Good Things Foundation	-	3,300	-	-	(3,300)	-
Ian Karten Charitable Trust		15,700			(15,700)	
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	7,848	-	-	(7,848)	-
ESFA - Covid	-	37,110	(37,110)	-	-	
Job retention scheme	-	35,222	(35,222)	-	-	-
Covid 19 Support funds	-	373,337	(373,337)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	-	481,217	(454,369)	-	(26,848)	-
Total funds	16,544,988	15,839,935	(14,538,108)	-	-	17,846,815

Charity (Prior Year)	At 01.04.2020 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains / (losses) £	Transfers £	At 31.03.2021 £
Unrestricted funds:						
General reserve	6,890,835	14,634,568	(13,501,489)	-	152,473	8,176,387
Designated funds						
Fixed asset fund	8,494,053	-	-	-	(125,452)	8,368,601
Total unrestricted funds	15,384,888	14,634,568	(13,501,489)	-	27,021	16,544,988
Restricted funds:						
Tyne and Wear Care Alliance	-	11,200	(11,200)	-	-	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	20,652	-	-	(20,652)	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	6,369	-	-	(6,369)	-
Job retention scheme	-	115,808	(115,808)			-
Covid 19 Support funds	-	260,231	(260,231)			-
Total restricted funds	-	414,260	(387,239)	-	(27,021)	-
Total funds	15,384,888	15,048,828	(13,888,728)	-	-	16,544,988

Fund descriptions

a) Unrestricted funds

The General reserve represents the free funds of the charity which are not designated for particular purposes.

b) Designated funds

The Fixed asset fund has been set up to assist in identifying those funds that are not free funds and it represents the net book value of tangible fixed assets less bank loans and hire purchase.

The Property Development Fund has been set up to assist in identifying funds that are not free funds and it represent funds that are required for the future development of properties.

c) Restricted funds

The restricted fund represents funds that have been received and are to be used for a specific purpose.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

22 Analysis of net assets between funds

Group fund balances at 31 March 2022 are represented by:	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2022 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	8,700,773	-	8,700,773
Investments	-	-	-	-
Current assets	11,495,900	-	-	11,495,900
Current liabilities	(1,736,295)	(90,535)	-	(1,826,830)
Long term liabilities	(186)	(485,994)	-	(486,180)
Total	9,759,419	8,124,244	-	17,883,663

Group fund balances at 31 March 2021 are represented by:	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2021 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	9,058,143	-	9,058,143
Investments	-	-	-	-
Current assets	9,550,926	-	-	9,550,926
Current liabilities	(1,361,351)	(87,352)	-	(1,448,703)
Long term liabilities	(276)	(577,072)	-	(577,348)
Total	8,189,299	8,393,719	-	16,583,018

Charity fund balances at 31 March 2022 are represented by:	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2022 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	8,673,283	-	8,673,283
Investments	20	-	-	20
Current assets	11,468,253	-	-	11,468,253
Current liabilities	(1,718,212)	(90,535)	-	(1,808,747)
Long term liabilities	-	(485,994)	-	(485,994)
Total	9,750,061	8,096,754	-	17,846,815

Charity fund balances at 31 March 2021 are represented by:	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2021 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	9,033,025	-	9,033,025
Investments	20	-	-	20
Current assets	9,517,926	-	-	9,517,926
Current liabilities	(1,341,559)	(87,352)	-	(1,428,911)
Long term liabilities	-	(577,072)	-	(577,072)
Total	8,176,387	8,368,601	-	16,544,988

23 Notes to the Cash Flow Statement

a) Reconciliation of net income / (expenditure) to net cash flow from operating activities

	Group 2022 £	Group 2021 £	Charity 2022 £	Charity 2021 £
Net income / (expenditure) for the year	1,300,645	1,162,907	1,301,827	1,160,100
Interest receivable	(2,744)	(590)	(2,744)	(590)
Interest payable	21,859	24,762	21,859	24,762
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	302,658	312,625	292,769	303,345
(Profit) / loss on disposal of tangible fixed assets	(149,887)	80	(150,603)	80
Provisions less payments	(90)	17	-	-
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	(2,014,105)	1,341,303	(1,988,347)	1,417,800
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	374,944	(249,816)	376,653	(222,505)
Net cash flow from operating activities	(166,720)	2,591,288	(148,586)	2,682,992

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

23 Notes to the Cash Flow Statement (continued)

a) Analysis of changes in net funds (current year)

	At 01.04.2021	Cash flows	Non-cash changes	At 31.03.2022
	£	£	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	5,612,030	(69,131)		5,542,899
Loans due within one year	(87,352)	87,895	(91,078)	(90,535)
Loans due after more than one year	(577,072)		91,078	(485,994)
	4,947,606	18,764	-	4,966,370

b) Analysis of changes in net funds (prior year)

	At 01.04.2020	Cash flows	Non-cash changes	At 31.03.2021
	£	£	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	3,235,558	2,376,472		5,612,030
Loans due within one year	(84,134)	85,380	(84,597)	(83,351)
Loans due after more than one year	(665,670)		84,597	(581,073)
	2,485,754	2,461,852	-	4,947,606

24 Subsidiary undertakings

The charity has two wholly owned non-charitable subsidiary undertakings ESPA Research Ltd (company number 6862992) and Autism Works Ltd (company number 7402411) which are registered in England and Wales. The registered address for both subsidiary undertakings is North House, Ferryboat Lane, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear. SR5 3RL

Autism Works Ltd is used for the trading activities of software testing and ESPA Research Ltd is used for academic research and non-primary purpose trading activities. All activities have been consolidated on a line by line basis in the SOFA. Any available profits are gifted to the charity, during the current financial year the subsidiaries have generated a small profit/loss on its trading activities but these have been retained in the year to fund current working capital.

A summary of the results of the subsidiaries is shown below:

	Autism Works Limited		ESPA Research Limited	
	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Turnover	155,993	147,477	6,742	27,750
Cost of sales	(152,472)	(156,082)	-	(3,235)
Gross profit	3,521	(8,605)	6,742	24,515
Administrative expenses	-	-	(125,751)	(122,558)
Other operating income	-	-	115,510	108,000
Profit/(Loss) on ordinary activities	3,521	(8,605)	(3,499)	9,957
Corporation tax repayable/(payable)	(1,205)	1,455	-	-
Retained (Loss)/Profit in subsidiary	2,316	(7,150)	(3,499)	9,957
The aggregate of the assets, liabilities and funds was:				
Assets	135,517	80,616	79,089	76,845
Liabilities	(72,917)	(20,332)	(104,822)	(99,079)
Reserves	62,600	60,284	(25,733)	(22,234)

Included within the operating income figure of Espa Research Limited, donations received during the year were £80,010 (2021: £80,000), with the largest donor being the Robert Luff Foundation of £80,000 (2021: £80,000). These funds are unrestricted and have been shown within the Group total of donations and legacies (note 2), with the balance of operating income and turnover of £35,500 (2021: £28,000) shown under trading activities (note 4).

ESPA Limited (The Charity) is prepared to provide continuing support to the trading subsidiaries.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

25 Pensions

The charity operates a defined contribution scheme for eligible employees and contributions are charged in the statement of financial activities as they accrue. The charge for the year was £273,761 (2021: £273,772). From February 2014, all employees have been automatically enrolled into the defined contribution scheme and the charity contributes between 1% and 10% of pensionable salaries.

The defined contribution liability is wholly allocated to unrestricted funds and is charged to the charitable activities in proportion to the staffing costs incurred.

Total pension commitments which are included in the balance sheet amount to £47,966 (2021: £45,522).

26 Events after the end of the period

On 15 June 2022 Education and Services for People with Autism Limited completed on the sale of a residential building at 6-7 The Cloisters, Ashbrooke, Sunderland, which was a education day service for people with autism spectrum disorders. The building was sold at market value for £400,000.

27 Related party transactions

The charity has taken advantage of the exemption conferred by paragraph 33.1A of FRS 102, 'related party transactions', that transactions with wholly owned subsidiaries do not need to be disclosed.

28 Financial instruments

The carrying amounts of the charity's financial instruments are as follows:	Note	Group 2022 £	Group 2021 £	Charity 2022 £	Charity 2021 £
Financial assets					
Debt instruments measured at amortised cost:					
- Trade debtors	16	2,808,431	1,896,540	2,731,835	1,885,392
- Amounts owed by group undertakings	16	-	-	159,470	99,344
- Other debtors and accrued income		2,871,642	1,798,074	2,815,993	1,753,135
- Cash at bank and in hand		5,542,899	5,612,030	5,504,716	5,542,736
		11,222,972	9,306,644	11,212,014	9,280,607
Financial liabilities					
Measured at amortised cost					
- Bank loans and overdraft	17/18	576,529	664,424	576,529	664,424
- Trade creditors	17/18	278,234	153,581	278,234	153,581
- Accruals		111,628	125,377	95,513	114,258
		966,391	943,382	950,276	932,263

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED

England & Wales - Charity number 1037868

Accounts

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

REPORT AND GROUP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1037868

COMPANY NO: 2909953

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED

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For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

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Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2021

The Trustees submit their annual Board of Directors' report including Strategic Report, together with the audited consolidated financial statements of the Charity and its subsidiaries for the year ended 31 March 2021.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies, set out in notes to the accounts and comply with the Charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 and 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 October 2019).

STRATEGIC REPORT

Objectives and Activities

The objectives of Education and Services for People with Autism Limited (ESPA) and its subsidiary undertakings are for the public benefit to promote the health and wellbeing of people with autism, learning disabilities, communication, social or behavioural conditions, by enhancing the quality of life of such persons, in particular by:

- Providing or assisting in the provision of education, training and employment opportunities for such people and advancing the education of others with autism, learning disabilities, communication, social or behavioural conditions;
- Providing accommodation, support and services to meet the needs of these individuals; and
- Carrying out or commissioning of research to improve the quality of life for autistic people and publish the useful results of such research.

ESPA's Mission Statement is:

"Enabling people across the autism spectrum to enjoy rewarding and fulfilling lives"

We currently support 224 people in a wide range of person centred services including:

- Independent Specialist Further Education College
- Residential services
- Independent Supported Living services
- Domiciliary support
- Community enablement
- Day and vocational opportunities
- Vocational opportunities

The majority of the people we support have additional or associated difficulties and disabilities including: learning disabilities, mental health conditions, ADHD, OCD, sensory and communication difficulties and display behaviours that challenge. We currently employ 578 highly skilled, trained and committed staff.

All of our services share a common vision which is to provide everyone with the highest quality autism specific support and education that is tailored to meet their needs, wishes and expectations.

Our primary objectives for the coming year are to:

- Continue to offer the highest quality autism specific, person centred and compassionate care and support
- Work in partnership with all stakeholders to ensure individuals achieve excellent personal outcomes
- Develop new services and support arrangements to meet the needs of others on the autism spectrum
- Achieve best practice through continuous quality improvement
- Ensure resources are allocated to meet strategic objectives
- Recruit and train a high quality and professional workforce
- Evidence public benefit and social value in all charitable activities

- Demonstrate best value.

Our long term ambition is to continue to be a leading regional autism specific Charity and build on our excellent track record and reputation. We aim to continue to develop new and innovative services in direct response to the changing needs of the people we support, identifying gaps in provision and services procured by Local Authorities. With strong financial management, we will continue to ensure that resources are invested in areas of the Charity that meet the longer term strategic objectives of the organisation. We have a clear accommodation strategy that we are continuing to work towards, which has involved a review and re-provision of some of our current buildings to ensure they meet the changing needs of the Charity, expectations of funders and the needs of people being referred. This work will continue over the coming years and will support ESPA's continued growth and diversification.

We measure the success of our work by:

- The positive outcomes people achieve and the quality of life they enjoy
- The growing numbers of people we support
- Feedback from individuals, families and other health and social care professionals
- Self- assessments, internal and external inspections and audits.

Public Benefit

In all the Charity's planning and activities the Trustees have reviewed and considered the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit. As a registered Charity, public benefit and social value are embedded within our charitable objectives and mission. ESPA provides tangible benefits to the public through providing high quality care and education for people on the autism spectrum.

All of our support and education aim to enhance people's independence and improve health and well-being outcomes, towards reducing their reliance on health and social care services, reducing health inequalities and increasing their economic independence.

Through our day-to-day work of supporting people with autism to become valued and accepted members of their community: we support the sustainability of other organisations and charities; provide volunteers; educate the public about autism and associated disabilities and provide practical support to community groups and clubs.

As a large and growing regional employer we are constantly creating new job opportunities for local people and to help reduce unemployment. In line with our Equal Opportunities Policy we are keen to attract a diverse workforce especially those who may experience social or economic barriers to employment or may be at risk of discrimination including people with disabilities or due to a person's ethnicity, nationality or religion.

Our commitment to public benefit is exemplified through our two trading subsidiaries: Autism Works and ESPA Research. Autism Works is a software testing company that employs people on the autism spectrum as software testers. This recognises that many of the autistic characteristics can be a commercial asset in this field of work. The company has been highly commended for the quality of their work through some very high profile customers. Autism Works business plan aims to continue to grow its workforce offering more real work opportunities to people on the spectrum. ESPA Research's aims are to improve the quality of life for people on the autism spectrum through high quality publishable research investigations.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2021

Objectives and Activities

The significant charitable activities undertaken by ESPA are:

Adult Social Care

a) Residential Homes

ESPA operates 14 residential homes across Newcastle, Sunderland and Durham. We currently support 74 (2020: 75) people in these services. Residential services currently represent 56% (2020: 59%) of the Charity's income.

Each service is unique and individually tailored to meet the needs, wishes and expectations of the individuals living there. These services range from single person apartments to shared living arrangements. Most of the people we support have challenging and complex needs. Many individuals also have additional or associated difficulties or disabilities, therefore all our services offer intensive and specialist support in highly structured, autism-specific environments. All our homes offer 24 hour person centred care and support and staffing levels are based upon the actual assessed needs of the people they support. Each person receives structured and consistent support from highly skilled, experienced and knowledgeable staff. 292 (2020: 298) staff are currently employed in the residential services.

Each individual has a Person Centred Plan which enables us to understand what is important to them and what they want from their lives. The setting of realistic personal goals ensures that individuals achieve positive outcomes in all aspects of their life. The primary measure of the success of our residential services is the positive life outcomes the individuals achieve and their families' satisfaction with the support we offer. Feedback is consistently captured through on-going dialogue, Service User Reviews and Satisfaction Surveys. Internal quality assurance processes including Senior Management Audits all support the continuous quality improvements of services, contract and Care Quality Commission (CQC) compliance and best practice. CQC inspections provide an independent assessment of quality, safety and compliance and 11 homes have been awarded an overall rating of 'Good', two have been awarded an 'Outstanding' and one was rated 'Requires Improvement.' All areas for improvement were immediately addressed.

For some people our residential services provide an excellent stepping stone towards a more independent future.

b) Domiciliary Agency

ESPA's Domiciliary Agency has three branches across the North East: Sunderland, Newcastle and Middlesbrough. This enables us to support people across the region. We always ensure that through individual service designs and Person-Centred Plans, the people we support remain at the heart of everything we do.

We are committed to providing each person with high quality care and support that is autism specific, person-centred, flexible and responsive. We aim to enable each person to live as independently as possible and to become a valued and respected member of their community. Everyone receives an individual package of care and support to meet their specific needs, wishes and aspirations to enable them to enjoy a lifestyle of their choice.

We offer support in a variety of ways depending on people's needs and preferences. Support can be provided for specific hours during the week up to 24-hours a day. We currently offer a wide range of services through the Agency including:

- Supported living services
- Community enablement
- A core and cluster service
- Day provision from a community hub

Over the past 12 months the Agency has maintained financial stability and represents 18% (2020:19%) of overall income and it currently employs 107 (2020:107) staff.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2021

The Domiciliary Agency is currently supporting 32 individuals. We have 7 supported living services, 6 community enablement services and 11 people are supported from a community hub in Stockton. Burnfoot Court, is a core and cluster service funded through Individual Service Funds (ISF's). It currently supports 5 tenants in individual bungalows.

c) Day and Vocational Services

The Croft Centre in Sunderland is a creative and innovative, community-based day provision that offers person-centred programmes of meaningful and stimulating activities for people across the autism spectrum, many of whom have additional or associated difficulties or disabilities. The Croft Centre also incorporates a vocational project 'Deliver me Timbers'. In addition to the extensive range of activities offered within the building, people also take part in a wide range of activities in the local and wider community.

Everyone in our residential services has the opportunity to take full advantage of all of these day opportunities. It also offers specialist full and part-time day placements for people living at home. These placements are commissioned by Local Authorities or purchased directly through Personal Budgets, Direct Payments or Individual Service Funds. We currently support 25 people for day placements from across the region. The Croft Centre is open for 44 weeks a year and it currently employs 30 staff.

Education

a) Independent Specialist Further Education College

ESPA operates an Independent Specialist Further Education College that is based within the North East of England, with day sites in Sunderland, Newcastle and Middlesbrough. Students have access to residential accommodation in Sunderland and Newcastle. The College offers day and residential placements for young people on the autism spectrum between the ages of 16 and 25 years. Most students are local however some come from across the country to access this specialist provision.

As we support students across the autism spectrum, each College site is specifically tailored to meet the needs of students with similar abilities and needs. Person-centred goals and transition plans ensure that each person achieves their personal ambitions. In March 2021 we were supporting 94 (2020: 85) students across the sites. We offer a 38 week academic year, but can offer residential placements for up to 52 weeks and respite. The College now represents 22% (2020: 21%) of the Charity's overall income and employs 147 (2020: 139) staff.

We have earned an excellent reputation and have a good track record of offering students a high quality, autism specific and person centred learning experience, towards them achieving positive educational and personal outcomes in preparation for life after College. We remain confident that we will see further growth in student numbers and income in coming years. We are also continuing to significantly invest in our College buildings to offer state of the art educational and residential facilities that will provide us with the capacity for growth and to enable us to meet the needs of increasingly complex and challenging learners.

The College offers each student a bespoke, innovative and creative curriculum. All our learning sessions are designed to be engaging, enjoyable, individualised and challenging. Each person has a programme of study tailored to their specific needs and aspirations. We consistently aim to develop the whole person and blend our autism specific core curriculum (Social Communication, Emotional Literacy and Behaviour Self-Management) with academic and vocational subjects. College learning sessions occur in a variety of settings, many of which are community based. Work experience, employability skills, enterprise and independence feature highly within the College's learning activities.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2021

Subsidiaries

a) **Autism Works**

Autism Works Limited is a wholly owned trading subsidiary of the Charity, offering independent software testing services. Established in 2010, its primary objective is to employ people on the autism spectrum, giving them the opportunity for sustainable employment and to reduce their reliance on state benefits. The company currently employs five people, three of whom have Asperger Syndrome. Our Business Plan demonstrates our commitment to create opportunities for many more people to gain meaningful employment as the enterprise grows.

b) **ESPA Research**

ESPA Research is also a wholly owned subsidiary of the Charity. Incorporated in 2009, its aims are to improve the quality of life for people on the autism spectrum through high quality publishable research investigations. It currently employs two people and the majority of their work is carried out from a laboratory in Sunderland's Business Innovation Centre.

Achievements and Performance

This has been a very challenging 12 months for ESPA due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This has impacted on all of the Charity's services and objectives. Our priority throughout the year has been the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff and everyone we support.

All our residential and supported living services continued to operate within Government restrictions. The College sites all remained open but attendance has fluctuated significantly across the year due to families decisions to self-isolate and the option of home or blended learning.

In consultation with Local Authorities and families, and robust risk assessments, some services closed temporarily for periods, offered a reduced programme or were suspended. This included The Croft Centre, Ware Street and some domiciliary community enablement packages of support. As restrictions are lifting we have plans in place to build all services back up to their original capacity.

Although we have experienced some challenging times the staff across the organisation have been exceptional. Their positivity, creativity and commitment throughout the pandemic has been outstanding and unwavering. The home based activities and events arranged to keep people happy and engaged were so varied and inspirational. These stories have been celebrated and shared through the Chief Executive Bulletins. Throughout the Board of Trustees have shared their thanks and appreciation to all staff.

The focus on supporting the Charity through these unprecedented times has had an impact on ESPA's ability to achieve the majority of its defined strategic objectives for this financial year so these will continue into 2021/22.

The Trustees however are pleased to report that during this period the Charity has managed to maintain its financial stability and business continuity. It is now beginning to refocus on organisational development and growth.

Directors and Central Management

Over the past 12 months ESPA has needed to invest a significant amount of time and effort in achieving realistic inflationary increases from Local Authorities and resolving on-going funding issues that were impacting on the Charity's cash flow. Some remain outstanding but overall good progress has been made. The fees the College is receiving through the NE12 commissioning framework remains a significant concern. We are trying to engage with Commissioners to try and reach a satisfactory outcome for both parties.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2021

We have continued to comply with the National Living Wage (NLW) and accommodate the significant 6.2% increase in hourly rates within the budgets. All other salary changes were announced in September 2020 and backdated to the 1st April. ESPA's standard hourly rates remain slightly higher than the NLW. There are however some variations aligned to specific contractual requirements.

In September 2020 the Teesside day College site relocated to Tithebarn House in Stockton. To accommodate the growing student numbers and a more complex population more space was needed. It is also enabling the curriculum to be expanded.

During the pandemic the Charity received some additional funding from the Government to support us with some of the increased costs and pressures in residential and domiciliary services. This has funded infection control equipment, covered staff salaries whilst isolating, supported testing and training and contributed towards staff recruitment. As visiting into care homes was prohibited for many months we were able to use some of the grant funding to subsidise the cost of installing safe visiting spaces in most gardens. These will be installed over the next few months.

Following the departure of our Behaviour Nurse Specialist, who led on Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) across the organisation, this role was reviewed. We split the responsibilities between two posts: PBS and Quality Assurance Lead and PBS Training and Development Lead. Together they are working towards a better integration of PBS, quality assurance and training, all of which are intrinsically linked and focus on supporting everyone to enjoy a good and meaningful quality of life.

In July 2020 Investors in People conducted their 24 month review of our Silver Accreditation. Overall feedback was very positive about our management of the pandemic and our ability to maintain business continuity. Following a cash benefit analysis we have decided not to renew our accreditation.

The Charity continues to meet all legislative and contractual requirements. We have continued to develop systems to evidence compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). We are in the process of working towards meeting all standards within the Data Security Protection Toolkit which will be reviewed and updated annually.

During October and November our new Insurers conducted an in-depth audit of ESPA's systems and practices. They provided a brief report and only highlighted 2 recommendations, both in relation to GDPR which have been actioned.

Across the year a working group was developed to systematically review and update the Charity's policies, procedures and guidance. This ensures they reflect best practice and are relevant to all ESPA services.

There were no Local Authority or Health advertised supported living or domiciliary tender opportunities over the previous 12 months. A number of Councils have taken the option to extend current Framework contracts for an additional year. Therefore during 2021/22 we are anticipating the need to make a number of applications to retain current contracts and apply to deliver new services. In March 2021 however, we did apply to become an approved provider on Stockton's new Residential Care framework and are awaiting a decision.

We continue to pride ourselves on the quality of our staff training and commitment to the continuous professional development for everyone. Due to the pandemic we have needed to make significant adjustments to our training which has been achieved without compromising on quality. Most training has successfully been done remotely. We are currently conducting a training needs analysis for each service to enable us to develop bespoke training programmes designed around the actual needs of the people they support.

We have appointed a SharePoint Specialist who began reviewing and upgrading our management system. Work however has been delayed due to other time pressures but we are confident that the project plan will be reinstated in the coming weeks.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2021

We have developed and maintained excellent relationships with an extensive range of health and social care professionals and agencies. This is enabling us to meet the more diverse and complex needs of our learners and service users.

Residential Services

All residential services have continued to operate within the Government restrictions. This has been a significant challenge especially managing this impact on everyone we support and their families. All staff have done an amazing job in keeping people happy and safe. Their sensitivity and creativity have ensured people remained engaged in fun and meaningful activities to help minimise the negative impact of the pandemic on their lives. These achievements have been celebrated and shared across the organisation, some of which were published in a local newspaper.

Over the year the residential services have remained financially stable although securing fee increases and inflationary rises from Local Authorities has continued to be challenging and time consuming.

On 31st March we were supporting 74 people across our 14 residential services and had 7 voids. Covid-19 has had a significant impact on our ability to progress with some very strong referrals for these placements. Throughout this period regular contact has been maintained with Local Authorities and this work is now restarting.

Services have needed to accommodate regular Covid testing and the demands of data reporting. This has been very time consuming and is adding further pressures on services. Staff started to receive vaccines in December 2020 and most staff and service users have now had at least their first injection.

All CQC inspections have been suspended over the year. A new Strategy on the future of CQC activities is being introduced and changes will be accommodated to ensure continued compliance.

Residential Managers have continued to meet, albeit virtually. The regular cycle of meetings now incorporate Clinical Meetings attended by a representative from the Psychiatric Partnership. The Psychiatrists now also deliver specialist training to support Managers and staff teams to meet individuals' increasingly complex mental health needs.

Domiciliary Agency

Over the year staff in our supported living services and core and cluster have been highly creative in ensuring the people they support have stayed safe and continue to enjoy a full and meaningful life. As these people are living in their own homes, there has been slightly fewer restrictions due to the pandemic.

After closing from April to July and following a robust risk assessment Ware Street began a phased reopening. Everyone who wanted to attend was offered a reduced programme and the majority have now built up to their full contracted hours. During periods of closure and through reduced numbers, staff were either furloughed or provided essential support into other services.

As with all CQC regulated services, inspections were suspended during 2020/21. However, between April 2020 and March 2021 the Teesside PBS Framework Local Authorities conducted a quality assurance audit. We were awarded 96% and received very positive feedback.

The Ware Street contract will be retendered for April 2022 which we are keen to retain. We have developed and managed this service from the outset and have gained an excellent reputation with families and professionals. As part of the process Stockton Borough Council have been conducting a review of the service and model to inform the new specification. The service is currently supporting 12 people on two to four day programmes in line with the agreed Recovery Plan. These are gradually increasing as restrictions continue to be lifted. We are now considering new referrals and will be supporting some individuals to transition from The Croft Centre in Sunderland.

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Burnfoot Court currently supports 5 tenants in their own bungalows. A 6th person is currently being assessed and we are working with Newcastle to develop a new supported living service for another person. We have begun to recruit the additional staff. Due to the pandemic the Council have taken the option to extend this contract until 31st July 2022.

Our supported living service in North Tyneside is still currently supporting two people and the staff team is now more established and stable. There is still a service user void but this is not being actively filled at this stage. In the Sunderland service there is also a void. A number of Local Authorities have expressed interest but for various reasons these placements did not proceed.

We have been approached by a specialist housing provider who is keen to work in partnership with ESPA to develop new supported living services. Having an established housing partner is often an advantage when responding to new tenders or mini-competitions. We were initially exploring the first development to be in Northumberland but they are about to publish a new framework through which all future services will be commissioned. ESPA will be submitting an application. We are also in early discussions with Stockton and North Tyneside about two new potential supported living services.

ESPA College

Despite ongoing funding challenges the College has remained financially stable. However currently the majority of placements are procured through a regional framework which has seen negligible inflationary increases over recent years which has not reflected the College's significant increase in expenditure. We are striving to have a conversation with Commissioners to explore our options.

On the 31st March 2021 learner numbers had increased to 94 compared to 85 in the previous year and we are anticipating further growth during 2021/22. This along with Government restrictions on community access, including work placements and General Further Education Colleges and the increasing complex learner population has put significant pressure on all sites. We are however confident that with the Government's recently published roadmap out of lockdown we will be able to reintroduce these opportunities.

Restrictions have impacted on our admissions process for new learners which has been much more reliant on paper based assessments. Virtual tours were produced to help learners and families make more informed decisions about placements.

Demand for post College social programmes has continued to increase. This is a positive transition opportunity for some learners and a new business opportunity for the Charity. The aim is to develop this as a discrete provision. To accommodate this plans are in place for a new build studio in the grounds of South Hill for September 2021. North Rye will become the North of Tyne base in September 2022. The new Teesside site, Tithebarn could already accommodate a small programme within the building.

Strong relationships have been maintained with Local Authorities, SEND Teams and local feeder schools and Colleges, albeit remotely. We have maintained our excellent reputation for supporting more challenging learners to achieve good educational and personal outcomes.

Work has continued at Ashleigh in Newcastle to convert the building to create 11 ensuite bedrooms for learners and young people. This includes two respite rooms which are in high demand. We are receiving a number of referrals for residential placements but recruitment has been challenging.

In February we finally heard that our grant application to Karten Media had been successful. This will fund an interactive sensory room based at South Hill, but will be a resource for the whole College. A timescale for installation is being determined.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2021

Virtual meetings have enabled ongoing effective planning, communication, management and consultation. This has included the Student Committee and Advisory Board. Observations of Teaching and Learning have continued within the sites and we have seen a significant increase in teaching assessed as 'Outstanding'.

The College published its annual Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) in December 2020. Mini SARs were also created for each site to reflect their uniqueness. These documents and Quality Reports have been shared with the Advisory Board and link Trustees on ESPA's Board.

Ofsted preparation has continued across the year and excellent progress has been made in developing systems and practices and evidencing outcomes and impact. We were anticipating our inspection in autumn 2021. However, recent announcements are indicating that for Colleges rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' this is likely to be delayed. They continue to be Ofsted ready and feel confident of a positive inspection.

Day and Vocational Services

The Croft Centre has been significantly impacted by the pandemic. In April 2020 the service closed and staff were either redeployed or furloughed following full consultation with Local Authorities and families. The service began a phased re-opening in September with reduced numbers and programmes. Due to places being spot purchased by a number of Local Authorities securing the continued funding was a challenge despite the Governments Supplier Relief Programme. Therefore in January 2021 when the new lockdown began we reduced the service down from 5 to 2 days so everyone received some access without the risk of ESPA losing income. Again staff were either redeployed or furloughed. This is likely to continue until after Easter when the programme will gradually begin to be extended.

Over the past 12 months due to restrictions no one from our residential services have been able to attend The Croft Centre and all social events were cancelled.

Autism Works

It has been another very busy year for the Autism Works team. For the past year they have all been working from home which due to the nature of the enterprise this has had no impact on the business. As a result they have now reduced their office space.

The majority of their contracts, primarily with Johnson and Johnson, have continued during 2020 and will be sustained throughout 2021. However one large contract for an NHS function was suspended which has had a short term financial impact. This contract is expected to restart in the coming months.

We have reviewed the terms and conditions of the testing team and are working towards supporting one of them to become Test Manager. This aims to free up the Managing Director to negotiate new contracts and enable us to expand the team and appoint Trainees or Apprentices.

ESPA Research

The past year has been very productive and the enterprise has retained its financial stability through another generous donation from the Robert Luff Foundation, funded research and donations.

The team's primary focus has been the completion of the a2milk research trial for autism and ADHD. The publication of the papers on the biochemical and behavioural findings were delayed following a request for further research into the digestive properties of the milk. The intention was to publish all papers together however a2milk have been reluctant to publish as the research results did not identify any benefits over the control milk. Papers will be published soon.

ESPA Research continue to try and develop research partnerships and collaborations some of which will hopefully lead to future funded research. All visits and conferences have been cancelled during the year due to national restrictions.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
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New studies are being explored into Vitamin D levels in people with autism and their families. This has a particular relevance due to the Coronavirus pandemic. A protocol has been drafted and ethics approval is being sought. They are aiming to develop more accurate and less invasive methods of analysing Vitamin D levels.

A co-morbidities paper was published in April 2020 and the team are in discussion about producing further peer reviewed papers pertinent to screening and treating comorbidities in autism. On-going mini projects on baby milk and cheeses are now expanding and partners think that potential findings may be significant.

Plans for future periods

Our Strategic Plan for April 2021 to March 2023 clearly defines ESPA's plans and processes, targets, expected outcomes and timescales, that will enable the Charity to build on its many achievements and retain its financial strength. Uncertainties however, in relation to on-going restrictions due to the Coronavirus means some plans and timescales are indicative and will continue to be reviewed across the year.

ESPA's key priorities and strategic objectives for April 2021 to March 2023 have been formally approved by the Board of Trustees. Progress against objectives is monitored and reported through the Board of Trustees Meetings and the Charity's management and meeting structures.

The key strategic objectives are summarised below:-

Governance and Central Management

- To ensure ESPA's continued financial strength with resources allocated according to priorities
- Increase income through growth in existing and new activities
- To implement the Charity's Accommodation Strategy
- To recruit, train and develop a high quality workforce
- To ensure compliance with legislative and contractual requirements and best practice
- To evidence best practice and the achievement of positive outcomes.

Residential Services

- To ensure the on-going financial strength and growth of residential services
- To deliver the highest quality person centred and autism specific support
- To ensure all homes continue to meet legislative requirements, local and national policy and best practice
- To achieve and sustain 94% occupancy
- To ensure resources are allocated to meet strategic priorities and objectives
- All services to maintain a 'Good' rating by the CQC but recognised for some outstanding practices.

Domiciliary Agency

- To ensure the Agency's financial strength to support its on-going development
- To ensure the Agency continues to meet legislative and contractual requirements and evidences best practice
- To ensure each person receives the highest quality person centred and autism specific support
- Everyone supported achieves positive personal outcomes and enjoys a good quality of life
- To remain on Local Authority frameworks and retain current contracts
- To increase income through new support contracts
- To ensure staffing and management structures meet actual needs within income.

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ESPA College

- To ensure the College's financial strength in order to provide the resources to support excellence in teaching and learning
- To increase income through increased student numbers and diversifying College activities
- Students achieve excellent educational and personal outcomes
- To further develop College systems and activities to improve the quality of teaching and learning
- To improve employability outcomes
- To develop a new social care programme for College leavers.

Day and Vocational Services

- To ensure the ongoing financial stability of day and vocational services
- To offer an extensive menu of high quality autism specific activities within the building and community
- To extend the range of activities in direct response to people's needs, wishes and interests
- To develop more vocational and volunteering opportunities.

Autism Works

- To maintain financial strength to support the continued growth and development of the enterprise
- To build on current contracts and secure new clients
- To recruit and train a skilled workforce.

ESPA Research

- To ensure the financial viability and growth of ESPA Research
- To produce high quality research for the public good
- To continue current research projects and engage in new partnerships
- To enhance marketing to raise the profile of the enterprise.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
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Financial Review

The consolidated statement of financial activities reports an operating surplus of £1.163m for the year ended March 2021 in comparison with £1.086m last year. The Charity has managed to maintain its financial position during a difficult year, and achieve a surplus, which exceeded our initial expectations. The financial austerity within social care remains a challenge for the Charity due to continued pressure on budgetary constraints within the NHS, local authorities, and the legislative impact of the National Living Wage (NLW). These pressures have been supported throughout the pandemic with additional funding from Central Government. Any surpluses that we generate are used to build up funding for investment in future projects and will enable the organisation to maintain its future strategic objectives.

In 2020-21, we generated total income for the year of £15.332m (2020: £14.893m) an increase of 2.94% on the previous year. The marginal increase in the year was due to the increased demand for College education and Domiciliary Agency placements, along with the Covid-19 funding support from the local authorities has enabled the Charity to show marginal growth in the income levels of charitable activities. During the year we have continued to see an increase in demand for both College services and adult social care placements. The pandemic restrictions continued longer than we anticipated throughout 2020/2021 and difficulties in recruitment and onboarding of new staff ended any opportunities of growth within the residential services. The College has continued to be challenged with the NE12 Funding Framework due to marginal inflationary increases and pressure on student fees. Student numbers and placement fees have increased in the year and the forecasted student numbers for 2021-22 is encouraging.

Fee income from statutory bodies represents 94.40% (2020: 96.82%) of the total income and as part of the strategic planning process, the Board of Directors and management are continuing to look at diversifying into other income streams. Adult social services decreased by 2.89% to £11.07m (2020: £11.41m), which is reflective of higher occupancy levels and the continued demand for new placements. Education fees increased by 12.71% to £3.39m (2020: £3.01m), an increase in funding from the ESFA and an increase in student numbers have impacted on this year's results. Grant income increased by 249.13%, with grants received in the year totalling £414,259 (2020: £118,656), which includes £11,200 from the Work force development fund, £260,231 from Government Covid-19 funds, £115,808 from the job retention scheme and £27,021 from the EFA Capital Fund.

During 2020-21, our total charitable expenditure increased to £14.169m (2020: £13.807m), up 2.62% on the previous year. Analysis of our expenditure shows, adult social services at 70.56% (2020: 70.96%) and education fees at 27.47% (2020: 27.00%) of our total expenditure. Support costs in the year were £1.55m or 10.13% of total revenues (2020 - £1.50m, 10.05%). The current economic conditions and financial austerity within social care remain a challenge for ESPA, but despite marginal growth in the Education funding and nominal inflationary increases in Local Authority income, we have continued to remain focused on driving efficiencies and optimising costs to maintain a healthy surplus for the year.

The balance sheet remains in good shape at the current financial year end. The organisation has invested funds of £0.11m (2020: £0.44m) in fixed assets during the year. The main investment in the year was in cyber security and the upgrade of the organisations Information and Communications Technology (ICT). This investment is aimed at ensuring the safety of the organisations communication throughout the services, while ensuring a strong platform for staff and students to benefit from the latest technology

At the end of the financial year the group has total net assets of £16.583m (2020: £15.420m) based on reporting a total net surplus of £1.163m.

The organisation continues to invest in short-term cash deposits, as these funds arise from fees received in advance. In 2021 the return on investments totalled £0.6k (2020: £18.3k), this being a decrease of 96.78% (2020: 0.0% increase). During the financial year the Charity has retained a strong cash flow due to new placements now settled in to the income stream within the local authorities, cash flow monitoring ensures that all funds will be maintained long term.

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The Bank of England base interest rate of 0.1% will continue to reduce our return on these short term investments. The Trustees are mindful of the investment policy and the rate of return has been continually monitored during the year to ensure that we are maximising any return on such funds.

ESPA Research Limited, our trading subsidiary, recorded financial results in the year as shown in note 23. In the current financial year we have seen a decrease in the ability to generate funds through grants and donors for the pure research activities. The company has made distributable profits in the year and the Board have recommended that these funds are retained within the company to fund current cash flow requirements. The outstanding intercompany loan is repayable on demand and the ESPA Board of Directors is reassured of the ability to meet this obligation. They continue their support for the trading subsidiary by defining its strategic objectives and will ensure the financial support required for the continued research activities it performs.

Autism Works Limited, our trading subsidiary, which was incorporated for the trading activity of IT software testing, recorded the financial results in the year as shown in note 23. During the year the enterprise team of Autism Works has successfully maintained a working relationship with Johnson & Johnson to develop new contracts (Covid-19), while retaining the involvement in existing contracts. During the duration of the Covid-19 crisis Autism Works saw a reduction in turnover of 20.73% in the year with some contracts being placed on hold during the pandemic. The results achieved in the year, although negative was controlled by mitigating risks and uncertainty on the existing contracts to ensure maximum revenues were achieved. The company continues to work on new and existing contracts with Johnson & Johnson and the ESPA Board of Directors continue their support based on the positive forecasts and the financial stability offered on future contracts.

Reserves Policy

The reserves policy is designed to reflect the underlying risks facing the Charity and to ensure that ESPA has an appropriate level of reserves to safeguard its operation and the services to people with autism spectrum conditions.

ESPA holds restricted funds in accordance with the donors' requirements. In addition, ESPA has established a designated reserve for the management of the fixed assets of the Charity, with the future requirements of the portfolio determined in accordance with the strategic planning process.

The Trustees have considered the minimum level of free reserves i.e. excluding restricted and designated reserves, required to support the Charity's operations. The free reserves required is between three and five months average budgeted expenditure, with three months being the optimum. Relevant factors include projected financial performance including cash flow requirements, risk management and assessment of the risks to the Charity's income streams.

Following this review, the Trustees have determined that the minimum required level of free reserves is £3.54m (2020: £3.45m), which is in line with the actual free reserves at 31 March 2021 of £8.19m (2020: £6.90m). This high level of reserves represents the trustees factoring in the effect of the pandemic on income and increased some of the risk factors on some areas of the organisation. While the actual reserves are higher than required, our expectation is that, over the period of the strategic plan they will be in line with the required level.

The requirement and underlying factors are considered annually and the minimum reserves requirement is, therefore, expected to change over time.

Investment Policy

Whilst the Charity has wide powers to invest monies the Trustees are mindful of:

- The need to maximise income by pursuing an investment policy that produces the best investment return reasonably obtainable.

- The necessity to safeguard the assets of the Charity by not making investments of a speculative or volatile nature.

- The need to maintain a level of reserves in cash in order to meet both the foreseen and unforeseen obligations of the Charity.

It has been the policy of the Trustees for some time and continues to be current policy that liquid reserves will be maintained in cash deposits and the Trustees will continue to look at ways of maximising the income from such deposits. This policy is reviewed and scrutinised regularly by the Trustees.

Going Concern

At the date of signing these financial statements, the world is still being affected by Covid-19. Although the vaccine has been developed and implemented throughout the UK there is still no certainty that there won't be further waves of infection.

During the duration of the Covid-19 crisis the Charity followed all Government and Public Health advice to protect the safety of our residents, students and staff. As a key response by the Charity a specific Covid-19 risk register was produced to ensure that immediate and long term risks were identified, along with the action required to mitigate these risks.

A key risk was financial stability, the Trustees have reviewed our financial position and financial forecasts, taking into account the assumptions underlying those forecasts and the impact for the potential risks affecting them. As a result of this review, the Trustees therefore consider that there is a reasonable expectation that the Group will be able to continue in operation and meet its liabilities as they fall due. As a consequence, they continue to support the going concern basis in accounting in preparing the annual accounts.

Structure, Governance and Management

Structure

Education and Services for People with Autism Limited, known as ESPA, is a registered Charity (No.1037868) and a company limited by guarantee (No.2909953) and is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association incorporated on the 18th March 1994 and as amended on 19th December 2012.

The Charity has two wholly owned subsidiary undertakings, ESPA Research Limited and Autism Works Limited, both trading companies. The principal activities of the trading companies are Research and ICT software testing.

Organisational Structure

The Board of Trustees is currently made up of 7 Trustees, comprising a mix of suitable qualified members. The Trustees are appointed and then become Directors of the Company for the purpose of the Companies Act 2006. The Trustees, all of whom are also Directors of the Charity, are listed on page 18, along with the key management of the organisation. Since April 2020 there have been no changes in Board membership. Their skills, qualifications and experience continue to provide strong governance towards the Charity:

- Setting and maintaining the visions, mission and values
- Developing and reviewing strategic priorities and objectives
- Setting operational plans and reviewing performance
- Ensuring compliance with the governing document and the law
- Ensuring accountability including the Charity Commission and Companies House
- Effectively managing resources and funds so it can meet its charitable objectives.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
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The Board ordinarily meets at least three times a year and holds an Annual General Meeting. However due to the pandemic meetings have been virtual and more frequent. All Board members give their time freely and none of them receive remuneration from the Charity. The Trustees have established a management structure to guarantee the effective governance and strategic management of ESPA and to ensure that the Charity meets its objectives. The Board delegates authority for the day-to-day management to the Chief Executive and the Finance Executive.

ESPA's two trading subsidiaries each have a Board of Directors, one of which is also a Trustee of the Charity. Meetings are also attended by ESPA's Chief Executive and Finance Executive. The Trustees of ESPA receive formal reports of the Companies activities through regular Board Meetings and papers.

The Board set, monitor and review the salaries of the management team and all salaries are benchmarked against appropriate comparable organisations.

Recruitment, Appointment and Induction of New Trustees

The aim of the Charity is to ensure that the Board of Trustees have a broad mix of skills and backgrounds. The process for recruiting new Trustees is based on an evaluation of the diverse skills and experience needed to govern the Charity. The skills mix of the Board is formally reviewed on an annual basis. On this review, the Board will identify any gaps in skills, knowledge and experience and try to identify individuals who can extend and compliment current membership. It is normal practice that before election, Trustees will receive an Induction Pack that contains everything they need to know about the Charity, their general responsibilities and key Policies and Procedures.

New Trustees are invited to spend time with the Executive Management Team as part of their induction. Prospective Trustees are also invited to visit services to further develop their understanding of the work of the Charity. They also receive additional training and updates relevant to their roles and responsibilities.

Trustees' Indemnity

As permitted by the Articles of Association, each of the Trustees has the benefit of an indemnity which is a qualifying third party indemnity as defined by section 234 of the Companies Act 2006. The indemnity was in force throughout the last financial year, and is currently in force.

Related parties

None of the Trustees receive remuneration or benefit from their work with the Charity. Any connection or conflicts with individuals, contractors or similar organisations are disclosed to the Board of Trustees. There were no related party transactions in the year as L. Moxon who is a Member and is the wife of P.M. Moxon, has retired in her role as a Consultant Trainer for ESPA.

Staff Members

None of our work at ESPA would be possible without the dedication, hard work and commitment of our staff especially during this very challenging year. ESPA is fortunate in employing so many staff members who share our values and provide an exceptional service to the people they support. We operate a robust recruitment process, with a commitment to retaining and rewarding staff, while also ensuring that all staff are offered excellent training and personal development.

Consultation with staff members exists at all levels, with the aim that all views are taken into account when decisions are made. During the year, regular communications are provided to staff through individual meetings, team meetings and bulletins. ESPA understands and values the differences in people and has a commitment to creating an environment that treats each individual fairly.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2021

The Charity commit's to employment policies which follow best practice, based on equal opportunities in employment and aims to ensure that all employees and job applicants are treated fairly and consistently regardless of their sex, marital status, race, colour, religion, nationality or ethnic or national origins, disability, age, sexual orientation and trade union membership/non membership.

Fundraising

ESPA does not actively raise funds externally or use professional fundraisers/commercial participators to actively raise funds to further charitable activities. The Charity does sometimes receive donations from our supports which are used to help further the lives of the individuals we support. In the course of their work some staff teams host events that showcase the talents of the people they support. Any funds raised are reinvested into resources.

Risk Management

We are aware of the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 in relation to statements on fundraising and are reviewing our processes to ensure compliance.

The Charitable Group operates a formal Risk Management Procedure that provides oversight and accountability for the management of risk across all levels of the group.

Risk is managed by the Trustees, Executive Management Team and relevant members of the Senior Management Team. Our Risk Management Procedure and process are in place to identify the strategic and operational risks to the Charity, current controls, monitoring processes and further action to be taken that will minimise the potential impact and likelihood upon the group.

All information is incorporated into the group wide Risk Register, which is reviewed and approved annually by the Board of Trustees. This was last reviewed in June 2021.

The main risk categories as defined by the group are divided into four categories:

- Strategic
- Operational
- Financial
- People

Overall the areas of residual risk that would have the highest (most significant) impact on ESPA have been assessed as:

- Employee absences
- A major incident/investigation
- Economic environment/Government budget cuts
- Severe injury or death of a service user, student or staff member (due to the increasingly complex and challenging needs of the people being supported)
- Changing legislation, Government policy and impact on commissioning strategies and funding
- Increased competition from other providers
- Expenditure exceeds income
- Retaining existing contracts or not being awarded new contracts
- Failure to retain or attract staff.

The risk management process demonstrates that through management review and current controls, it significantly reduces the potential impact and likelihood of risk in all areas. The Risk Register clearly defines further action to be taken within the group, which has been reflected in the strategic objectives for 2021/23.

Board of Trustees Report including Strategic Report
For the year ended 31 March 2021

Statement of Trustees Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also Directors of Education and Services for People with Autism Limited) are responsible for preparing the Trustees Annual Report (including the Strategic 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 charitable company and the group and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company and the group for that period. 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 2019 (FRS 102);
- 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 charitable company and the group will continue to operate.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and the group 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 charitable company and the group, and hence for taking reasonable steps for prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.
In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditors are unaware; and
- the Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

AUDITORS

The auditors, Azets Audit Services, will be proposed for re-appointment in accordance with Section 485 of the Companies Act 2006.

The Report of the Trustees including the Strategic Report was approved by the Board of Trustees on 15 June 2022 and signed on its behalf by:

Paul Shattock

Paul Shattock

Chairman

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

Charity Registration Number:	1037868
Company Registration Number:	2909953
Trustees and Directors:	P E G Shattock (Chairman) P M Moxon Prof M Hooper R Jordan S Robinson G Young Dr M Maskey
Chief Executive:	Ms L Lane
Key Management:	L Lane - Chief Executive K T Hardy - Finance Executive P G Cahill - College Principal M Elstob - General Manager
Company Secretary:	K T Hardy
Registered Office:	North House Ferryboat Lane Sunderland Tyne and Wear SR5 3RL
Auditors:	Azets Audit Services 32 Brenkley Way Blezard Business Park Seaton Burn Newcastle upon Tyne NE13 6DS
Bankers:	Barclays Bank PLC Barclays House 5 St Ann's Street Quayside Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 3DX

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF

EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIMITED

Opinion on financial statements

We have audited the financial statements of Education and Services for People with Autism Limited (the 'parent charitable company') and its subsidiaries (the 'group') for the year ended 31 March 2021 which comprise the group Statement of Financial Activities, the group and parent charitable company Balance Sheet, the group Cash Flow Statement 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 group's and parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2021, and of the group's 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 responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group and parent charitable company 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 group and parent charitable company'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 trustees' 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 the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' annual report (including the strategic report and the directors' report) for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the directors' report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of our knowledge and understanding of the group and parent charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report and the trustees' annual 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 by the parent charitable company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the parent charitable company's financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of directors' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we required for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 17, the trustees (who are also the directors of the parent charitable company for the purposes 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 group and parent charitable company'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 group or parent 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

We have been appointed auditor under the Companies Act 2006 and report in accordance with this Act.

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.

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.

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 company 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.

Azets Audit Services

Graham Fitzgerald BA FCA DChA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Azets Audit Services
Accountants
Statutory Auditor
32 Brenkley Way
Blezard Business Park
Seaton Burn
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE13 6DS

15 June 2022

Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities (Incorporating an income and expenditure account)
For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

Income and Expenditure Account

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £	Total Funds 2020 £
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	2	230,629	-	230,629	80,853
Charitable activities	3	14,483,348	414,260	14,897,608	14,541,875
Other trading activities	4	203,227	-	203,227	252,376
Investments	5	590	-	590	18,341
Total income		14,917,794	414,260	15,332,054	14,893,445
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	6	13,781,908	387,239	14,169,147	13,807,217
Total expenditure		13,781,908	387,239	14,169,147	13,807,217
Net income / (expenditure)		1,135,886	27,021	1,162,907	1,086,228
Transfers between funds	20	27,021	(27,021)	-	-
Net movement in funds	20	1,162,907	-	1,162,907	1,086,228
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward	20	15,420,111	-	15,420,111	14,333,883
Total funds carried forward	20	16,583,018	-	16,583,018	15,420,111

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities. The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised during the year.

Balance Sheet
at 31 March 2021

	Note	Group 2021 £	Group 2020 £	Charity 2021 £	Charity 2020 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	13	9,058,143	9,265,584	9,033,025	9,243,857
Investments	14	-	-	20	20
Total fixed assets		9,058,143	9,265,584	9,033,045	9,243,877
Current assets					
Debtors	15	3,938,896	5,280,199	3,975,190	5,392,990
Cash at bank and in hand		5,612,030	3,235,558	5,542,736	3,061,889
Total current assets		9,550,926	8,515,757	9,517,926	8,454,879
Current liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	(1,448,703)	(1,695,301)	(1,428,911)	(1,648,198)
Net current assets		8,102,223	6,820,456	8,089,015	6,806,681
Total assets less current liabilities		17,160,366	16,086,040	17,122,060	16,050,558
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	17	(577,072)	(665,670)	(577,072)	(665,670)
Provisions for liabilities	19	(276)	(259)	-	-
Net assets		16,583,018	15,420,111	16,544,988	15,384,888
Charity Funds					
Restricted funds	20	-	-	-	-
Unrestricted funds	20	16,583,018	15,420,111	16,544,988	15,384,888
Total charity funds	20	16,583,018	15,420,111	16,544,988	15,384,888

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board on 15 June 2022.

Signed on behalf of the board of trustees:

Paul Shattock

Paul Shattock - (Chairman)

Company registered number: 2909953

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Statement of Cash Flows and Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows
For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

	Note	Group 2021 £	Group 2020 £	Charity 2021 £	Charity 2020 £
Cash flow from operating activities	22	2,591,288	337,771	2,682,992	290,310
Net cash flow from operating activities		2,591,288	337,771	2,682,992	290,310
Cash flow from investing activities					
Receipts from sales of tangible fixed assets		-	4,854	-	4,854
Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets		(105,264)	(444,331)	(92,593)	(435,390)
Interest received		590	18,341	590	18,341
Net cash flow from investing activities		(104,674)	(421,136)	(92,003)	(412,195)
Cash flow from financing activities					
Repayment of long term loans		(85,380)	(146,338)	(85,380)	(146,338)
Interest paid		(24,762)	(27,500)	(24,762)	(27,500)
Net cash flow from financing activities		(110,142)	(173,838)	(110,142)	(173,838)
Net increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		2,376,472	(257,203)	2,480,847	(295,723)
Cash and cash equivalents at 01.04.2020		3,235,558	3,492,761	3,061,889	3,357,612
Cash and cash equivalents at 31.03.2021		5,612,030	3,235,558	5,542,736	3,061,889
Cash and cash equivalents consists of:					
Cash at bank and in hand		5,612,030	3,235,558	5,542,736	3,061,889
Cash and cash equivalents at 31.03.2021		5,612,030	3,235,558	5,542,736	3,061,889

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

1 Accounting policies

1.1 Company information

The Charity is a private company limited by guarantee and is incorporated in England and Wales. The address of its registered office is North House, Ferryboat Lane, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear. SR5 3RL.

The members of the company are the Trustees named on page 18. In the event of the Charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the Charity.

1.2 Basis of preparation

The Group and Charity financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: "Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) " (SORP) issued in October 2019 and the "Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland" (FRS 102). They also comply with the reporting requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

The Group and Charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

The Group and Charity financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis, under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value.

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of the Group and Charity financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

Monetary amounts in these financial statements are stated in pounds sterling and are rounded to the nearest whole £1.

1.3 Going Concern

In order to assess the appropriateness of the going concern assumption basis, the Trustees have considered the Group's financial position, reserves and forecasts for the foreseeable future. At the time of approving the financial statetemnts, the trustees have considered the assumptions underlying those forecasts and the impact of Covid-19 for the potential risks affecting them. After a review, the Trustees therefore consider that there is a reasonable expectation that the Group will be able to continue in operation and meet its liabilities as they fall due. There are no material uncertainties about the Group's ability to continue as a going concern.

1.4 Basis of consolidation

The financial statements of the Charity and its two subsidiary Companies are consolidated, on a line by line basis to produce the Group financial statements. The consolidated entity is referred to as 'the Group'.

The Charity has taken advantage of the exemption in section 408 of the Companies Act 2006 from disclosing its individual statement of financial Activities.

1.5 Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when the Charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

a. **Donations**
For donations to be recognised the Charity will have been notified of the amounts and the settlement date in writing. If there are conditions attached to the donation and this requires a level of performance before entitlement can be obtained then income is deferred until those conditions are fully met or the fulfilment of those conditions is within the control of the Charity and it is probable that they will be fulfilled.

b. **Investment income**
Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the Charity.

c. **Government grants**
Income from government grants is recognised when the Charity has entitlement to the funds and any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met.

d. **Legacies**
Legacies are recognised at the earlier of the Charity being notified of an impending distribution or the legacy being received.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

1.6 Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. It is categorised under the following headings:

a. Costs of raising funds includes the costs associated with any fund raising and publicity.

b. Expenditure on charitable activities includes costs of grant awards and other direct costs incurred towards achieving the Charity's charitable objectives.

c. Expenditure on governance relate to the corporate management of the organisation. They include the audit fee and insurance costs for the corporate management.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as an expense against the activity for which expenditure arose.

1.7 Allocation of support cost

All expenses including support costs and governance costs are allocated or apportioned to the applicable expenditure headings. Where support costs cannot be directly attributed to one or more categories they are apportioned on the basis of time spent. The analysis of these costs is included in note 7.

1.8 Operating leases

Operating lease rentals are charged to the SOFA on a straight line basis over the term of the lease.

1.9 Pension costs

The Charity operates a defined contribution scheme for the benefit of its employees. Pension contributions payable for the year are recognised as an expense and as a liability, after deducting amount already paid.

1.10 Foreign currency

Transactions in foreign currencies are translated to sterling at the exchange rate ruling at the date of transaction. Exchange differences arising are taken to the SOFA.

1.11 Taxation

The Charity is an exempt Charity within the meaning of schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes.

Taxation that may arise within the Group through its subsidiary undertakings is accounted in accordance with FRS 102 section 29 'Income tax'.

1.12 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets costing more than £500 are capitalised and included at cost including any incidental expenses of acquisition.

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets at rates calculated to write off the cost on a straight line basis over their expected useful economic lives as follows:

Asset Category	*Rate*
Freehold land	nil
Freehold buildings	2% Straight line
Short leasehold buildings	2% Straight line and over the life of the lease
Plant & Machinery	over 5 years
Fixtures, Fittings & Equipment	over 5 years
Computer equipment	over 3 years
Motor vehicles	over 4 years

1.13 Investments

Investments are stated at cost at the balance sheet date. The SOFA includes the net gains and losses arising on revaluations and disposals throughout the year.

Investments in subsidiaries which consist of ordinary share capital are carried at cost less impairment.

1.14 Debtors

Debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

1.15 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, cash held in current accounts and deposit accounts with UK Banks. All deposits are ready realisable.

1.16 Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where there is a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in a transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any discounts due.

1.17 Financial instruments

The Group has chosen to adopt section 11 and 12 of FRS 102, identifying and classifying financial instruments as 'basic' and 'other'. The Group has identified assets that qualify for 'basic' financial instruments only.

a. **Financial assets**
Basic financial assets, including trade and other debtors, cash and bank balances, are initially recognised at transaction value 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. Such assets are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest method.

b. **Financial liabilities**
Basic financial liabilities, including trade creditors, bank loans, and other creditors, are initially recognised at transaction value unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest method.

1.18 Fund accounting

Restricted funds
Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the Charity for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund.

Unrestricted funds

a. **Designated**
Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

b. **General**
General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Transfers from general funds to restricted funds are made when the income for a specific activity does not cover the full costs. Transfers between designated funds and general funds are determined by the Trustees where deemed appropriate.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

2 Income from donations and legacies

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2021	Total Funds 2020
		£	£	£	£
Donations		150,629	-	150,629	853
Donations - Robert Luff Foundation	23	80,000	-	80,000	80,000
		230,629	-	230,629	80,853

Income from donations and legacies was £230,629 (2020 - £80,853) of which £Nil (2020 - Nil) was attributable to restricted funds and £230,629 (2020 - £80,853) was attributable to unrestricted funds.

3 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2021	Total Funds 2020
	£	£	£	£
Adult services fees	11,076,901	-	11,076,901	11,406,440
College fees	3,396,231	-	3,396,231	3,013,141
Grants	-	414,260	414,260	118,656
Other	10,216	-	10,216	3,638
	14,483,348	414,260	14,897,608	14,541,875

Income from charitable activities was £14,897,608 (2020 - £14,541,875) of which £414,260 (2020 - £118,656) was attributable to restricted funds and £14,483,348 (2020 - £14,423,219) was attributable to unrestricted funds.

During the year the Group and Charity received no capital grants (2020 - £NIL), which has no unfulfilled conditions or other conditions attached. Other forms of grant assistance from which the Group and Charity has benefitted amounts to £414,260 (2020: £118,656).

4 Income from other trading activities

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2021	Total Funds 2020
		£	£	£	£
Garden furniture income		-	-	-	1,621
Subsidiary undertakings income	23	203,227	-	203,227	250,755
		203,227	-	203,227	252,376

Income from other trading activities was £203,227 (2020 - £252,376) of which £Nil (2020 - £Nil) was attributable to restricted funds and £203,227 (2020 - £252,376) was attributable to unrestricted funds.

5 Income from investments

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2021	Total Funds 2020
	£	£	£	£
Interest received	590	-	590	18,341
	590	-	590	18,341

The group's investment income arises from money held within interest bearing deposit accounts and is attributable to unrestricted funds.

6 Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

	Note	Activities undertaken directly	Support costs	2021	2020
		£	£	£	£
Adult services fees		9,211,726	785,321	9,997,047	9,797,221
College fees		3,129,180	762,500	3,891,680	3,728,468
Subsidiary undertakings expenditure	23	275,861	4,559	280,420	281,528
		12,616,767	1,552,380	14,169,147	13,807,217

£387,239 (2020 - £22,080) of the above costs were attributable to restricted funds. £13,781,908 (2020 - £13,785,137) of the above costs were attributable to unrestricted funds.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

7 Allocation of support costs

Support costs are allocated to activities on a relevant basis to the nature of the underlying cost, including headcount, time spent or in proportion to resources used.

Support cost (Current Year)	Note	Adult services fees	College fees	Trading Activities	2021
		£	£	£	£
Governance	8	10,241	10,241	4,559	25,041
Management		117,606	117,606	-	235,212
Finance		114,780	114,779	-	229,559
Human resources		29,327	29,327	-	58,654
Maintenance		62,234	62,234	-	124,468
Training		38,344	15,522	-	53,866
Multi disciplinary team		64,149	64,150	-	128,299
Facilities (incl. rental)		24,239	24,240	-	48,479
Admin and Office costs		324,401	324,401	-	648,802
Total support and governance costs		785,321	762,500	4,559	1,552,380
Support costs are made up of:					
Staff Costs		426,440	403,618	-	830,058
Other Costs		358,881	358,882	4,559	722,322
Total support and governance costs		785,321	762,500	4,559	1,552,380

Support cost (Prior Year)	Note	Adult services fees	College fees	Trading Activities	2020
		£	£	£	£
Governance	8	10,118	10,118	4,398	24,634
Management		111,293	111,294	-	222,587
Finance		122,954	122,953	-	245,907
Human resources		32,047	32,047	-	64,094
Maintenance		61,054	61,055	-	122,109
Training		38,916	13,356	-	52,272
Multi disciplinary team		63,674	63,674	-	127,348
Facilities (incl. rental)		52,269	52,268	-	104,537
Admin and Office costs		266,506	266,507	-	533,013
Total support and governance costs		758,831	733,272	4,398	1,496,501
Support costs are made up of:					
Staff Costs		429,938	404,379	-	834,317
Other Costs		328,893	328,893	4,398	662,184
Total support and governance costs		758,831	733,272	4,398	1,496,501

8 Governance costs

	2021	2020
	£	£
Auditor's remuneration:	18,410	18,528
- Audit of the charity's annual accounts	4,559	4,398
- Audit of the charity's subsidiary undertakings	2,072	1,708
Trustees' indemnity insurance	25,041	24,634

9 Net income for the year

Net income is stated after charging:	2021	2020
	£	£
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	312,625	299,952
Loss on sale of tangible fixed assets	80	(3,848)
Operating lease rentals - land and buildings	101,725	181,137
Operating lease rentals - equipment	151,734	136,689

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

10 Staff costs and remuneration of trustees and key management personnel

The total group staff costs and employees benefit's was as follows:

	2021	2020
	£	£
Wages and salaries	10,391,312	10,093,673
Social security costs	641,595	615,378
Pension costs	273,772	270,338
	11,306,679	10,979,389

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2021	2020
	Number	Number
Charitable activities	543	541
Management and administration of the charity	35	34
Subsidiary undertakings	7	7
	585	582

The number of employees who received total employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) of more than £60,000 is as follows:

	2021	2020
	Number	Number
£60,001 - £70,000	1	1
£70,001 - £80,000	-	-
£80,001 - £90,000	-	-
£90,001 - £100,000	1	1
£100,001 - £110,000	2	2

The key management personnel of the Group are the Trustees and Management listed on page 19. Total salary and employee benefits received by key management personnel during the year amounted to £327,784 (2020: £326,496) plus pension contributions of £21,036 (2020: £21,061).

The trustees neither received nor waived any emoluments during the year (2020: £Nil).

During the year no trustees (2020: 4) were reimbursed expenses totalling £Nil (2020: £1,350), which represented accommodation, travel and subsistence expenses incurred for attendance at the Trustees' meetings. A total of £Nil (2020: £655) was paid directly to third parties. As permitted in the Articles of Association, Trustee indemnity insurance was purchased at a total cost of £2,072 (2020: £1,708).

11 Interest payable and similar charges

	2021	2020
	£	£
Bank loans and overdrafts	24,762	27,500
	24,762	27,500

12 Taxation

Education and Services for People with Autism Limited is a registered charity and as such its income and gains falling within s.505 ICTA 88 or s.256 TCGA 92 are exempt from corporation tax to the extent that they are applied to its charitable activities. No material corporation or deferred tax charge has arisen in its subsidiary undertakings.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

13 Tangible fixed assets

Group	Freehold land and buildings £	Plant and machinery £	Fixtures and fittings £	Motor vehicles £	Computer equipment £	Total £
Cost or valuation:						
At 01.04.2020	11,480,211	248,711	617,390	28,574	323,214	12,698,100
Additions	37,856	12,129	11,661		43,618	105,264
Transfers						-
Disposals		(7,549)	(31,747)		(59,057)	(98,353)
At 31.03.2021	11,518,067	253,291	597,304	28,574	307,775	12,705,011
Depreciation:						
At 01.04.2020	2,422,496	196,044	523,759	19,440	270,777	3,432,516
Charge for the year	207,910	24,543	36,931	4,057	39,184	312,625
Eliminated on disposals		(7,548)	(31,711)		(59,014)	(98,273)
At 31.03.2021	2,630,406	213,039	528,979	23,497	250,947	3,646,868
Net book value:						
At 31.03.2021	8,887,661	40,252	68,325	5,077	56,828	9,058,143
At 01.04.2020	9,057,715	52,667	93,631	9,134	52,437	9,265,584

Charity	Freehold land and buildings £	Plant and machinery £	Fixtures and fittings £	Motor vehicles £	Computer equipment £	Total £
Cost or valuation:						
At 01.04.2020	11,480,211	209,297	617,390	28,574	320,106	12,655,578
Additions	37,856		11,661		43,076	92,593
Transfers						-
Disposals		(7,549)	(31,747)		(59,057)	(98,353)
At 31.03.2021	11,518,067	201,748	597,304	28,574	304,125	12,649,818
Depreciation:						
At 01.04.2020	2,422,496	176,607	523,759	19,440	269,419	3,411,721
Charge for the year	207,910	16,098	36,931	4,057	38,349	303,345
Eliminated on disposals		(7,548)	(31,711)		(59,014)	(98,273)
At 31.03.2021	2,630,406	185,157	528,979	23,497	248,754	3,616,793
Net book value:						
At 31.03.2021	8,887,661	16,591	68,325	5,077	55,371	9,033,025
At 01.04.2020	9,057,715	32,690	93,631	9,134	50,687	9,243,857

Tangible fixed assets with a net book value of £6,188,628 (2020 - £6,298,885) have been pledged as security for liabilities of the group and charity. These assets have restricted title.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

14 Fixed asset investments

	Group 2021 £	Group 2020 £	Charity 2021 £	Charity 2020 £
Market Value as at 1 April 2020	-	-	20	20
Additions	-	-	-	-
Disposal	-	-	-	-
Impairment	-	-	-	-
Market Value as at 31 March 2021	-	-	20	20

The Charity holds 100 per cent shareholdings in the two subsidiary undertakings within the Group, these are valued at cost of £20 (Espa Research Limited £10 and Autism Works Limited £10) (see note 23).

15 Debtors

	Group 2021 £	Group 2020 £	Charity 2021 £	Charity 2020 £
Trade debtors	1,896,540	2,464,290	1,885,392	2,456,413
Amounts owed by group undertakings	-	-	99,344	227,913
Other debtors	98,643	78,893	91,742	69,050
Prepayments and accrued income	1,943,713	2,737,016	1,898,712	2,639,614
	3,938,896	5,280,199	3,975,190	5,392,990

16 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Group 2021 £	Group 2020 £	Charity 2021 £	Charity 2020 £
Bank loans and overdrafts	87,352	84,134	87,352	84,134
Trade creditors	153,581	191,817	153,581	191,620
Fees in advance	68,735	300,262	68,735	272,512
Payments received on account	651,362	673,763	650,226	670,286
Other tax and social security	172,182	166,802	164,645	155,986
Accruals and deferred income	315,491	278,523	304,372	273,660
	1,448,703	1,695,301	1,428,911	1,648,198

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

17 Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	Group 2021 £	Group 2020 £	Charity 2021 £	Charity 2020 £
Bank loans	577,072	665,670	577,072	665,670
	577,072	665,670	577,072	665,670

Bank loans include aggregate amounts of £Nil (2020 - £6,135) which fall due after five years and which are repaid by instalments. The payment terms and interest rate of each creditor for which an amount falls due after one year are given below:

The bank loans are secured by legal charges and a debenture dated 21/04/1995 over various freehold land and buildings of the Group and Charity.

	Group 2021 £	Group 2020 £	Charity 2021 £	Charity 2020 £
2.50% above LIBOR secured loan repayable on 22 June 2025	79,985	103,995	79,985	103,995
0.75% above LIBOR secured loan repayable on 2 November 2023	497,087	561,675	497,087	561,675
	577,072	665,670	577,072	665,670

18 Operating lease

At 31 March 2021 the Charity and the Group had total commitments under non-cancellable operating leases for Land and Buildings and Equipment as follows:

	Group 2021 £	Group 2020 £	Charity 2021 £	Charity 2020 £
Operating lease payments falling due:				
Within one year	162,762	139,770	148,873	116,723
Between one and five years	89,788	96,700	89,788	96,700
After more than five years	-	-	-	-
	252,550	236,470	238,661	213,423

19 Provisions for liabilities

	Group 2021 £	Group 2020 £	Charity 2021 £	Charity 2020 £
At 01.04.2020	-	-	-	-
Deferred tax provision	276	259	-	-
At 31.03.2021	276	259	-	-

The tax provision relates to the deferred taxation within the subsidiary undertaking and is resultant of a timing issue.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

20 Fund reconciliation

Group (Current Year)	Balance At 01.04.2020 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains / (losses) £	Transfers £	Balance At 31.03.2021 £
Unrestricted funds:						
General reserve	6,904,331	14,917,794	(13,781,908)	-	149,082	8,189,299
Designated funds						
Fixed asset fund	8,515,780	-	-	-	(122,061)	8,393,719
Total unrestricted funds	15,420,111	14,917,794	(13,781,908)	-	27,021	16,583,018
Restricted funds:						
Tyne and Wear Care Alliance	-	11,200	(11,200)	-	-	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	20,652	-	-	(20,652)	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	6,369	-	-	(6,369)	-
Job retention scheme	-	115,808	(115,808)	-	-	-
Covid 19 Support funds	-	260,231	(260,231)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	-	414,260	(387,239)	-	(27,021)	-
Total funds	15,420,111	15,332,054	(14,169,147)	-	-	16,583,018

Group (Prior Year)	Balance At 01.04.2019 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains / (losses) £	Transfers £	Balance At 31.03.2020 £
Unrestricted funds:						
General reserve	6,107,814	14,774,789	(13,785,137)	-	(193,135)	6,904,331
Designated funds						
Fixed asset fund	8,226,069	-	-	-	289,711	8,515,780
Total unrestricted funds	14,333,883	14,774,789	(13,785,137)	-	96,576	15,420,111
Restricted funds:						
Tyne and Wear Care Alliance	-	22,080	(22,080)	-	-	-
The Wolfson Foundation	-	70,000	-	-	(70,000)	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	20,652	-	-	(20,652)	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	5,924	-	-	(5,924)	-
Total restricted funds	-	118,656	(22,080)	-	(96,576)	-
Total funds	14,333,883	14,893,445	(13,807,217)	-	-	15,420,111

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

20 Fund reconciliation (continued)

Charity (Current Year)	At 01.04.2020 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains / (losses) £	Transfers £	At 31.03.2021 £
Unrestricted funds:						
General reserve	6,890,835	14,634,568	(13,501,489)	-	152,473	8,176,387
Designated funds						
Fixed asset fund	8,494,053	-	-	-	(125,452)	8,368,601
Total unrestricted funds	15,384,888	14,634,568	(13,501,489)	-	27,021	16,544,988
Restricted funds:						
Tyne and Wear Care Alliance	-	11,200	(11,200)	-	-	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	20,652	-	-	(20,652)	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	6,369	-	-	(6,369)	-
Job retention scheme	-	115,808	(115,808)	-	-	-
Covid 19 Support funds	-	260,231	(260,231)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	-	414,260	(387,239)	-	(27,021)	-
Total funds	15,384,888	15,048,828	(13,888,728)	-	-	16,544,988

Charity (Prior Year)	At 01.04.2019 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains / (losses) £	Transfers £	At 31.03.2020 £
Unrestricted funds:						
General reserve	6,140,683	14,444,034	(13,503,609)	-	(190,273)	6,890,835
Designated funds						
Fixed asset fund	8,207,204	-	-	-	286,849	8,494,053
Total unrestricted funds	14,347,887	14,444,034	(13,503,609)	-	96,576	15,384,888
Restricted funds:						
Tyne and Wear Care Alliance	-	22,080	(22,080)	-	-	-
The Wolfson Foundation	-	70,000	-	-	(70,000)	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	20,652	-	-	(20,652)	-
ESFA - Independent Specialist Providers	-	5,924	-	-	(5,924)	-
Total restricted funds	-	118,656	(22,080)	-	(96,576)	-
Total funds	14,347,887	14,562,690	(13,525,689)	-	-	15,384,888

Fund descriptions

a) Unrestricted funds

The General reserve represents the free funds of the charity which are not designated for particular purposes.

b) Designated funds

The Fixed asset fund has been set up to assist in identifying those funds that are not free funds and it represents the net book value of tangible fixed assets less bank loans and hire purchase.

c) Restricted funds

The restricted fund represents funds that have been received and are to be used for a specific purpose.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

21 Analysis of net assets between funds

Group fund balances at 31 March 2021 are represented by:	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2021 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	9,058,143	-	9,058,143
Investments	-	-	-	-
Current assets	9,550,926	-	-	9,550,926
Current liabilities	(1,361,351)	(87,352)	-	(1,448,703)
Long term liabilities	(276)	(577,072)	-	(577,348)
Total	8,189,299	8,393,719	-	16,583,018

Group fund balances at 31 March 2020 are represented by:	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2020 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	9,265,584	-	9,265,584
Investments	-	-	-	-
Current assets	8,515,757	-	-	8,515,757
Current liabilities	(1,611,167)	(84,134)	-	(1,695,301)
Long term liabilities	(259)	(665,670)	-	(665,929)
Total	6,904,331	8,515,780	-	15,420,111

Charity fund balances at 31 March 2021 are represented by:	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2021 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	9,033,025	-	9,033,025
Investments	20	-	-	20
Current assets	9,517,926	-	-	9,517,926
Current liabilities	(1,341,559)	(87,352)	-	(1,428,911)
Long term liabilities		(577,072)	-	(577,072)
Total	8,176,387	8,368,601	-	16,544,988

Charity fund balances at 31 March 2020 are represented by:	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2020 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	9,243,857	-	9,243,857
Investments	20	-	-	20
Current assets	8,454,879	-	-	8,454,879
Current liabilities	(1,564,064)	(84,134)	-	(1,648,198)
Long term liabilities		(665,670)	-	(665,670)
Total	6,890,835	8,494,053	-	15,384,888

22 Notes to the Cash Flow Statement

a) Reconciliation of net income / (expenditure) to net cash flow from operating activities

	Group 2021 £	Group 2020 £	Charity 2021 £	Charity 2020 £
Net income / (expenditure) for the year	1,162,907	1,086,228	1,160,100	1,037,001
Interest receivable	(590)	(18,341)	(590)	(18,341)
Interest payable	24,762	27,500	24,762	27,500
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	312,625	299,952	303,345	293,873
(Profit) / loss on disposal of tangible fixed assets	80	(3,848)	80	(3,848)
Provisions less payments	17	179	-	-
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	1,341,303	(1,362,962)	1,417,800	(1,329,880)
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	(249,816)	309,063	(222,505)	284,005
Net cash flow from operating activities	2,591,288	337,771	2,682,992	290,310

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

22 Notes to the Cash Flow Statement (continued)

b) Analysis of changes in net funds (current year)

	At 01.04.2020	Cash flows	Non-cash changes	At 31.03.2021
	£	£	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	3,235,558	2,376,472		5,612,030
Loans due within one year	(84,134)	85,380	(88,598)	(87,352)
Loans due after more than one year	(665,670)		88,598	(577,072)
	2,485,754	2,461,852	-	4,947,606

b) Analysis of changes in net funds (prior year)

	At 01.04.2019	Cash flows	Non-cash changes	At 31.03.2020
	£	£	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	3,492,761	(257,203)		3,235,558
Loans due within one year	(145,875)	146,338	(84,597)	(84,134)
Loans due after more than one year	(750,267)		84,597	(665,670)
	2,596,619	(110,865)	-	2,485,754

23 Subsidiary undertakings

The charity has two wholly owned non-charitable subsidiary undertakings ESPA Research Ltd (company number 6862992) and Autism Works Ltd (company number 7402411) which are registered in England and Wales. The registered address for both subsidiary undertakings is North House, Ferryboat Lane, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear. SR5 3RL

Autism Works Ltd is used for the trading activities of software testing and ESPA Research Ltd is used for academic research and non-primary purpose trading activities. All activities have been consolidated on a line by line basis in the SOFA. Any available profits are gifted to the charity, during the current financial year the subsidiaries have generated a small profit/loss on its trading activities but these have been retained in the year to fund current working capital.

A summary of the results of the subsidiaries is shown below:

	Autism Works Limited		ESPA Research Limited	
	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Turnover	147,477	186,057	27,750	36,698
Cost of sales	(156,082)	(145,622)	(3,235)	(5,263)
Gross profit	(8,605)	40,435	24,515	31,435
Administrative expenses	-	-	(122,558)	(122,960)
Other operating income	-	-	108,000	108,000
Profit/(Loss) on ordinary activities	(8,605)	40,435	9,957	16,475
Corporation tax repayable/(payable)	1,455	(7,683)	-	-
Retained (Loss)/Profit in subsidiary	(7,150)	32,752	9,957	16,475
The aggregate of the assets, liabilities and funds was:				
Assets	80,616	194,388	76,845	116,130
Liabilities	(20,332)	(126,954)	(99,079)	(148,321)
Reserves	60,284	67,434	(22,234)	(32,191)

Included within the operating income figure of Espa Research Limited, donations received during the year were £80,000 (2020: £80,000), with the largest donor being the Robert Luff Foundation of £80,000 (2020: £80,000). These funds are unrestricted and have been shown within the Group total of donations and legacies (note 2), with the balance of operating income and turnover of £28,000 (2020: £28,000) shown under trading activities (note 4).

ESPA Limited (The Charity) is prepared to provide continuing support to the trading subsidiaries.

Notes to the financial statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

24 Pensions

The charity operates a defined contribution scheme for eligible employees and contributions are charged in the statement of financial activities as they accrue. The charge for the year was £273,772 (2020: £270,338). From February 2014, all employees have been automatically enrolled into the defined contribution scheme and the charity contributes between 1% and 10% of pensionable salaries.

The defined contribution liability is wholly allocated to unrestricted funds and is charged to the charitable activities in proportion to the staffing costs incurred.

Total pension commitments which are included in the balance sheet amount to £45,522 (2020: £43,069).

25 Events after the end of the period

On 15 September 2021 Education and Services for People with Autism Limited completed on the sale of a residential building at 1-7 Mowbray Road, Sunderland, which was a education hall of residence for people with autism spectrum disorders. The building was sold at market value for £380,500.

26 Related party transactions

The charity has taken advantage of the exemption conferred by paragraph 33.1A of FRS 102, 'related party transactions', that transactions with wholly owned subsidiaries do not need to be disclosed.

During the year education consultancy work to the value of £Nil (2020: £3,550) has been charged to Education and Services for People with Autism Limited by L. Moxon. L. Moxon is the wife of P.M. Moxon, who is a trustee of the Charity. At the year end, the outstanding balance owed to L Moxon was £Nil (2020: £Nil).

27 Financial instruments

The carrying amounts of the charity's financial instruments are as follows:

	Note	Group 2021 £	Group 2020 £	Charity 2021 £	Charity 2020 £
Financial assets					
Debt instruments measured at amortised cost:					
- Trade debtors	15	1,896,540	2,464,290	1,885,392	2,456,413
- Amounts owed by group undertakings	15	-	-	99,344	227,913
- Other debtors and accrued income		1,798,074	2,563,741	1,753,135	2,466,401
- Cash at bank and in hand		5,612,030	3,235,558	5,542,736	3,061,889
		9,306,644	8,263,589	9,280,607	8,212,616
Financial liabilities					
Measured at amortised cost					
- Bank loans and overdraft	16/17	664,424	749,804	664,424	749,804
- Trade creditors	16/17	153,581	191,817	153,581	191,620
- Accruals		125,377	79,850	114,258	74,897
		943,382	1,021,471	932,263	1,016,321